



HUMAN SECURITY

URBAN SAFETY AND SECURITY INITIATIVES

A guidebook for local authorities



OBJECTIVES

The action-research project « Human Security: Urban Safety and Security Initiatives. A Guidebook for Local Authorities », which will last two years (june 2006-june 2008), is a cooperative effort between the United Nations (UNITAR, UN-HABITAT) and several research programmes of the Federal Polytechnic School of Lausanne (EPFL) operating under the aegis of the International Relations Vice-Presidency– Unity Cooperation@epfl (<http://cooperation.epfl.ch/>). Beyond the echo that the **research** will have through **action** by sharing knowledge with the United Nations and local authorities in the studied cities, the project will aim for **inter-disciplinarity** and dialogue between **technical and social sciences**.

ANALYSIS

The research project will **analyse the contemporary transformations of the city, through the prism of human security**. It will assess the capacities of public policies and of private and/or community initiatives to produce safer cities for everyone. In this perspective, we will analyse effects that – natural or anthropogenic – threats have on urban environment and answers given in terms of security and safety. Security is an important challenge for local authorities and answers must be adapted to the multiple needs of the populations living in cities. The stake is to know how to deal with **inter-sectoriality** and **participation**. Our analysis of the urban transformations will be a precious guide for good governance in cities.

The elaboration and publication of research methods issued from a dialogue between the research centres involved will generate interdisciplinary and theoretical work in line with the **Millennium Development Goals** (MDG's) as defined by United Nations and will serve as a political framework for development actors.

PRACTICES

In order to take into account geographic, socio-political, economic, and environmental diversity, we will carry out **ten case studies** which, by their specificities and their complementarities, will constitute “**models**”, symbolizing the diversity of policies and actions undertaken on security (security/safety) around the world. We will study the perceptions that inhabitants have of security and safety projects, and the links they establish between well-being and “security”.

The research method will provide a framework for the case studies and will be distributed to the consultants in charge of the field research and to the local authorities involved, to improve the **research's** impact on actual **action**.

TRAINING

The training of **local authorities** on the stakes of security policies and on the conditions for the creation of “urban well-being” will be provided by the Decentralized Cooperation Program of the United Nations Institute for Training and Research (UNITAR). Training workshops targeting local authorities will increase their understanding of human security issues and their knowledge through self-assessment and knowledge sharing tools, transmitted by UNITAR.

UN-HABITAT will participate in the project and contribute directly to the activities of the “Safer Cities” program which aims to increase human security. The results of this research will be integrated into UN-HABITAT's cooperation activities and will be used in its “Toolkits” for city authorities to provide answers to the problems of insecurity through a preventive approach and good governance, as opposed to approaches limited to repressive action.

RESEARCH PROBLEM, RESEARCH QUESTIONS AND METHODOLOGY

To understand how human security is built in urban environments requires identifying of the actors concerned and involved, the values conveyed to answer specific threats – and which ones –, and mobilizing the appropriate resources.

Urban policies value more and more human security problematic and security politics are more and more involved in urban policies. We will question the management of urban threats to understand how public policies, private strategies and communitarian actions create a governance system of the human security action. We will then analyse the effect these human security actions have on urban space transformations.

RESEARCH PROBLEM

Two lines of reflexion define the axes of our research problem:

1. What is the genesis of the different components of the governance system in the field of security? How are the different actors of the security connected?

We will be particularly interested in the definition of the problems to solve and in the ends pursued, in the types of interventions planned, in the targets, in the instruments implemented and in the concrete modalities for their application.

2. What is the impact of such governance on urban transformation?

The risk of fragmentation is important, and we want to understand how this is the consequence of the lack of harmonization between different interventions on the security issue.

On the basis of ten case studies chosen for their relevance toward a particular aspect of the problem, we will seek to understand if there is a globalization of policies and actions. We will more specifically establish whether there is only one model of policies and actions of security in cities, or if different contexts benefit from different approaches, which respond to the specificity of each city.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

Drawing from this research problem, we propose two axes for multiple questioning to elaborate upon: (1) the elaboration of public, private and community-based actions to meet security requirements, and (2) the territorial impact of security policies.

Question 1: Security is a privileged concept increasingly being used to justify public policies in the same field of security or even in the fields of urban planning, education, health... Indeed, when elaborating policy priorities, different public actors understand in very different ways the stakes of urban transformation.

Question 2: Because security is being 'merchandized', inclusive public strategies are increasingly losing ground to exclusive private strategies that separate the rich from the poor geographically. However, when public security policies are based on prevention, they are building social cohesion by using community-level action as their privileged instrument of intervention.

METHODOLOGY

The methodology will be characterised by constant exchange between the representatives of the different "professions of the urban space" and the multiple actors living and operating in cities. We propose a research project in three phases:

1. Reports and analyses: We will develop the tools which will enable us to register and qualify, according to international standards, the types of interventions and actors concerned by the human security issue.

2. Micro-characterization of security: we will realise a monograph of the trajectory of each locality studied as far as human security policies and urbanisation are concerned since thirty years. We will have to identify the human security problems experienced, the solutions implemented and the results observed. We will build an **assessment scale** for the identified security initiatives. In each city, two areas judged relevant will be selected for the analysis. The micro-characterization of the studied contexts includes four essential analysis angles: **territory, security, institutional configuration and participation**. The research will therefore require using different ethnographic methods for **field research**.

3. General synthesis: we will present our results during a round-table of experts who will assess our analyses and verify its conclusions. Then, a published report will disseminate the results of the research and take advantage of the **World Urban Forum IV** to organize a seminar with social, political, economic, public and private actors from the ten cities selected. This event will close our project by diffusing the results to the public sphere and by ensuring the building and the development of **city to city cooperation**.

SECURITY AND SAFETY VERSUS HUMAN SECURITY

Birth and Development of the Concept of Human Security

The development of the concept of Human Security and the use of this terminology are relatively recent trends in the field of human and social sciences. Human Security “rather comes from a definition of the insecurity as the whole of the political, economic, social, environmental, and cultural threats that confront individuals in their daily lives” (Rioux, 2001). The concept of Human Security recentres reflections on questions of security to the individual and the community; breaking away from its classical roots in national security which focused primarily on the border protection. Literature on this topic is abundant, as revealed by the Harvard University Program of Humanitarian Policies and Conflict Research, or by the researches on Human Security lead by the Swiss Peace foundation.

Some theorists (Badie, Smouts, 1992, Laroche, 2000) talk about a changing era and about new contemporary geopolitics marked by the fall of the Berlin wall and with it, the end of the cold war and the opening of frontiers that symbolize the process known today as globalisation. Three factors in particular contributed to this redefinition. Firstly, conflicts are less and less between the states, but occur more and more inside the states themselves. Secondly, the classical distinction between national security and international security has lost its relevance. Increasing interdependence blur the lines between the internal and the external, accrediting the idea that these two dimensions of security are inseparable: It is not possible to have international security when civil peace is uncertain; in the same way, internal stability is not possible without a minimal level of peace between states. Finally, because of globalisation and decreasing bipolarity, the military dimension is not longer the exclusive element comprising security policies. Peace today depends more on development, on securing resources, on environment preservation, and on human rights protection - the violation of which creates not only injustices and tensions, but also international instability. If the normal exercise of the power for every state was represented by violence, strictly regulating employment for individuals and groups and globalization has enabled us to contest this monopoly. “Statism disintegrated as contacts with new information technologies were used instead of managing and controlling it; and these technologies in turn lead to a strong dynamic of systems constituting networks and decentralisation, and in the same time, question the logic of centralization of orders coming from the top down, and from the bureaucratic supervision. Our societies are not disciplined jails, but chaotic jungles” (Castells, 1999).

The will of non-governmental or international organisations to protect individuals against violence is not recent, as evidenced in particular in the Geneva Convention (1945), in the United Nations Charter (1948), and in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1949). Development which was formerly perceived as a linear process of state growth, from a lower statute to an upper statute, is now perceived as a duty of developed countries to support developing countries, and the interference of countries in the internal

affairs of another country is justified by international humanitarian rights and of assistance to persons in danger.

The first signs of action emerging from this concept of Human Security date back to 1991, when the United Nations Security Council declared that a threat against peace is an attack to the security of civilians on the part of the Iraqi government, and foresaw the possible use of force (CS/Res. 688/05.04.1991). This first stand of its kind of the United Nations was soon followed by the creation of the United Nations peace-keeping troops who can now provide direct help to civil populations where Human Security is threatened (Somalie, Haiti...).

Finally, it is the report of the United Nations Development Program (UNDP), *The New Dimensions of Human Security*, published in 1994, that really give birth, content, and international recognition to the concept of Human Security. The main messages contained in this report are as follows:

- The evolution of the international relations, particularly the end of the cold war, requires that the question of security be considered, and that a bridge from the military security to the human security must be built.
- The efforts dedicated until now to armament must now be consecrated to development.
- For the majority of individuals, insecurity comes from daily preoccupations, rather than the fear of war.
- Daily fears are likely to touch individuals differently in rich and poor countries.
- Fields like environment or health which were not thought of in terms of security in the past, have now become important stakes in security: the nature of the threat change.

Freedom from fear, Freedom from want: a new paradigm of security

The conceptual displacement operated by Human Security

The widening of the definition of security illustrates a theoretical and practical conceptual displacement of a classical security, based on the state protection, to a security focused on the individual. Human Security thus aims firstly to satisfy the primary security needs of individuals. With it, a new form of risk management is proposed, thanks to the realization that security is interdependent and to the systemic answer proposed.

Beyond this new look about what is a threat for human beings and how face it, Human Security leads to a second conceptual reversal: security passes from a position of purpose to a more instrumentalist position of means. It becomes a functional and utilitarian reconstruction of the earth's future, according to three new axes of reflection :

- The first brings with it a new vision of the risk and of its international management, where disasters are no longer presented as fatalities but as politic stakes.
- The second proposes the idea of linking well-being to the Welfare- state and the individual, and explores the possibility of transporting the model to the international level.
- Finally, this new utilitarianism measures the effects of interdependency and connects the different actors involved in security. This new interdependency is fundamental because it connects sectors which had never been linked before such as: development/security, human rights/security.

This fast and substantial development of the concept of Human Security up to an organizational level enables us to incorporate practices into the debate from its initial conception. The states and international organizations who participated in the debates around security matters, non academic but active discussions, were immediately divided on two main definitions of what Human Security should be: on the one hand, the *freedom from fear* or strict conception; on the other hand, the *freedom from want* or wide conception.

Freedom from fear

The partisans of the Human Security concept based on a ***freedom from fear*** recommend fighting (at least ideologically) against the infringing on every type of individual liberty and threats to personal security.

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs Canada plays a propulsive role in the promoting the acceptance of this concept and explains its vision:

“We want to build a world in which people will be sheltered from terrorism, drug trafficking, and the illicit trade of light weapons (...) Human Security is an approach to foreign policy drawn towards individuals, which admits that lasting stability is impossible as long as Human Security is not ensured – and as long as the citizens are not protected from the threats of violent attacks on their rights, their security, and their lives”.

In more concrete terms, the Canadian government explores five main themes : civilian protection (judicial and physical protection of civilians, children and armed civil conflicts, responsibility to protect), conflict prevention (small arms, war economies, social responsibility of firms, personal rights and minorities, consolidation of mediation capacities, policies of conflict prevention), peace operations (elaboration of policies about peace operations), governance and responsabilisation (the CPI and responsabilisation, the reform of the security sector, women, peace and security, the democracy) and finally public security.

The Centre for Human Security, mainly financed by western governments (Canada, United Kingdom, Sweden, Norway and Switzerland) represents this trend today and recently published this vision in a report entitled: *Human Security Report: War and Peace in the 21st Century*.

Freedom from want

The United Nations Development Program (UNDP) was the first one to use the wide conception of what is Human Security and to defend the principle of freedom from want. Amartya Sen, giving birth in 1990 to the human development index (the first report on human development) enabled us to think again about poverty in terms of well being and liberties through the notions of “capabilities” and of “functioning” and the measures of longevity, education level and standard of living. Poverty is now thought of differently than simply in monetary terms. Human Security with a ***freedom from want*** means, notably encouraged by the Japanese government, to see the individual free oneself from elementary needs measured by the human development index: « *Human security covers all the menaces that threaten human survival, daily life, and dignity (...) and strengthens the efforts to confront these threats* ». A notable overhang but very influenced by the liberal trend.

The Commission on Human Security which was established thanks to the initiative of the Japanese government and with the support of the Swedish government, the World Bank, UNDP and the Office of the High Commissioner for Refugees, resulted from this trend, and worked on the writing and the publication of the report Human Security Now, whose vision today is sheltered under the auspice of the Unit for Human Security within the Office of the United Nations for the Coordination of the Humanitarian Affairs. The unit manages a budget financed by Japan which promotes, through concrete projects, the applied vision of Human Security.

Adversaries of this acceptance wish “to widen the concept of security to give it additional analytical value: the more one considers that they are a threat, more difficult it is to study the relations between them”

In 2006, it is important to note the international significance much more than national which these conceptions can have when they emanate from the ministries for the Foreign Affairs of Canada or Japan. They refer, both, to the principles of humanitarian intervention and respect of the human rights and can in a perverse way being instrumentalized to interfere into the internal businesses of a country, under pretext of preventive war or having of humanitarian intervention. In addition, there are many criticisms of the humanitarian actions stating that they are of development or emergency who see there a very singular manner to impose the liberal vision and neo-imperialism of the Western States on the countries known as of the South.

Finally the Secretary General of the United Nations, Kofi Annan, tries to reconcile the two approaches while favoring the second, however, when he declares: « *Human Security in its broadest sense embraces far more than the absence of violent conflict. It encompasses human rights, good governance, access to education and health care, and ensuring that each individual has the opportunities and choices to fulfil his or her potential (...) Freedom from want, freedom from fear, and the freedom of future generations to inherit a healthy natural environment – these are the interrelated building blocks of human – and therefore national security* ».

OUR APPROACH

Security and safety in urban environments: well being and preventing the risks

« Human Security always meant two essential things: to release themselves from the fear and to guard themselves against the needs » (UNDP, 1994)

When definitions of Human Security are multiplied, they coincide on the need for establishing security for all. What type of security are we referring to? There are two concepts of security and safety which are known as *freedom from fear* and *freedom from want*. We can explore these concepts simultaneously and observe the relationships which bind them. How is security intrinsically related to safety? And, can safety be established without security? Is it possible to carry out a dissociation of these two terms in practice? If so, which are the impacts on urban societies? Human Security creates sedentary corridors which upset risk management. At the city level, this implies working with a versatility which did not exist before.

Today, half of the inhabitants of the planet, or 6 billion men and women, live in cities. Unfortunately, the resolution adopted by the General meeting of the United Nations on August 16, 2001, on cities and other human settlements, is always present: “We note, with serious concern, that one in every four urban dweller in the world lives below the poverty line. Many cities confronted with rapid expansion display ecological problems and slow economic development. For them it was not possible to meet the challenges of sufficient employment, the supply of adequate and affordable housing, and the fundamental needs of the citizens” (A/RES/S-25/2).

Safety remains an abstract concept which can only be measured and analyzed after the consideration of its antonym, insecurity. However, insecurity is also a subjective concept which stems from the individual's conception of a situation. City space is particularly susceptible to ambiguity, heterogeneity and complexity when it comes to analyses regarding feelings of insecurity: “*Urbanization is a global but heterogeneous process; its intensity and effects vary among regions and social classes. Consequently, often just on the basis of observations made through windows onto the street below, one sees Armageddon and another a brave new world*” (Pedrazzini, Boistreau, 2006).

Feelings of insecurity are perceived in various ways, according to time, space, and the social layers involved: for certain populations, feelings of insecurity are related to nutrition or sanitation, while for others it translates into a threat of terrorism, stray bullets or inevitable blows. Insecurity is generated by fear and insecurity itself generates fear. This occurs when actors are stigmatized and the adoption of

anomalous behaviour is encouraged. Even if certain acts of violence depend on the spontaneous emotions of individuals, each person tries to remain rational and violence often results from a calculation between costs and benefits. The UNDP has already underlined it in its world report on human development in 1994, “a failure, total or partial, regarding human development generates deprivations, with their range of poverty, hunger, disease, persistent inequalities between ethnic communities, and in access to power and the economic life. As many factors likely to degenerate into violence” (UNDP, 1994).

In other words, the lack of security and safety provoke within the individual feelings of insecurity which correspond to inadequate or insufficient public, private and community actions. If we add to this combination the insecurity felt by those who are most vulnerable, as well as the frequent stigmatization that they undergo and who those who indicate them as potentially dangerous, then this insecurity can be easily translated into acts of violence or delinquency.

The border between State violence and violence in the state is sometimes fuzzy, the case is similar when it is a question of violence in cities and violence of cities: the accelerated process of urbanization doesn't always enable the organization and the adequate management of cities. It also includes catastrophes and disasters which, when they occur in densely populated areas, generate more victims.

The categories that the UNDP built to analyze the spectrum of Human Security (economic security, nutrition, sanitation and the personal, communal and political environment) permit, according to us, a fair diagnosis of the insecurity experienced at the city level and we choose not to analyze them separately, but rather to understand the established links between them.

It is thus essential to measure the risk faced by individuals that are conflicted in relation to the environment, sanitation, etc and to respond to their needs in an adequate way: which can be achieved when a diagnosis of insecurity is accurate and relevant. To study the question of Human Security, we must look at it interdisciplinarily by including physicists, doctors, urban planners, historians, etc. And, at the local level, administrations will understand insecurity only when they work **together** and in an **inter-sector** way to construct a better city and a better life within society.