

# Challenges in Conceptualizing and Providing Human Security

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*Changes in the security environment after the end of Cold War have seriously affected our security concepts and paradigms. Human security was finally conceptualized and presented to the global public in a Human Development Report in 1994. The concept has evolved since then and, today, we can identify quite a number of seriously conceptualized definitions and theoretical approaches that have led to the formation of a number of practical attempts to provide it. This concept is theoretically rather well substantiated, attractive and modern. It seems that it is the concept of the future for interpreting and approaching most of security situations as it integrates human rights, security and sustainable development. It puts an accent on the individual – the most significant and vulnerable part of society. However, the concept and practice of human security face some serious challenges that need to be identified, analysed and explained to relevant professional and political publics if we want to achieve an optimal approach to human security situations and effective implementation of human security preventive and reactive measures. The goal of this article is to identify some key challenges in conceptualizing human security. Discussed challenges stem from the lack of conceptual coherence, lack of interdisciplinary approaches and cooperation, lack of joint methodology, mistaken perception that the content of human security is something entirely new, understated importance of finding the appropriate balance between human security and other human rights, neglecting the technical foundation of human security and the problem of subjectivity in threat perception. The author analyses these problems and proposes solutions for the human security theory, aiming to optimize the concept of human security itself.*

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## I. Introduction

The concept of human security evolved as a result of the changes in security environment after the end of the Cold War. A combination of many factors led to its formation. A decreased threat of global nuclear war created a cognitive space for non-military threats to be perceived with greater intensity. At the same time, the process of democratization reached a new level as democracy spread to the developing countries. This meant also that individual human life and well-being received more attention and obtained more importance. Consequently, the role of human rights and freedoms and their implementation at the national and international level became much more significant. At the global level, one could observe a process of increasing globalisation, leading to shrinkage of space and time as well as the withering of borders. The role of (geographical and) physical distance has decreased, and technology has increased the speed of various transfers on the global scale. The meaning of national borders as cornerstones of national and international stability, has also decreased to a certain extent.

All mentioned factors opened space for increased development. On the other hand, an increasing number of internal violent conflicts erupted in Africa, Asia and Europe (Balkans), leading to huge humanitarian crises, increasing differences in economic development between North and South emerged and the problem of terrorism gradually became a more serious and recognized threat. In such circumstances, the concepts of national and international security simply did not reflect the environment and the needs stemming from it. This is why a kind of intellectual ‘revolution’ started, aiming to provide the most appropriate and fitting concept that would make interpretation and analysis of security easier. Neorealist focus on states and military security proved to be increasingly narrow and unfitting.

In this respect, the narrow politico-military focused strategic studies evolved towards much broader security studies, encompassing also many non-military aspects of security. Prominent journals *International Security* and *Foreign Affairs* published two theoretically breaking articles both titled “*Redefining Security*”. The first article, published in 1983 by Ullman, substantiated broadening of security to the economic and developmental issues. He questioned the utility of focusing on military security, since it conveys a profoundly false image of reality and causes states to concentrate on military threats and to ignore other and perhaps even more harmful dangers. He thought that such an approach actually reduces our total security.<sup>2</sup> The second article was published later in 1989 by Mathews, substantiating broadening of security towards environmental, resource and demographic issues.<sup>3</sup> Even the journal *Survival*, which was known for its neorealist approach, published an article on non-military aspects of security in 1989. Perhaps the most

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<sup>2</sup> Ullman, Richard, *Redefining Security*, in: *International Security* (Volume 8, Number 1), The MIT Press, Cambridge, 1983, pp. 129 – 153.

<sup>3</sup> Mathews Tuchman, Jessica, *Redefining Security*, in: *Foreign Affairs* (Volume 68, Spring), Council on Foreign Relations, New York, 1989, pp. 162 – 177.

comprehensive approach to security after the end of Cold War was substantiated by the “Copenhagen School” led by Barry Buzan, Ole Waever, Jaap de Wilde and others. In their key publications such as *People, States and Fear, An Agenda for International Security Studies in the Post-Cold War Era*, *The European Security Order Recast: Scenarios for the Post-Cold War Era*, and *Security: A New Framework for Analysis*,<sup>4</sup> its representatives defined security as an inherently multisectoral phenomenon consisting of military, environmental, economic, political and societal sectors. The Copenhagen School pragmatically combined traditional and emerging approaches in security studies.<sup>5</sup> After 9/11, a concept of asymmetric threats became increasingly recognized and used by the scientific community worldwide.<sup>6</sup> Asymmetry refers to the disproportionality between the threatening subject and the threatened subject, which refers mostly to terrorists on one side and the state and society on the other side.

What actually happened with the security at the conceptual level after the end of Cold War is simultaneous horizontal and vertical broadening. This is where the roots of human security are to be found. Horizontal broadening refers to incorporating “new”<sup>7</sup> non-military aspects of security, such as environmental, economic, demographic, criminal, terrorist, health, information, immigration and other aspects (or sectors and dimensions as called by some), while vertical broadening of security referred to incorporation of other non-state referent objects, such as individuals, local communities, groups of people by common ethnic, religious or ideological characteristics, global community, etc. It is this combination of non-military security dimensions and non-state referent objects that gave birth to the concept of human security.

The human security was finally conceptualized and presented to the global public in a *Human Development Report* in 1994. The concept has evolved since then, and today we

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<sup>4</sup> Buzan, Barry, Ole Waever and Jaap de Wilde, *Security: A New Framework for Analysis*, Lynne Rienner Publishers, London, 1998; Buzan, Barry, *People, States and Fear, An Agenda for International Security Studies in the Post-Cold War Era*, Harvester Wheatsheaf, London, 1991; Buzan, Barry, Morten Kelstrup, Pierre Lemaitre, Elizabeta Tromer and Ole Waever, *The European Security Order Recast: Scenarios for the Post-Cold War Era*, Pinter Publishers, London, 1990.

<sup>5</sup> Also many other security schools and approaches appeared after the end of Cold War, however this article addresses only those most relevant for making the main point on the circumstances of development of human security approach. For a good elaboration on security schools see Smith, Steve, *The Increasing Insecurity of Security Studies: Conceptualizing Security in the Last Twenty Years*, in: Croft, Stuart and Terry Terrif (eds.), *Critical Reflections on Security and Change*, Frank Cass, London, 2000.

<sup>6</sup> The concept of asymmetric threats began to appear in the USA in the late 1990s. It was quickly exported to other countries and represents one of the key ways of understanding threats in the 21st century.

<sup>7</sup> The frequent use of the term “new threats to security” by many scientists and professionals after the end of Cold War should be disputed. They said that historical changes brought about new threats (e.g. environmental, economic, health, illegal immigration, etc.), which in fact were not new as they existed also in the Cold War. New was the environment that with minimizing the military threat created a cognitive space for other pre-existing threats to be perceived. Conceptually the new security sector that appeared has been only the information sector. For more on this see Prezelj, Iztok, *Grožnje varnosti, varnostna tveganja in varnostni izzivi v sodobni družbi: razreševanje nekaterih terminoloških dilem*, in: *Teorija in Praksa* (Volume 38, Number 1), Faculty of Social Sciences, Ljubljana, 2000, 127-141.

can observe quite a number of seriously conceptualized definitions and theoretical approaches. General goal of this article is to discuss the concept human security in a reflective and rather critical way, identifying key challenges that should be understood and taken into account by the scientific community in order to achieve better results in application of human security worldwide. After comparing the concept of human security with traditional security concept for the purpose of achieving a better conceptual clearance, the author will compare different conceptualizations of human security along the perceived referent object, identified human values at stake, identified threats and means for providing human security. In our sample of definitions, we have academic definitions, UNDP definition, a Canadian definition and a definition of the Human Security Network, a Japanese definition and a definition by the Commission on Human Security, a Thai understanding, etc. It is not the intention of this paper to elaborate all those relevant definitions. Our intention is to extract their common denominators and stress some differences by using the qualitative comparative method.

The concept of human security is inherently related and even to certain extent integrated into the concept of human development, which will be shown by this article. At empirical level, many uncoordinated international approaches, policies or even programs for providing human security exist, which brings the author to the observation that providing human security is incoherent in large proportion due to the complexity of human security and related insufficient conceptual coherence. The concept of human security is theoretically substantiated, attractive and modern, however it embraces almost everything, making it difficult to implement.

## **II. The Concept Of Human Security**

For the purpose of writing this article, many academic and non-academic definitions of human security were analyzed and compared. The concept has attracted much attention, which is reflected in quite a large number of sources on this topic. Providing as much conceptual clearance as possible is a first necessary step in any serious academic and practical debate about human security and related challenges.

### **A. *Human Security Versus Traditional Security***

Firstly, the concept of human security should be clearly distinguished from the traditional and narrow concept of security. The former evolved in the nineties as a compensation for deficiencies of a traditional concept of security. Understanding of the term security has broadened along the vertical and horizontal dimensions. The “horizontal broadening” referred to including other security dimensions next to political and military, such as environmental, economic, health, social, etc., while the “vertical broadening” referred to

including other referent objects next to the state. The individual became a key referent object in human security, differentiating it from the traditional approach. The vertical and horizontal broadening was taking place simultaneously. Table 1 shows key differences between human and traditional concepts of security.

Table 1: *Comparison of human and traditional security concepts.*<sup>8</sup>

	<b>Traditional national security</b>	<b>Human security</b>
<b>Security for whom (referent object)</b>	Primarily states	Primarily individuals
<b>Values at stake (security of what values)</b>	Territorial integrity and national independence	Personal safety and individual freedom
<b>Security from what (threats and risks)</b>	Traditional threats (military threats, violence by countries...)	Non-traditional and also traditional threats
<b>Security by what means</b>	Force as the primary instrument of security, to be used unilaterally for a state's own safety	Force as a secondary instrument, to be used primarily for cosmopolitan ends and collectively; sanctions, human development, and humane governance as key instruments of individual-centered security.
	Balance of power is important; power is equated with military capabilities.	Balance of power is of limited utility; soft power is increasingly important.
	Cooperation between states is tenuous beyond alliance relations.	Cooperation between states, international organizations and NGOs can be effective and sustained.

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<sup>8</sup> Bajpai, Kanti, *Human Security: Concept and Measurement*, Kroc Institute Occasional Paper (Number 19), University of Notre Dame, Notre Dame, Indiana, 2000, at p. 48.

	Norms and institutions are of limited value, particularly in the security/military sphere.	Norms and institutions matter; democratization and representativeness in institutions enhance their effectiveness.
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We can see from Table 1 that the differences in understanding key referent objects, values, threats and risks correspond to differences in understanding the appropriate means for providing security. Certain means are gaining importance, while others are losing it.

Table 1 above can give us also an impression that human security is about to replace the traditional security concept. Yet, Axworthy noted that the concept of human security does not oust or replace the traditional security concept. Both concepts represent rather different ideas how to respond to existing threats. The basis of the traditional security concept is sovereignty of a state, while the basis of the concept of human security is sovereignty of an individual.<sup>9</sup> We can observe that the right of the state and the right of the individual somehow coexist in the security environment and influence each other. In this respect, both concepts also coexist (Wh. s.o.). Important is that human security is not negating traditional security because it incorporates traditional threats and means. Naturally, extreme stressing of one of them leads us to exposing conceptual differences. On this basis, we can not confirm the thesis that human security is something completely opposite from traditional security. The concepts are different, but at the end they are both human-centred, i.e. they bring human (directly or indirectly) to the forefront.<sup>10</sup> This means that human security is complementing the notion of national and international security by focusing it more on the human component (and not on critical infrastructure, institutions or territory). Today, it has become a fundamental element of the concepts and policies of national, regional and international (and even global) security. It has become also a logic that determines to a certain extent how these policies will be formed and implemented.

### ***B. Broad Concept Of Human Security: Similarities And Differences Among Definitions***

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<sup>9</sup> Axworthy, Lloyd, *Human security: Safety for People in a Changing World*, Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade, Ottawa, Canada, 29 April 1999.

<sup>10</sup> By saying that traditional security concept is indirectly also human-centred we refer to the fact that the motivational drive behind conceptualizing traditional politico-military concept was, among other things, also a concern how security circumstances could threaten the human population. The state, its representatives and institutions might have been in focus of traditional security approach, but the relation between the security of the state and its people is undeniable. Both securities are connected.

The development of the concept of human security was deeply influenced by the political and security context after the end of the Cold War. Several factors created a cognitive space that was necessary for developing such a concept:

- decreased threat of global nuclear war,
- predominance of non-traditional and non-military threats,
- democratization,
- strengthening of human rights and freedoms in national and international policies,
- increase awareness of the importance of human life and well-being,
- globalization and related consequences,
- increase poverty and differences between developed North and poor South,
- increase number of internal armed and violent conflicts,
- spread of small arms and light weapons, as well as the issue of anti-personnel mines.

Because the above mentioned phenomena are unevenly spread around the world, they create slightly different input or context in the process of conceptualization of human security. Some regions have more conflicts, different social, cultural, economic and geostrategic context than other regions.<sup>11</sup> This is why many (mostly similar, but slightly different) academic and political definitions of human security have been developed.

A comparison of conceptualizations of human security (along the perceived referent object, identified human values at stake, identified threats and means for providing human security) shows great similarity among concepts. Differences stem from slightly different contexts, which are mostly regionally conditioned. Comparison shows that all concepts stress that the key referent object is individual, while only some concepts also stress the centrality of human communities (e.g. ethnic groups, minorities etc.). The criteria for this selection is the vulnerability of individuals to traditional or non-traditional threats.

Comparison of human security approaches further shows a lower degree of unity regarding the identified human values. The values most often stated as “at stake” in human security situations are survival, safety, livelihood, freedom, well-being and dignity. For example, Bajpai<sup>12</sup> stressed that the fundamental values at stake in human security are physical safety and well-being and individual/personal freedom. This brings us to the question of relationship between human security and human liberty and freedom, which will be addressed later.

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<sup>11</sup> For example, debate on human security in Asia was shaped by the economic crisis in the nineties.

<sup>12</sup> Bajpai, Kanti, *Human Security: Concept and Measurement*, Kroc Institute Occasional Paper (Number 19), University of Notre Dame, Notre Dame, Indiana, 2000, at pp. 38-39.

A comparison of the concepts of human security regarding perceived and identified threats to individuals shows a great variety of potential threats. All approaches stress mostly non-traditional threats; however traditional ones are mentioned and stressed by some as well. The threat spectrum includes the following threats:

- economic threats,
- food threats,
- health threats,
- environmental threats,
- personal threats,
- community threats,
- political threats,
- demographic threats,
- crime in all forms, including terrorism,
- natural disasters,
- violent conflicts and wars,
- genocide,
- anti-personnel mines, SALW, etc.

A difference among approaches in terms of giving different prioritization to different threats can be identified. Some approaches<sup>13</sup> mention also the structural violence of different forms as a threat to human security. Freedom from fear is many times mentioned as a key element of human security. Freedom from fear is actually measured by the (opinion polls on) threat perception. Some approaches also mention an “acceptable quality of life” (see the Canadian approach). It is very important that many approaches understand the interconnection among threats (transborder interconnection and intersectoral interconnection).<sup>14</sup> The latter refers to the fact that complex human security situations embrace a broad spectrum of more or less interconnected and correlated threats from different dimensions or sectors. This also means that extreme escalation of threat in one dimension leads to escalation of threats in other dimensions. For example, the wartime situation in Bosnia and Herzegovina was an example of extreme escalation of military threat that has led to the escalation of economic threats (e.g. unemployment, economic crisis), environmental threats (environmental damage and pollution), terrorism, organized crime (e.g. looting during the war operations), health threats (e.g. unbearable

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<sup>13</sup> For example Møller, Bjørn, *National, Societal and Human Security – A General Discussion with a Case Study from the Balkans*, Paper for the First International Meeting of Directors of Peace Research and Training Institutions, Paris, 27-28 November 2000.

<sup>14</sup> For example, UNDP wrote in its report from 1994 that the components of human security are interdependent. The consequences of human security situations spread transnationally. In this respect, threats to human security are no longer just personal or local and national. They are becoming global. See United Nations Development Programme, *Human development Report 1994*, Oxford University Press, Oxford, 1994.



health conditions), disrespect of human rights, etc.<sup>15</sup> In this respect, we should support Oberleitner's finding that individuals actually face an endless spectrum of potential threats.<sup>16</sup>

One must also note that human security is directly related to the concept of international peace and security. The report by the UN High-level Panel on Threats, Challenges and Change entitled *A More Secure World: Our Shared Responsibility* makes a distinction between threats from non-state actors and states to human security as well as state security.<sup>17</sup> Human security is in such perception put directly along the state security in national and international context. The panel proposed a comprehensive system of collective security that tackles both new and old threats, and addresses the security concerns of all states - rich and poor, weak and strong. The UN Secretary General confirmed in his introduction to this report that the UN strategies must be comprehensive and its institutions must overcome their narrow preoccupations and learn to work across the whole range of issues, in a concerted fashion. The report by the former UN Secretary General *In Larger Freedom: towards Development, Security and Human Rights for All* stressed the relationship between the rule of law and human security. The report stressed the rule of law as the all-important framework for advancing human security and prosperity. Yet, in many places governments and individuals continue to violate the rule of law, often without consequences for them but with deadly consequences for the weak and the vulnerable. In other instances, those who make no pretence of being bound by the rule of law, such as armed groups and terrorists, are able to flout it because the peacemaking institutions and compliance mechanisms are weak.<sup>18</sup>

It is also very obvious that the UN broadened its understanding of the threat to international peace and security from conflicts among states to human security crises within states. Internal wars, genocides and other extreme violations of human rights can be treated as threats to international peace and security. The history of UN resolutions shows us that many of them (also within the 7<sup>th</sup> Chapter of the UN Charter) were adopted because of such situations and such interpretations<sup>19</sup>. For example, Resolution 668 (1991)

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<sup>15</sup> For more on the concept of complex security threat see Prezelj, Iztok, *Nacionalni sistemi kriznega menedžmenta*, FDV Ljubljana, 2005.

<sup>16</sup> Oberleitner, Gerd, *Human Security and Human Rights*, ETC Occasional Paper Number 8, ETC, June 2002, at p. 13.

<sup>17</sup> United Nations, Panel on Threats, Challenges and Change, *A More Secure World: Our Shared Responsibility*, 2004, at p. 1.

<sup>18</sup> UN General Assembly, *In Larger Freedom: Towards Development, Security and Human Rights for All*, Report of the Secretary-General, United Nations, A/59/2005, 2005, at p. 35.

<sup>19</sup> See Faulenbach, Jürgen et al., *Informationen zur politischen Bildung, Internationale Beziehungen II, Frieden und Sicherheit zu Beginn des 21. Jahrhunderts*, Bundeszentrale für politische Bildung (BpB), Bonn, 2002; Lodgaard, Sverre, *Human Security: Concept and Operationalization*, Seminar Paper, Expert Seminar on Human Rights and Peace, Palais Wilson, Geneva, 8-9 December 2000, pp. 1-21; Axworthy, Lloyd, *Human security: Safety for People in a Changing World*, Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade, Ottawa, Canada, 29 April 1999; Mathews, Jessica Tuchman, *Power Shift*, in: *Foreign Affairs* (Volume 76, Number 1), January/February 1997, pp. 50 - 66.

on Iraq stressed that suppression of civilian population represents a threat to international peace and security. The Security Council authorized the use of force in 1992 in Somalia and Haiti on behalf of civilian population and without the consent of the state. In Bosnia and Herzegovina, ethnic cleansing was labelled as violation of international humanitarian law and as a threat to peace and security. The genocide in Rwanda in 1995 was labelled in a similar way. Many related UN documents reflect the fact that international peace and security has an increasingly important human security aspect.

Comparison of understanding means for protection of human security shows that the state is actually the most important subject. Some approaches explicitly and some also implicitly stress the importance of non-governmental actors. The central goal of the human security agenda is to help the threatened people. Approaches identify two groups of means or measures: preventive and reactive. Preventive measures refer to all measures that aim to minimize the vulnerability of human beings, while reactive means are understood as secondary means for providing human security. The use of force is interpreted only as a last resort. The following means for providing human security are frequently mentioned:

- humanitarian intervention or humanitarian help,
- peacekeeping operations,
- peacebuilding,
- arms verification operations,
- respect for human rights and liberties,
- sustainable economic development,
- early warning,
- diplomatic missions,
- focused (smart) sanctions,<sup>20</sup>
- preventive deployment of armed forces,
- preventive diplomacy,
- stronger civil society,
- empowerment strategies,<sup>21</sup>
- assuring the minimal life standards, etc.

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<sup>20</sup> The case of so-called smart economic sanctions is exemplary for showing how human security concern affects the international security mechanism. The experiences after years of sanctions showed that many times the sanctioned regimes were not hurt by sanctions that much as the ordinary population. Due to the sanctions, there was for example no fuel or no particular medicines to the ordinary population but for high officials and politicians who actually motivated those sanctions. The practice of international economic sanctions had therefore changed into more focused measures, such as freezing the bank accounts of political elite, etc. By such focusing on more “guilty” members of the society, the general human security situation in the sanctioned country would not suffer that much.

<sup>21</sup> Empowerment strategies refer mostly to practices that make individuals stronger and more robust for coping with human security situations. In this respect they incorporate various education processes.

Approaches again differ in prioritizing these means. Many people claim that it is easier to ensure human security through early prevention than through later intervention; however it seems that this is not always considered in practice.

Our overview of means suggests that human security has become an inseparable part of national and international security policy performed by states, international organizations and non-governmental organizations. Human security plays a direct or at least an indirect role in formulating and implementing these policies.

1. *Interconnection Between The Human Security And Human Sustainable Development*

Human security approaches stress that the search for security must be based on human development. This is very important for human security as it puts it into a sustainable perspective. Actually, the sustainable development leads to environment where human security is less threatened because the emergence of violent conflicts is less likely. This is why the concept of human security is inherently and strongly connected with the concept of sustainable human development. This concept was formed in the second half of the eighties by the UN World Commission on Environment and Development and refers to the development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of the future generations to meet their own needs. The commission defined this connection clearly by saying that sustainable development requires meeting the basic needs of all and extending to all the opportunity to satisfy their aspirations for a better life. In their view, a world in which poverty and inequity are endemic will always be prone to ecological and other crises.<sup>22</sup> Similar thinking on inextricable link between development and security can be found in the already mentioned Report by the UN Panel on Threats, Challenges and Change. The report acknowledges that a more secure world is only possible if poor countries are given a real chance to develop. Extreme poverty and infectious diseases threaten many people directly, but they also provide a fertile breeding-ground for other threats, including civil conflict.<sup>23</sup>

Human development is measured by the Human Development Index. This index actually measures the average achievements in a country in three basic dimensions of human

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<sup>22</sup> Model of sustainable development become internationally recognized topic after the report by the World Commission on Environment and Development was published in 1987. The report substantiated the concept of sustainable development based on the analysis of threatening environmental trends and its symptoms and causes. See United Nations, *Report of the World Commission on Environment and Development: Our Common Future*, Transmitted to the General Assembly as an Annex to [document A/42/427](#) - Development and International Co-operation: Environment, New York, 1987.

<sup>23</sup> United Nations, Panel on Threats, Challenges and Change, *A More Secure World: Our Shared Responsibility*, 2004, at p. viii.

development: a long and healthy life, knowledge and a decent standard of living.<sup>24</sup> The strong connection between human development and human security brings us to consideration if conceptualizing the human security index would be possible.

Fundamental precondition for sustainable development is empowerment of people, referring to their education. By educating them, the key barrier to human development – human mind – can be surpassed. Means for achieving sustainable human development are rule of law, respect for human rights, economic development, social development, environmental development, creation of adequate norms and regimes. Many peace-building practices around the world reflect how development is connected to safety of people. Safe environment is a precondition for implementation of any kind of developmental projects, which further influence the well-being of population. Population with more satisfied basic needs is less likely to turn to violence in solving its problems.

### **III. Partial Coherence Of The Human Security Concept As A Challenge**

Human security is a multidimensional phenomenon because it refers to a number of security dimensions (threats), almost all aspects of human life and a broad spectrum of means. This is why a multidisciplinary approach to human security is being shaped. Human security can be discussed from the perspective of human rights, security, law, humanitarian, economic, environmental, developmental and other perspectives or angles. For example, a Human Security consortium that was formed under the 6<sup>th</sup> Framework Research Program, financed by the European Commission, consists of a wide spectrum of research institutions, such as human rights studies, security studies, criminology and law.<sup>25</sup> We can observe that a kind of “human security studies” is being shaped which is indicated by new human security research projects, courses in universities, conferences, HUMSEC journal, etc. Only a broad approach to human security can lead us to comprehensive and correct understanding of the human security situation.

One crucial problem arises from this “multi approach” however. The concept of human security actually refers to almost all security aspects (threats and risks). The question is how to build theory and implement it in the practice if it refers to everything. Such a broad concept actually lacks coherence and, consequently, focus. The problem of focus makes it difficult to implement the concept of human security in practice (in policy). This means that the concept of human security is theoretically well substantiated, attractive and modern; however it embraces almost everything, making it difficult to implement. The scientific community needs to operationalize this concept better if we want to avoid

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<sup>24</sup> Human development index is calculated for 177 countries and areas of the world. Information. Available online at: <http://hdr.undp.org/en/>.

<sup>25</sup> See European Commission, *Annex 1 to the Project Human Security in the Western Balkans Region: the Impact of Transnational Terrorist and Criminal Organisations on the Peace-Building Process of the Region*, Contract Number 028795, Brussels, 2006.

the inflation of this concept and the trap of broad understanding of security. Broad understanding of human security may be correct, but it is a labyrinth for which we need a better conceptual and political compass. What we perhaps really need is the development of a human security index, as already proposed and discussed by some scholars.<sup>26</sup> Such index would enable the international community to monitor the human security situation in crisis areas and elsewhere systematically and permanently. It would give a clear benchmark upon which the preventive and reactive actions could be better prepared and more comprehensive. Already mentioned parallels with the Human development index could be valuable in addressing the challenge of conceptualizing and implementing the human security index.

The second problem stems from the fact that complex security environment created possibilities for faster interconnection among different categories (dimensions or sectors) of threats to human security. Human security crises are actually situations where threats from several dimensions escalate. They are strongly correlated. There is no one way or one mechanism for solving such crises. Many disciplines are involved, but they do not communicate enough with one another. There are no joint methodologies and also such need is not perceived and comprehended by most scholars. An interdisciplinary approach is currently the Achilles heel of human security. Inter-disciplinarity in this respect refers to disciplines working together (not parallel) to achieve joint goals with joint methodologies. Also many actors that implement human security policy do not interact enough (OSCE, EU, NATO, OAS, G7/G8, UN, Human Security Network, Commission on Human Security, etc.). For example, the EU is looking for possible ways to increase human security in Kosovo in its new mission. The exploration of these possibilities should take into account the already existing activities of a large number of other foreign actors in Kosovo.<sup>27</sup>

Complex security environments and corresponding human security situations and crises require optimal approaches. Partial approaches (by one actor) can be more or less efficient; however complex situations can not be solved by partial approaches. Interorganizational and interdisciplinary cooperation is therefore a necessity in the formulation of human security policy, decision making and implementation. We must take an additional step from our practice of broad initiatives and partitioned implementation to the practice of comprehensive implementation. A tool for this is better horizontal cooperation.

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<sup>26</sup> See Bajpai, Kanti, *Human Security: Concept and Measurement*, Kroc Institute Occasional Paper (Number 19), University of Notre Dame, Notre Dame, Indiana, 2000, pp. 55 - 59.

<sup>27</sup> International organisations keep on forgetting taking into account other international organisations when conceptualizing their approach to emerging human security situations and topics. At this point, we should stress the example of good practice by the OSCE in the field of terrorism. The OSCE had studied the role of all international organisations and initiatives before it actually defined its role in the field of anti-terrorism. This study was conducted under the assumption that the new OSCE anti-terrorist role(s) shall not duplicate already existing roles by other actors.

#### **IV. A Challenge Of Balancing Human Freedoms And Security In The Human Security Concept: A Relationship Between Human Needs And Rights**

Human security by its content opens the question of relationship between freedom and security. Concept and practice of human security is strongly connected to human rights. For some scholars, human security refers to the protection of personal safety and individual freedom. In the contemporary security environment, it seems that too many times a view on competing concepts prevails. Interpretations that we need to take sides in question of security versus freedom are prevailing. This is to a large extent stimulated by the intensive (legal or illegal) violations of human rights by states in the fight against terrorism. However, some scholars and politicians claim that the relationship should be understood in a more complementary manner. This is not a new thesis, as Benjamin Franklin already took this perspective in 1795. These are mutually supporting concepts because they are both human needs and human rights. Article 3 of the *Universal Declaration on Human Rights and Freedoms* states that everyone has the right to life, liberty and security of person.<sup>28</sup> Kofi Annan also stressed the positive correlation among human rights, security and development in his report in *Larger Freedom: Towards Development, Security and Human Rights for All*.

In his opinion, the notion of larger freedom (that was introduced in his report) encapsulates the idea that development, security and human rights go hand in hand. He creates a triangle of interconnected elements – security, human rights and development. The former Secretary General argues that these three elements increasingly reinforce each other. This relationship has only been strengthened in our era of rapid technological advances, increasing economic interdependence, globalization and dramatic geopolitical change. Accordingly, we will not enjoy development without security, we will not enjoy security without development, and we will not enjoy either without respect for human rights. Unless all these causes are advanced, none will succeed.<sup>29</sup>

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<sup>28</sup> UN General Assembly, *Universal Declaration on Human Rights and Freedoms*, General Assembly Resolution 217 A (III), New York, 10 December 1948, art. 3.

<sup>29</sup> UN General Assembly, *In Larger Freedom: Towards Development, Security and Human Rights for All*, Report of the Secretary-General, United Nations, A/59/2005, 2005, at pp. 5-6. We also quote the following examples of the relationship among human rights, security and development from this document:

‘Even if he can vote to choose his rulers, a young man with AIDS who cannot read or write and lives on the brink of starvation is not truly free. Equally, even if she earns enough to live, a woman who lives in the shadow of daily violence and has no say in how her country is run is not truly free. Larger freedom implies that men and women everywhere have the right to be governed by their own consent, under law, in a society where all individuals can, without discrimination or retribution, speak, worship and associate freely. They must also be free from want — so that the death sentences of extreme poverty and infectious disease

Accordingly, the Human Security Concept refers to providing security within the limitations of respect for human rights. However, there are some limitations on human rights and freedoms due to some predefined interests of national and public security. This is the point at which the problems emerge, especially in the effective fight against the terrorism. Terrorism is a threat deeply incorporated in our societies.

According to the European Police Office (EUROPOL) altogether 498 terrorist attacks were carried out in the EU in 2006. The vast majority of them resulted only in limited material damage and were not intended to kill. A total of 706 individuals were arrested as suspects of terrorism in the same year.<sup>30</sup> In the past several years, we have witnessed major arrests of terrorist suspects every month by European security services. The fight against terrorism has become a priority for many European and non-European states and international organisations. Basic security documents of these actors clearly reflect this priority.<sup>31</sup>

The effective fight against terrorism obviously draws in large part upon the limitation of human rights and freedoms. This is due to prevailing preventive focus in fight against terrorism. The states are responsible for providing human security and also human rights. By defending some human rights, they obviously decrease some other human rights and freedoms. Finding a right balance is one of the biggest challenges of contemporary states and societies. This, however, is also a challenge of the Human Security Concept. The concept should be shaped and developed in a complementary way, balancing human security and human rights. This is not only a question of law and human rights experts, but a question of and for all disciplines dealing with human security. A better multidisciplinary dialogue should be developed within human security studies focusing on this question. The concept of human security should help to find an answer how to strive for acceptable (not maximal) level of security with minimal violations of human rights. More conceptual clearance would help various institutions within the states (e.g. police services, intelligence services, oversight bodies, political parties) and also international bodies, such as the EU. The process of establishing an Area of Freedom,

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are lifted from their lives — and free from fear — so that their lives and livelihoods are not ripped apart by violence and war. Indeed, all people have the right to security and to development”.....”While poverty and denial of human rights may not be said to “cause” civil war, terrorism or organized crime, they all greatly increase the risk of instability and violence. Similarly, war and atrocities are far from the only reasons that countries are trapped in poverty, but they undoubtedly set back development. Again, catastrophic terrorism on one side of the globe, for example an attack against a major financial centre in a rich country, could affect the development prospects of millions on the other by causing a major economic downturn and plunging millions into poverty. And countries which are well governed and respect the human rights of their citizens are better placed to avoid the horrors of conflict and to overcome obstacles to development’.

<sup>30</sup> EUROPOL, *EU Terrorism Situation and Trend Report 2007*, March, 2007, pp.3-4.

<sup>31</sup> E.g. EU Security Strategy from 2003, NATO strategy from 1999 and Riga declaration from 2006.

Security and Justice within the EU can be successful only if the mentioned balance or equilibrium is found.

The process of finding a balance between human security and other human rights should at least draw upon the existing documents, such as the *Universal Declaration on Human Rights*,<sup>32</sup> *European Convention on Human Rights*,<sup>33</sup> *Guidelines on Human Rights and the Fight against Terrorism*<sup>34</sup> and *Johannesburg Principles on National Security, Freedom of Expression and Access to Information*<sup>35</sup>. These documents approve certain exceptions and situations in which human rights can be legally violated, however they also draw a strict line that can not be crossed by states in pursuit of security.

Looking at the critical examples in practice, we have no problem of identifying many cases where human rights were violated by organisations wanting to provide human and national security. But first, it should be clearly stated that sole terrorist attacks represent a gross violation of the human right to life. On the response side, we witnessed heavily militarized counter-terrorism, which is probably the first step in the wrong direction in addressing predominantly civilian terrorist threat. Definitions of terrorism are still not precise enough, leaving an open space for abuse by security services. Personal data exchange among countries is not necessarily subjected to the highest human rights standards, some states have been rendering their suspects to other states where human rights standards are not adequate, proactive stimulations for committing a criminal and terrorist act by European and US police services were identified, profiling terrorists can lead to religious or ethnic discrimination, pre-charge detention periods are increasing, violence used by states in crisis management operations outside Europe and US is not subject to the same limitations as at home, the concept of enemy combatant has been misused, Guantanamo bay detention camp proved to be a place where torture was used to extract information from suspects, where suspects are being held without temporal limits, and military commissions (courts) were used to trial detainees, etc. Telecommunication and internet providers needed to prolong the storage time for communications that took place among users, universal data bases are being created for data mining purposes, simultaneously creating worries on how to control access and prevent misuse of personal data. Some terrorist suspects were detained in Europe by the CIA at secret locations, where torture and other illegal practices were most likely used. This list of disputable or critical practices simply does not end. This fact just proves our statement that balancing between human rights and security is one of the most important challenges of the human security studies community.

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<sup>32</sup> UN General Assembly, *Universal Declaration on Human Rights and Freedoms*, General Assembly Resolution 217 A (III), New York, 10 December 1948, art. 3.

<sup>33</sup> Council of Europe, *The European Convention on Human Rights*, Rome, 1950.

<sup>34</sup> Council of Europe, *Guidelines on Human Rights and the Fight against Terrorism*, Directorate General of Human Rights, 11 July 2002.

<sup>35</sup> Article 19 – Global Campaign for Free Expression, *Johannesburg Principles on National Security, Freedom of Expression and Access to Information*, London, November 1996. Available online at: <http://www.article19.org/pdfs/standards/joburgprinciples.pdf>.



## V. Neglecting The Technical Foundation Of Human Security

Besides the evolution of the concept of human security and practice, the concept of critical infrastructure protection is gaining importance. The concept is focusing on threats to and protection of critical infrastructures, such as:

- energy (oil and gas production, refining, treatment and storage, electricity generation, transmission of electricity, gas and oil, distribution of electricity, gas and oil),
- information and communication technologies – ICT (e.g. Internet, provision of fixed telecommunications, provision of mobile telecommunications, radio communication and navigation, satellite communication, etc.),
- transport (road transport, rail transport, air transport, sea transport),
- water systems (provision of drinking water, control of water quality, control of water quantity),
- food (provision of food and safeguarding food safety and security),
- health systems (medical and hospital care, medicines, serums, vaccines and pharmaceuticals, bio-laboratories and bio-agents),
- financial systems (payment services/payment structures, etc.),
- state infrastructure, (ministries, relevant objects) etc.<sup>36</sup>

These are all important systems that consist of objects and processes vital for human society. Vitality refers to criticality for normal functioning of human society. Many authors understand critical infrastructures as networks of mutually connected elements upon which normal functioning of society depend.<sup>37</sup> Some authors stress that societal dependence from these systems is increasing.<sup>38</sup>

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<sup>36</sup> See for example European Commission, *Green Paper on a European Programme for Critical Infrastructure protection*, COM(2005) 576, Brussels, 17 November 2005; Lewis, Ted, *Critical Infrastructure Protection in Homeland Security: Defending a Networked Nation*, Wiley Interscience, New Jersey, 2006; Dunn, Myriam, *The Socio-political Dimensions of Critical Information Infrastructure Protection*, in: *International Journal of Critical Infrastructures*, Inderscience Publishers (Volume 1, Number 2/3), 2005, pp. 258 - 268; Radvanovsky, Robert, *Critical Infrastructure: Homeland Security and Emergency Preparedness*, Taylor & Francis, New York, 2006.

<sup>37</sup> Ellison, Robert et al, *Survivability: Protecting Your Critical Systems*, CERT Coordination Center, Carnegie Mellon University, Pittsburgh, 1999, at p. 1; Boin, Arjen, Patrick Lagadec, Michel-Kerjan Erwann and Werner Overdijk, *Critical Infrastructures under Threat: earning from the Antrax Scare*, in: *Journal of Contingencies and Crisis Management*, Inderscience Publishers (Volume 11, Number 3), 2003, pp. 18 – 29; Erwann, Michel-Kerjan, *New Challenges in Critical Infrastructures: A US Perspective*, in: *Journal of Contingencies and Crisis Management*, Inderscience Publishers (Volume 1, Number 3), 2003, pp. 132 – 141.

<sup>38</sup> Ellison, Robert et al, *Survivability: Protecting Your Critical Systems*.

Threats to critical infrastructures are, in fact, the same or at least similar to threats to human security. Critical infrastructure can be damaged, destroyed or disrupted by three categories of threats:

- disasters (broad spectrum of more or less coincidental events coming from system external environment),
- intentional attacks and
- failures (due to internal malfunctions in systems).

Damaged, destroyed or disrupted critical infrastructure for any reason directly or indirectly affect or even threaten human society, state and individuals. Human vulnerability in this area is increasing together with increasing dependence on vital support systems. We can identify plenty examples where human security was threatened also because of the malfunctioning of critical infrastructures. Most bigger terrorist attacks destroyed beside human lives also critical infrastructure. 9/11 was an attack against financial, military and political centres. The London and Madrid attacks involved rail infrastructure. Terrorist hijacking of airplanes involve air transport infrastructure. Natural disasters, such as hurricane Katrina and the tsunami in Asia, led to such destruction of critical infrastructures that human lives (not to mention well-being) were threatened. These events triggered the biggest humanitarian operations of the recent past. Europe and America have witnessed some big electric blackouts in the past ten years, which caused economic damage. Some serious humanitarian crises (e.g. Sudan, Kosovo, Macedonia in time of conflict) alarmingly showed that critical infrastructure is extremely important for human security. The worst case scenario regarding the “millennium bug” or Y2K included seriously disrupted human life due to potential malfunctioning of multiple critical infrastructures (financial, information, transport, energy and other infrastructures).

Despite such importance of critical infrastructures, the concept of human security has not addressed this problem at all. The problem is the predominantly technical orientation of scientists dealing with critical infrastructures and predominantly non-technical orientation of disciplines dealing with human security. These disciplines and approaches are not really capable of looking over the self-imposed boundaries to strongly connected problems. Human security has many non-technical aspects; however, the unaddressed technical aspect is increasingly important. This has also serious effects on practice, especially formulation and implementation of human security measures. Interdisciplinarity and comprehensiveness proved again to be the Achilles heel of human security.

## **VI. Inevitability Of Subjectivity in Assessing Human Security Situations – A Challenge Of Conflicting Perceptions**

One further problem is to be found in predominant subjectivity of human threat perception. Similar human security situations can be perceived quite differently around the world. The constructivist approach in social sciences substantiated the idea of contemporary reality as a social construction. Our reality is only a function of our knowledge about the world. This knowledge is socially constructed. Aristotle, in *Metaphysics*, argued that there is a difference among the truth, its appearance and our perceptions.<sup>39</sup> Baudrillard stressed in this regard that we live in some kind of objective illusion of reality or a kind of simulation of reality.<sup>40</sup> Similarly, Schopenhauer in his famous work *The World as Will and Representation* argued that the existing world is a reflection of our perceptions and will.<sup>41</sup>

Similar logic was applied to the field of security. W. B. Gallie has as early as in 1962 noted that security is essentially a contested concept. Buzan and Patman stressed that the decision on what security is has been based on the subjective elements, such as politics, morality, ideology and similar elements.<sup>42</sup> Individuals, social groups, societies, states and international community perceive and interpret human security situations through their own lenses and from their own perspectives. Also, their immediate or long-term interests influence their perceptions. Because human in-security in its broadest meaning lies predominantly in the eyes of beholder, the real threats to human security are not necessarily the perceived ones and vice versa. The problem gets even worse as real and perceived threats change over time. For example, the threat by terrorism today can be interpreted on the one hand as the threat number one or only as one among the potential threats on the other hand. The exodus of Serbs from Kosovo in 1999 can be interpreted as rescuing people from a kind of ethnic cleansing or as a phase of liberating the country from the oppressors. Military intervention by NATO in Kosovo in the same year can be interpreted as a military humanitarian support mission with goal to protect Kosovars from the genocide and ethnic cleansing, or as a threat to human security and a military aggression on an independent country. The list of such different interpretations can just not end. The point is that this paradox has not been resolved yet at conceptual level in security studies and also not in the social practice. In relation to this problem, Buzan, Waeber and de Wilde warn against the extreme error in threat perception, such as paranoia. Paranoia in this regard refers to perceiving threats that do not exist.<sup>43</sup>

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<sup>39</sup> Aristotle, *Metaphysics*, in: Irwin, Terence and Gail Fine (Translators), *Aristotle – Selections*, Hackett Publishing Company, Indianapolis, 1995, Book VI, Chapter 5, pp. 266-267.

<sup>40</sup> See Horrocks, Christopher, *Baudrillard and the Millennium*, ICON Books, Cambridge, 1999, pp. 5-7.

<sup>41</sup> Schopenhauer, Arthur, *The World as Will and Representation*, Dover Publications, New York, 1969, at p. 4.

<sup>42</sup> Buzan, Barry, *People, States and Fear, An Agenda for International Security Studies in the Post-Cold War Era*, Harvester Wheatsheaf, London, 1991; Patman, Robert, *Introduction: Security in a Post-Cold War Context*, in: Patman, Robert (ed.), *Security in a Post-Cold War World*, Macmillan Press, London, 1999, at p. 2.

<sup>43</sup> Buzan, Barry, Ole Waeber and Jaap de Wilde, *Security: A New Framework for Analysis*, Lynne Rienner Publishers, London, 1998, at p. 57.

The question and a challenge in human security studies is how to objectivize human security despite the fact that insecurity and threats are social and cultural constructions. Is there some concept that would indisputably lead the beholders towards more objective perception? Naturally, the perception of human security situations will always be to a certain extent subjective and conflicting, however this is not a reason that should prevent the scientific community to contribute to minimizing these differences. We need some kind of objectivization of human security in crisis and non-crisis situations. Again, a clear benchmark, such as for example a human security index, would be helpful in this regard. The scientific communities, dealing with human security, have not addressed the question of varying and conflicting perceptions at all. Ample opportunities and challenges still remain to be dealt with.

## **VI. Conclusion**

The concept of human security has evolved in changed security environment after the end of Cold War. Simultaneous vertical and horizontal broadening of security necessitated a formation of a new concept that would explain the existing security circumstances better. The concept adds value to the traditional approach by taking a different perspective on the common topic. A virtue of this concept is to be found in incorporating also traditional threats and traditional means into its framework. This means that the concept of human security should be understood as a complement to the traditional security concept and not a substitution. Today, human security has become an inseparable part of national and international security policies as shown by the article.

The author identified many slightly different understandings (or definitions) of human security. Their joint denominator is actually only partially controllable wideness, especially in the field of threats and means. The precise study of the concept and reality in which we try to implement it shows that this concept is actually in its infant or at least pubertal stage of development. Many conceptual challenges were identified in the article. The problem is that the scientific community (or human security studies community) is not aware of them or is not addressing them comprehensively.

The first such challenge is inadequate conceptual coherence. The Human Security Concept addresses almost all aspects of human life, which is theoretically attractive, modern and comprehensive at first sight, yet almost no serious interdisciplinary work exist at theoretical and practical level. Disciplines do not interact enough, there are no joint methodologies, operational institutions that try to provide human security work too much parallel and too little in close interaction. For these reasons, this concept is difficult to implement. The Western Balkan complex human security situation is an excellent proof for this.

A further challenge is to make clear to the scientific community that the concept of human security by its content is not something really new. This is believed by many people, who represent human security related topics as something new. New are only the concept, stronger focus on individuals as referent objects and comprehensiveness involved.

The central challenge in conceptualizing human security likely refers to balancing human security with other human rights. It is clear that people need to be safe and enjoy a reasonable, if not optimal, level of human rights. Our arguments in the article also made it clear that states are obliged to provide all human rights, including security. How to achieve this balance is simultaneously a theoretical and practical dilemma. At the theoretical level, the concept of human security has not answered sufficiently how to achieve this balance and does not integrate various disciplines enough to at least be in position to do it. For the mean time, let us be pleased with formulation that the Human Security Concept refers to providing security within the limitations of respect for human rights.

An interesting challenge appears with parallel and apparently unconnected development of human security studies and critical infrastructure protection studies. Both actually deal with effects of threats on safety and security of people but from different aspects. Fine, but again a big opportunity for new scientific achievements lies precisely at the merging point of two approaches. So far, both sides do not possess the knowledge of how to do it. The key again is in the greater interdisciplinarity that would, in this case, exceed social sciences and natural sciences.

The last challenge addressed in this article refers to the problem of subjectivity in threat perception. This is a fundamental problem in security studies as threat perception determines shaping and implementing security policies. Some more objective measure of human security situation should be developed, and a benchmark in shape of a Human Security Index would be helpful.

