Human Security and Social Development

John F. Jones

Follow this and additional works at: https://digitalcommons.du.edu/djilp

Recommended Citation

This Article is brought to you for free and open access by Digital Commons @ DU. It has been accepted for inclusion in Denver Journal of International Law & Policy by an authorized editor of Digital Commons @ DU. For more information, please contact jennifer.cox@du.edu,dig-commons@du.edu.
Global issues no less than community concerns influence social development, though the impact is not always apparent to those most closely involved. One of the harshest realities facing communities in the twenty-first century is the impact of a global economy as this is played out locally, whether on an American Indian reservation in Oregon or in a forced settlement in Ethiopia. Globalization means change, most dramatically demonstrated in those countries moving from central planning to a free market, like the present and former socialist countries in Asia, Central Europe, and Africa. Controversy surrounds approaches to economic reform. The field is roughly divided between those who endorse the "big bang" of immediate and drastic change, and those who prefer gradual development.¹

The big bang or accelerated approach, heavily favored by the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank, involves restructuring the economy in both its macro- and micro-economic policies, including privatization, decentralization, and deregulation, along with support for entrepreneurship and free market competition, all achieved as quickly as possible.² As envisaged by Richard Jackman, author of Economic Policy and Employment in the Transition Economies of Central and Eastern Europe: What Have We Learned?, the restructuring process proceeds through three stages: first, a shake-out of the old economy, eliminating waste and unprofitable operations; second, growth of private enterprises, recruiting the excess labor made redundant by reform; and third, establishment of equilibrium and competition in the new system, where pressure comes from the market rather than central planning mandates.³ The approach to

¹ Research Professor, Conflict Resolution Institute, University of Denver.


³ Richard Jackman, “Economic Policy and Employment in the Transition Economies of Central and Eastern Europe: What Have We Learned?,” 133 INT’L LAB. REV. 327, 327-45 (1994). Both approaches to reform have much the same final goals, but the gradualists would proceed at a more measured pace than the big bang advocates. The economy would be restructured sector by sector, allowing some parts to shift to a market orientation while retaining central planning for the rest as a
ECONOMIC TRANSITION: THE COMMUNITY IMPACT

The debate on the best approach to economic transition might seem purely academic and of little interest to social development were it not that the global economy affects local communities everywhere, and in disturbing ways. The persistence of poverty and the erosion of social services in transitional economies are cause for concern. There is general consensus among development scholars that in economic and political transition, social safety nets suffer, but how precisely countries are impacted depends on a number of factors. The contrast was sharp between, on the one hand, the implosion of the former Soviet Union, with its broad economic and political revolution in the late 1980s and, on the other, China's narrower economic reform introduced gradually a full decade earlier. Eastern Europe, torn apart politically after the dissolution of the Soviet Union and prodded towards economic stability by the IMF, most faithfully adopted the IMF/World Bank recommendations to speed transition until, in the case of the Russian Federation, the economy worsened to the point of near collapse and the IMF softened its demands. Among the Asian socialist countries, the biggest player, China, largely ignored any calls from within its borders and from the outside world for instant capitalism or democracy, preferring to implement a type of reform sequencing. African countries were variously affected by gradualist and big bang policies, caught between the World Bank's insistence on structural adjustment and the reality of national political and social restraints.

The immediate consequences of radical economic reform are not really disputed. Any disagreement centers on the extent to which the safety nets are shredded, the type of development causing the most or least harm, and the prospects for rebuilding a welfare system in some new form. Declaring that "development itself interferes with human and social development," Paul Streeten, author of The Social Dimensions of Development, asserts that "the poor shoulder the heaviest burden." At present, the results of this world-wide movement to a market system are mixed. In some places, economic and political freedoms have

7. Id.
8. Though the debate on national policy is most commonly stated in economic terms, the decisions are to a large measure political. Adrian Leftwich, Bringing Politics Back In: Towards a Model of the Developmental State, 31 J. DEV. STUD. 400, 401 (1995).
gone hand-in-hand, but benefits have been widely scattered often resulting in greater injustice than existed before the transition.¹¹

Major groups have been consistent losers in the shuffling of opportunities, rewards, and costs. Women tend to be losers in transitional economies.¹² For instance, after Mongolia threw aside the policies of the Soviet Union that it had previously favored, women’s unemployment jumped to fifty-four percent of the country’s unemployed population.¹³ As social welfare safety nets are dismantled, others at risk include children, the elderly, the disabled, and the poor.¹⁴ Transition to a market economy, while desirable or even necessary in view of global competition, has its dangers for many countries. The breakup of old systems before new institutions are put in place is likely to disrupt production and cause massive uncertainty about the future direction of the economy.¹⁵ Policy makers all too often pay little attention to the sequencing of reforms when it comes to privatization, liberalization, and institution building.

The impact economic reform will have on local communities must be considered not in a vacuum, but rather in a global context. For communities caught in national crises, outside pressures can be enormous. A case study is never just a study of a community in isolation, cut off from the region, from the country, from the world. Just as national boundaries are porous, so too are town walls and village ditches. Ordeals need not be sudden or spectacular to impact localities. Environmental quality no less than conflict can curtail basic necessities like food, and affect cultural norms as well as socio-political structures in a community.¹⁶ Assessment of local social development has to take into account national and regional links, and threats to a community’s security should be considered in whatever form they come.

HUMAN SECURITY: A SHIFT OF EMPHASIS

To some extent the urgency of human security stems from fear of political instability, border conflict and social chaos following the disappearance of


paradoxically stable cold war boundaries and (often forced) alliances. There are three major developments which have played a part in reshaping the notions of security and conflict resolution. These are:

The shift in analysis from a narrow focus on military security in the defense of national sovereignty to consideration of internal sources of instability such as communal strife, ethnic unrest, poverty, unemployment, crime, and terrorism.

Recognition of the inevitable link between the welfare of citizens and the security of the state. Non-military barriers to stability can be economic, social, environmental or civil. Drug smuggling, illegal immigration, corruption, human rights violations, disease, and poverty can threaten a government no less than armed invasion from outside.

Increasing awareness that national and sub-national problems are amenable to, and sometimes require, international assistance or even intervention. Suddenly, regional humanitarian issues become geopolitical. Witness Bosnia, Kosovo, Rwanda, Iraq, and Liberia.

Mass population displacement, taking the form of internal migrations and/or cross-border refugee movements, is a common consequence of in-country devastation. While human security has a far wider scope than concern for refugees, there is little doubt that the multiple problems caused by the forced displacement of populations and the widespread phenomenon of asylum seekers in the 1990s has had the effect of forcing governments, international aid organizations, and U.N. agencies to examine their roles in humanitarian action, emergency relief, and conflict resolution. State security has shifted from a focus on military defense from external threats to internal sources of instability, arising from economic, social and political considerations.

HUMAN RIGHTS AND HUMAN SECURITY

The security of states brings the question of human rights to the center of the debate. Human rights are commonly divided into rights from (protection) and rights to (provision). The first set of rights is intended to guarantee protection by the state or, where the need arises as it too often does, protection from the state. This first set of rights involves civil liberties such as freedom of speech or freedom

---

22. Id.
of movement. The second group represents rights to services or resources, which the government must itself provide or make available through civil society (e.g. health care, employment, and education). The need for proscription against things that should be done to no one (rights from) is harshly demonstrated in victims of torture, persecution, and genocide, while mass poverty and disease illustrate the denial of basic human needs (rights to).

In both poor and rich nations, human life is increasingly threatened by sudden, unpredictable violence. These threats take several forms such as physical torture, war, terrorism, ethnic tension, crime and street violence, rape and domestic violence, as well as threats directed at women and children based on their vulnerability and dependence. When promoting or evaluating social development it is necessary to recognize the two components of human security, namely, civil rights and social welfare. The development practitioner may, depending on circumstances, concentrate on one or the other, but the total matrix must always be kept in mind. Civil rights guarantee protection, while social welfare encompasses the provision of basic needs. Each is essential, and together they are the foundation of human security.

PROTECTION

Human rights invoke a rule of law dating back to ancient religious and moral codes in Asia and Africa, and later formalized in increasingly legal language in Europe with the Magna Carta, the Treaty of Westphalia, the Napoleonic Code, and later various legislation. In the post-World War II era, the 1948 Universal Declaration of Human Rights listed basic rights as the right to life, liberty and security of person, and the right to seek and enjoy asylum. The 1951 Geneva Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees (1951 Convention) defined a refugee as a person outside his or her country of origin who has a well-founded fear of persecution because of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group or political opinion, and one who is unable or unwilling to avail him or herself of the protection of that country, or to return there for fear of

27. Id.
An important right contained in the 1951 Convention was the right to be protected against forcible return (refoulement) to the territory from which the refugee had fled. Subsequent covenants, such as the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (1966), the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (1966), and the UN Convention Against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment (1984), reinforced or extended these rights.

In addition to international covenants, regional treaties broadened the language of the 1951 Convention's definition of a refugee. The Organization of African Unity (OAU) Convention Governing the Specific Aspects of Refugee Problems in Africa specifically inserted a political element into the definition when it included any persons compelled to leave their country owing to external aggression, occupation, foreign domination, or events seriously disturbing public order in either part or the whole of their country of origin or nationality. The Cartagena Declaration on Refugees of 1984, which was approved by ten countries, recommended having the definition of refugee cover those fleeing a country because of generalized violence, internal conflicts, or massive violations of human rights. Racism, certainly found in ethnically homogeneous and industrialized countries, is a threat to human security recognized, for instance, in the 1997 Treaty of Amsterdam which empowered the European Union to act against discrimination based on racial or ethnic origin, religion, or belief. National legislation on all continents, too numerous to cite, embodies selectively and sometimes restrictively the articles of international treaties, agreements, and covenants.

What stands in contrast to most social development literature and earlier peace studies is the explicit recognition enforcement gets in the human security agenda. Rights, the thinking goes, are meaningless unless they can be enforced, and the experience of recent decades exemplifies this. While the need for

31. Id., at art. 33 ("No Contracting State shall expel or return ('refouler') a refugee in any manner whatsoever to the frontiers of territories where his life or freedom would be threatened on account of his race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group or political opinion.")
protection applies first and foremost to vulnerable client populations, it also applies to the social workers and others who serve them. The civilian workers in humanitarian agencies put themselves at risk in civil war-torn regions. Nongovernmental organizations’ (NGO) staff and U.N. personnel require protection, sometimes by force of arms. Some 375 U.N. civilian workers have been killed in the line of duty in countries shaken by violence – Rwanda, East Timor, Somalia, Kosovo, and Iraq. The first generally recognized line of defense is the legitimate government in countries where the rights of individuals, groups, or even large populations are threatened. The various conventions and treaties referred to above assume that it is the principal responsibility of states to protect their citizens. But where this breaks down, as it did at one time or another in Burundi, Liberia, Rwanda, Sierra Leone, and Somalia, then international protection is invoked to guard against the forced displacement of minorities. While there is an uneasy acceptance of the need for international aid and the logic of war, the very existence of international war crimes tribunals and U.N. peace-keeping forces points to the recognition of super-national legality and enforcement measures. The OAU made itself clear on the need for intervention and in fact blamed the United Nations itself, along with the United States and European nations, for passivity in the face of Rwanda’s tragedy.

Few are comfortable with tying humanitarian assistance to police or military surveillance and control. The preference is to see the need for large-scale law enforcement, especially at the international level, as a necessary evil, a temporary obligation required only in the most drastic situations. There is an understandable aversion to linking conflict resolution to force of arms in Rwanda or other war-torn countries. That has made many NGOs disassociate themselves from force of any kind in the delivery of services or emergency aid. This is particularly true with sectarian and religious agencies, but the hesitation is apparent.

37. Guzzetta, supra note 21.
42. Guzzetta & Jones, supra note 4.
43. See Adam Hussein Adam, Displacement, Minorities, and Human Security, 24 REGIONAL DEV. DIALOGUE 120, [pg#] (2003).
45. See SUSTAINABILITY IN GRASS-ROOTS INITIATIVES: FOCUS ON COMMUNITY BASED DISASTER MANAGEMENT (Rajib Shaw & Kenji Okazaki eds.,2003)
on all fronts. It is probably fair to say that the majority of social development personnel and conflict resolution advocates tend to distance themselves from violence, even in the protection of human rights.

The majority's withdrawal from violence leaves a broad responsibility for human security to those whose main concern is people's immediate need for food and shelter, or to those involved with a wider service social agenda that includes health and education. A second feature of this social orientation, distinct from law enforcement, is widening the human security perspective to encompass not only refugees and displaced populations but the entire sweep of people who suffer severe deprivation of any kind. This is closer to a more traditional concern with sustainable development, and it echoes the emphasis of, for instance, the U.N. Development Programme (UNDP). Protection, to be successful, requires not only enforcement, but a broadening of scope to encompass all severe deprivation.

**PROVISION**

Provision, in the context of human security, means the alleviation of disease, hunger, unemployment, crime, and environmental hazards through programs and projects that seek to remove these dangers. The intensity of the threats may differ from one country to another but, being almost universal, the risks are not confined to particular groups or ethnic populations, though the need may be more urgent in some cases. Scarcities of food, shelter, and healthcare in one place affect the common good everywhere else. The security of nation states begins with the security of the people who form the state, and individual perceptions of insecurity are more often linked to worries about daily life than to the dread of world events. For people in developing countries and for the poor everywhere, job security and health and safety are of prime importance. The framework of security is ultimately a social one.

Because governments have almost always seen security from the top down, and have concentrated on national, regional, and international security, they have principally kept their eye on armed invasion from outside or ideological subversion threatening the nation from within. Conflict between states has been the main

---

46. KURT MILLS, supra note 34, at 126-165.
48. See infra. note 60.
53. See DAVID STOESZ, CHARLES GUZZETTA, & MARK LUSK, INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT
issue that has defined the notion of security at the political level.\textsuperscript{54} The result has been a reliance on arms to protect territory, often with scant attention to the condition of people living in that very same territory.\textsuperscript{55} In reality, human security should be seen principally as a bottom-up issue since what really matters is the well being of people. Human insecurity is not some inevitable occurrence, but rather a direct result of existing power at several tiers, ranging from the global through the regional, the state, and finally down to the local level.\textsuperscript{56}

Security is gradually becoming understood better and more broadly than in the past, meaning that the concept now extends beyond the security of states to the safety of groups and individuals within a society who are tied into international systems and who share a global environment. Although few definitions of security stress the conditions necessary for peace, these in fact include sustainable development, economic and social equity, in addition to the protection of human rights already discussed.\textsuperscript{57} Security, therefore, affects and is affected by all aspects of human life, encompassing the use of natural resources, population dynamics, as well as ethnic and gender identities.

True human security takes human beings and their communities, rather than states, as the measure of safety.\textsuperscript{58} While the security of states is necessary to ensure individual well being, it is not sufficient. Threats from military and non-military sources such as intrastate wars, small arms proliferation, human rights violations, crime, and drugs are equally dangerous to human welfare. Poverty is paramount in undermining social development. At the core, the safety and well being of individuals are the essential ingredients of global peace and human security.\textsuperscript{59} The UNDP Human Development Report for 1994 put it this way:

People in rich nations seek security from the threat of crime and drug wars in their streets, the spread of deadly diseases like HIV/AIDS, soil degradation, rising levels of pollution, the fear of losing their jobs and many other anxieties that emerge as the social fabric disintegrates. People in poor nations demand liberation from the continuing threat of hunger, disease and poverty while also facing the same problems that threaten industrial countries.\textsuperscript{60}

The UNDP was among the first to lay out the dimensions of human security,
adopting a seven-fold categorization where the prerequisites for human security were listed as economic security, food security, health security, environmental security, personal security, community security, and political security. Economic security requires an assured basic income usually from productive and remunerative work or, for people at risk, from a publicly financed safety net. Real wages in many parts of the world have declined. When the UNDP laid the groundwork for measuring human security in 1994, it estimated that in Latin America, wages had fallen by twenty percent, and in African countries, the value of the minimum wage had dropped by twenty percent in Togo, forty percent in Kenya and eighty percent in Sierra Leone.

Food insecurity is a result of both physical and economic non-availability of provisions. Remedying the situation requires not just enough food to go around, but that people have ready access to the basic food to which they are entitled, either by growing it themselves or by taking advantage of a public food distribution system.

Health insecurity is a result of inadequate or non-existent health services. In developing countries the major causes of death are infectious and parasitic diseases, which kill millions of people annually. The latest plague in a series of preventable diseases is acquired immunodeficiency syndrome (AIDS), with Africa having the highest population affected by the disease. A 1998 joint report by U.N. Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS) and World Health Organization (WHO) pointed out that Africa suffered 5,500 deaths per day from HIV/AIDS and no less than twelve million Africans had so far died of AIDS-related diseases. Among the most vulnerable are the young, those who should guarantee the future of the continent. Adolescents and the young in general are a high at-risk group in this regard. Sub-Saharan Africa has more than 10 percent of the global population, but accounts for seventy percent of all people living with HIV – some twenty-five million. In 2003 alone, an estimated three million people became newly infected, while 2.2 million people died of AIDS – seventy-six percent of

---

64. Id. at 26.
66. United Nations Development Programme, supra note 60, at 27.
69. Id. at 10.
global deaths. In 2001, around 800,000 infants contracted HIV, ninety percent of them through mother-to-child transmission, according to U.N. Children’s Fund (UNICEF) statistics. Death from disease is clearly linked also to poor nutrition as well as to an unsafe and polluted environment where there is a lack of safe drinking water, poor sanitation, and chemical pollution.

The environmental threats facing countries are a combination of the degradation of both local ecosystems and the global system. In developing countries, one of the greatest environmental threats is that of water scarcity. Water scarcity is increasingly a factor in ethnic strife and political tension. Air pollution too, in industrial and developing countries alike, is a major environmental threat.

Community insecurity is affected by inter-group conflict and threats to family integration. Most people derive security from their membership in a unit such as a family, a community, an organization, a racial or ethnic group, all of which offer a cultural identity and group cohesiveness. Some of these traditional group and community supports are breaking down under the steady process of modernization.

REDEFINING SECURITY

Over the past few years, the United Nations has been developing and refining the notion of human security. Human security must include considerations of human development, which refers not simply to the income aspects of poverty but to poverty as a denial of choices and opportunities for living a tolerable life. One-quarter of the global population lives in severe poverty, with some countries suffering much more than others. The majority of poor people are still located in

70. JOINT UNITED NATIONS PROGRAMME ON HIV/AIDS, AIDS EPIDEMIC IN SUB-SAHARAN AFRICA: FACT SHEET (UNAIDS 2004).
71. UNITED NATIONS CHILDREN’S FUND, MOTHER-TO-CHILD TRANSMISSION OF HIV: FACT SHEET (2002).
72. UNITED NATIONS DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME, supra note 60, at 27.
73. ORGANISATION FOR ECONOMIC CO-OPERATION AND DEVELOPMENT, SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT STRATEGIES: A RESOURCE BOOK 10 (2002).
the developing or global South countries, though the countries of Central and Eastern Europe also experienced severe deterioration in the early and mid-1980s. Human development and the perpetuation of poverty are heavily impacted by the modern trend toward globalization. Thus, the process of globalization has a direct impact on human security.

Despite overall economic growth worldwide, it can be argued that "the great unanswered question is whether the winds of globalization will be viewed as a great opportunity or a great threat, as a "fresh breeze or a violent hurricane." Globalization in general has resulted in polarization between rich and poor throughout the world. Despite the enormous wealth of nations, 2.5-3 billion people are now living on less than two dollars per day. While human security for some is being enhanced, for many it is being eroded. Two-thirds of the global population appear to have gained little or nothing to date from the economic growth that occurred as a result of globalization. In the 1990s, income inequalities increased very sharply as shown in the UNDP human development report for 1997 which indicated that the world's poorest people, estimated at twenty percent of the global population, received 1.1 percent of global income, compared with 1.4 percent in 1991, and 2.3 percent in 1960.

Globalization and capitalism have had detrimental effects on women's economic and human security throughout most developing countries. Women continue to be disadvantaged relative to men by what can only be described as global discrimination in the division of labor. Though women disproportionately perform unremunerated subsistence or household tasks and low-paid work, which are effectively subsidizing global capitalism, their security and well being are being threatened by the harsh economic system.

There are considerable links and overlaps among the various threats to human security, and a weakness in one category inevitably affects all the other forms of human security. Famines, ethnic conflicts, social disintegration, terrorism, pollution, and drug trafficking can no longer be confined within national borders and no nation can isolate its life from the rest of humanity.

82. UNITED NATIONS DEV. PROGRAMME, HUMAN DEVELOPMENT REPORT 1997 9-10 (1997).
85. UNITED NATIONS DEV. PROGRAMME, supra note 82, at 9.
86. Lawrence Haddad et al., The Gender Dimensions of Economic Adjustment Policies: Potential Interactions and Evidence to Date, 23 WORLD DEVELOPMENT 881, 893 (1995).