



Human Insecurity: Understanding International Migration from a Human Security Perspective

Francesca Vietti
Independent Researcher

Todd Scribner
United States Conference of Catholic Bishops

Executive Summary

This article examines contemporary, mass migration from the perspective of human security. It tracks the development of the human security model of international relations, and compares it to the well-established state security model that has served as the dominant paradigm for international relations since the seventeenth century. The article argues that human security offers a more effective approach to many of the underlying problems and threats associated with mass migration, than does the traditional state-security model. It challenges national and international authorities to address threats to human security, in order to minimize forced migration and to create the conditions for migration by choice, not necessity.

Introduction

The Peace of Westphalia, which brought the Thirty Years War to an end in 1648, initiated a series of significant changes in international affairs. Perhaps most prominent was that it delegitimized the “transnational role of the Catholic Church and validated the idea that international relations should be driven by balance of power considerations rather than the ideals of Christendom” (Krasner 2001, 20-29). In doing so, it helped to lay the groundwork for the emergence of the modern nation state. The Westphalian model emphasizes the primacy of state sovereignty, the principle of non-interference by states in the domestic affairs of other states, and a territorial conceptualization of security.

Under this model, nation-states are the relevant political actors and maintain their power and stability according to a philosophy of *si vis pacem para bellum* (If you want peace, prepare for war). The international system, in turn, consists of equal and sovereign states, fighting against each other in a zero-sum game to achieve their aims (Commission on Global Governance 1995, 78). Conflicts result from states pursuing their interests: “Among states, the state of nature is a state of war, this is meant not in the sense that war constantly occurs but in the sense that, with each state deciding for itself whether or not to use force, war may at any time break out” (Waltz 1979, 102). As a consequence, the goal of securing state security is preeminent with each nation seeking to preserve its integrity and to defend

itself against the intrusion of other individuals or state powers intent on asserting their will.

Although the state security model remains the dominant paradigm in international affairs, political and military crises of the twentieth century have led scholars and politicians to search for alternative paradigms. Criticism of the Westphalian model centers on the inability of individual nation states to respond on their own to environmental disaster, famine, the forced relocation of peoples, refugee flows, the spread of communicable diseases, and other security threats (Owen 2004, 374). The Westphalian model was created to provide protection to populations that lived and worked within established boundaries. Global or supra-regional threats require a response that extends beyond discrete nations. In addition, the Westphalian model fails in situations in which the sovereign persecutes its own people.

In contrast to the Westphalian paradigm, the human security model adheres to a philosophy of *si vis pacem para pacem* (if you want peace, prepare for peace), and consequently affirms that all measures should be taken at the national, regional, and international levels to ensure that humans are “born free and equal in dignity and life” and can lead their own lives accordingly (United Nations General Assembly 1948). Such an approach would not necessarily seek to displace the Westphalian model but would instead put into place systems that “complement state security, enhance human rights and strengthen human development.” A human security approach seeks to protect people against a broad range of threats and to empower them to act on their own behalf” (Commission on Human Security 2003, 2).

The rest of this essay will explore the emergence of the human security model and will argue that it provides a more effective approach to many of the underlying problems that drive mass migration than does the traditional state-security model.

The United Nations Charter, *The Universal Declaration of Human Rights*, and the Emergence of the Human Security Model

The founding of the United Nations (UN) in the years immediately following World War II signified the initial step in a long process that has led to the emergence of the human security model. The UN’s founding document sets forth one of the institution’s primary objectives, “to save succeeding generations from the scourge of war, to reaffirm faith in fundamental human rights and to maintain international peace and security” (Charter of the United Nations). The UN was established on the principle of multilateralism and of the sovereign equality of all its members. It created a system of collective security investing the Security Council with the responsibility to protect and maintain international stability. The UN’s revolutionary character lies in its attempt, as highlighted in Chapters VI and VII of the Charter, to prevent the use of force, resolve international disputes by peaceful means, and use military force as a last resort for imminent threats, in conformity with the right of individual or collective self-defense.

While affirming human rights as a guiding principle and emphasizing conflict resolution by means other than an appeal to arms, the UN charter endorsed the classical sovereignty principle of non-intervention (Krasner 2001, 22). Nevertheless, its multidimensional understanding of security is not exclusively state-centric, but takes into account:

the respect for the principle of equal rights and self-determination of peoples, ...higher standards of living, full employment, and conditions of economic and social progress and development, ...solutions of international economic, social, health, and related problems, ...universal respect for, and observance of, human rights and fundamental freedoms for all without distinction as to race, sex, language, or religion. (Charter of the United Nations)

The UN charter acknowledges that an international order based on peace and international security cannot refrain from considering individual well-being, and emphasizes the urgency of promoting security in a multiplicity of ways, including in its economic, social, developmental, and political dimensions. Its multi-layered approach to security highlights the well-being of people as a crucial component in building and restoring an international order based on democracy, peace and security.

Shortly after its founding, the UN General Assembly adopted *The Universal Declaration of Human Rights* which contains principles and norms that have achieved the status of customary law and inspired subsequent treaties and conventions on human rights. The *Declaration* plays a pivotal role in support of a human-centered definition of security, affirming that “everyone is entitled to a social and international order in which the rights and freedoms set forth in this Declaration can be fully realized” (United Nations General Assembly 1948). The Declaration does not use the expression ‘human security,’ but it recognizes that respect for rights is intimately connected to the creation of a just social and international framework. It anticipates a human-centered approach to security based on the interdependence of peoples.

Although the *Universal Declaration on Human Rights* helped to lay the groundwork for the human security paradigm, it was not until nearly a half century later that human security emerged as a conceptually distinct alternative to the state security model. The delay in developing this perspective was due, at least in part, to the tensions between the United States and the Soviet Union following World War II. Political and philosophical differences during the Cold War reinforced the state security paradigm as the two superpowers struggled to gain superiority over each other. By the 1970s the Soviet Union had deployed troops and material support to surrogates in and around Ethiopia, Cuba, Vietnam, the Middle East and elsewhere as a way to solidify its influence and to undermine American power internationally (Brzezinski 1992, 39-40). The United States, in turn, sought to maintain close political and security ties with Western Europe through the establishment of NATO and it provided technical and economic assistance to dozens of additional nations in order to inhibit Soviet expansion. As one US commentator noted shortly after the fall of the Soviet Union, “virtually every dimension and deployment of our (the United States) armed forces, virtually every weapons system developed, diplomatic move taken and foreign dollar expended have been shaped primarily by the need to wage and win the Cold War with communism and to prevent—or to prevail in, if we could not prevent—a hot war with the Soviet Union” (Sorensen 1990, 4).

The focus on national security during the Cold War constrained efforts to provide a more comprehensive understanding of security in international affairs. Nevertheless, by the early eighties there were signs that a re-evaluation was occurring in some circles. Two separate commissions of this period took steps to move beyond the traditional preoccupation with

military security and embraced the idea of human development. The first commission focused on economic development in the global south and the second on the issue of military security. In 1977 the President of the World Bank and former U.S. Secretary of Defense Robert McNamara proposed that an international commission comprised of distinguished individuals from poor and rich nations address the social and economic disparities that existed between developed and developing nations. The result was the Independent Commission on International Development Issues, chaired by the former German Chancellor Willy Brandt (Scully 1982, 12-14). The final Commission report noted that “much of the insecurity in the world” was “connected with the divisions between rich and poor countries – grave injustice and mass starvation causing additional instability,” and it proposed that “if military expenditure can be controlled and some of the savings related to development, the world’s security can be increased, and the mass of mankind currently excluded from a decent life can have a brighter future” (Independent Commission on International Development Issues 1980, 124-5).

In 1982, The Independent Commission on Disarmament and Security Issues, chaired by the Swedish politician Olof Palme raised up the language of “common security.” In a speech to a special session of the UN General Assembly in the summer of 1982, Palme argued against policies that sought strategic advantage via military superiority, and called for an end to the arms race with complete disarmament the final goal and a commitment to joint survival rather than permanent competition (Palme 1982). Building on the importance of international solidarity, the Commission’s final report states that “lasting security ... can only be achieved through co-operation based on the principle of equity, justice, and reciprocity” and “common security requires that people live in dignity and peace, that they have enough to eat and are able to find work and live in a world without poverty and destitution” (Commission on Disarmament and Security Issues 1982).

Taken together, the Commissions initiated a shift from an understanding of security based exclusively on military threats and national security to an open-ended, broader and contextual definition. They recognized that while the developed world was focused on military issues, Third World security was threatened by poverty, deprivation and economic inequality. They understood that the developed world (in particular) must deal more intentionally with these non-military threats to security.

Although these Commissions promoted themes consistent with the idea of “human security,” it was not until the 1994 *Human Development Report: New Dimensions of Human Security* by the United Nations Development Program (UNDP) that this approach became explicit. Building on conceptual developments related to security that occurred in the 1980s, the Report emphasized that social and economic insecurity threatened international stability (Timothy 2004, 19-20). It opened with the statement that:

for too long, nations have sought arms to protect their security. For most people today, a feeling of insecurity arises more from worries about daily life than from the dread of a cataclysmic world event...Most people instinctively understand what security means. It means safety from the constant threats of hunger, disease, crime and repression. It also means protections from sudden and hurtful disruptions in the patterns of our daily life. (UNDP 1994, 3)

The 1994 UNDP report assumes that human security consists of two complementary elements: “freedom from fear” (e.g., threats from war, conflict and state sponsored violence) and “freedom from want” (e.g., preventable diseases, economic hardship, poverty, developmental concerns) (UNDP 1994, 24). While experts and academics have debated the usefulness of defining human security in these terms, freedom from fear and want are interlinked and fundamental to human security. The failure to achieve the conditions that allow persons to live their lives free from fear and want can contribute to forced migration. The report identifies seven categories of threats to human security: economic, food, health, environmental, personal, community and political (UNDP 1994). For example, the report views access to food and clean water, protection against sudden, unpredictable violence, employment opportunities, and basic forms of healthcare as fundamentally inter-connected conditions of human security. Failure to meet these basic needs threatens to exacerbate the conditions that drive unregulated migration. To meet them, in turn, requires a comprehensive notion of development that is economic, political and social in nature.

To appreciate the findings of the 1994 human development report, it is necessary to situate it within the larger series of human development reports that were launched in 1990 under the leadership of the Pakistani economist Mahbub ul Haq. As defined in the 1990 report, the overarching principle that should guide an understanding of development is that “people are the real wealth of a nation” and the goal of development is “to create an enabling environment for people to enjoy long, healthy and creative lives” (UNDP 1990, 9).

According to this understanding, “development” cannot be limited to Gross National Product (GNP). Rather, a much broader set of metrics needs to be considered. Such a vision seeks a paradigm shift that puts people at the center of the development process, that benefits everyone and not a select few, that looks to the economy as a means and not as an end in itself, and that takes seriously the well-being of future generations (UNDP 1994, 4). As a way to reach beyond the narrow economic conception of development, the human development reports initiated the Human Development Index (HDI), which uses a variety of measures to judge a country’s development performance. Successive reports built on the HDI and touched on some of the key elements that affected human development, including globalization, technology, human rights, inequality and human security.

The authors of the 1994 report distinguish human development from human security by noting that the former consists of “widening the range of people’s choices” and “means that people can exercise these choices safely and freely, and that they can be relatively confident that the opportunities they have today are not totally lost tomorrow” (UNDP 1994). The failure to provide security on a human level can disrupt development, while the failure to establish mechanisms for development can exacerbate insecurity and lead to increased deprivation.

The human security concept gained momentum in the new millennium. In September 2000, UN General Secretary Kofi Annan reiterated the challenge to the international community to achieve the twin goals of freedom from fear and want. In response, the Japanese government formed The Commission on Human Security that, while functioning as an independent body, maintained close ties to the UN (Commission on Human Security 2000, iv). Similar to its predecessors, the Commission sought to expand on traditional notions of security and to move from a state-centered focus to include “non-traditional” threats. In its final report

the Commission sought to generate public support for human security, use this concept as a tool for policy formulation and implementation, and propose a program of action to address critical and pervasive threats to security. It posited that:

Human security means protecting fundamental freedoms—freedoms that are the essence of life. It means protecting people from critical (severe) and pervasive (widespread) threats and situations. It means using processes that build on people's strengths and aspirations. It means creating political, social, environmental, economic, military and cultural systems that together give people the building blocks of survival, livelihood and dignity. (Commission on Human Security 2000)

The Commission on Human Security argued that states needed to work together to help create stable conditions in which local communities could thrive, particularly in regions characterized by political instability and economic insecurity.

In short, the UN Development Program and the Commission viewed human security from a human-centered model focused on a comprehensive understanding of development, rather than one focused solely on the economic aspects of a person's or community's life. They encouraged the establishment of rights-respecting, political structures, employment-producing economic institutions, and cultures that did not discriminate according race, religion, gender, or any other arbitrary classification.

As the Commission noted:

human security policies must consider the fight against poverty as a major challenge for the international community. It is imperative to develop global strategies supporting growth and sustainable development while at the same time implementing policies of economic development and social protection at the national level. (Commission on Human Security 2003)

Sustainable development requires more than strategies to further economic growth; it requires political and social institutions that will promote human security. According to the 1994 UN Development Report, such institutions should be built on the local and national level, but it is equally important to construct new institutions that can help to provide global governance in an increasingly interconnected world. Events in one corner of the world increasingly have repercussions in other areas (Arias 1998; Kay 1997).

Migration both results from and can lead to human insecurity. Disruptions in the economic lives of individuals and their families, dislocation due to environmental disasters, and political and religious persecution constitute a few of the threats to human security that drive migration on a mass scale.

Migration, the State and Human Security

International migration is defined by the International Organization for Migration (IOM) as “the movement of persons who leave their country of origin or the country of habitual residence, to establish themselves either permanently or temporarily in another country” (International Organization for Migration 2005).¹ Since at least the emergence of the

¹ According to the International Organization for Migration there are approximately 214 million international

Westphalian state, migration from one country to another has been primarily regulated by the decisions of the sovereign regarding who is allowed into and out of their national boundaries. The Global Commission on International Migration highlighted the fact that “controlling who enters and remains on their territory is an integral part of the sovereignty of states” (Global Commission on International Migration 2005, 66).² Borders define territories and the notion of territoriality has been central in the formation of nation-state (Battistella 2005, 1). Consequently, one of the primary ways that sovereign nation states have contended with irregular migration is through border enforcement mechanisms. Irregular migration is perceived as an attack on state sovereignty that brings into question the state’s ability to exercise control over its spatial and territorial domain. In recent years, many states have spent immense amounts on border security through the deployment of immigration officers and frontier guards, the construction of barriers and border fences, the interdiction of migrants in transit, and large-scale removals and detention.

According to the Migration Policy Institute, in Fiscal Year 2012, the United States invested nearly 18 billion dollars in the federal government’s two main immigration enforcement agencies: US Customs and Border Protection and the US Immigration and Customs Enforcement. This amounts to fifteen times the spending level for the Immigration and Naturalization Service in 1986, and “exceeds funding for all other principal federal criminal law enforcement agencies combined” (Meissner, Kerwin, Chishti and Bergeron 2013, 50). At the heart of these efforts is the attempt to maintain state security in the face of what is perceived as a serious threat to national autonomy.

While spending on border security would continue under a human security approach, the point of emphasis would differ. Instead of “simply closing the door behind us in order to keep the less fortunate people outside” a human security approach would emphasize the multiple factors that give rise to migration flows, including economic deprivation, political persecution, and ethnic cleansing, and would seek to address these conditions before they lead people to migrate (Thakur 2003, 5).

The traditional distinction between “voluntary” migrants or “free population movements” and “forced” or “involuntary” highlights the complexity of the challenge. Forced migrants are driven from their home countries by war, violent conflicts, human rights violations and abuses or discrimination (Fisher, Martin and Straubhaar 1997, 50). Voluntary migrants, on the other hand, are assumed to have migrated through free choice rather than force.

Situations of involuntary and voluntary migration can be clear cut in many instances. Yet the distinction between forced and voluntary migration blurs in cases involving south-south migration (e.g. Mozambique to South Africa) or migration of the very poor from the developing to the developed world. Social, political, and economic insecurity can compel people to move from one place to another, even if they do not experience overt forms of persecution that are normally assumed to drive involuntary migration.³ While a specific

migrants worldwide today (3.1% of the world’s population). <http://www.iom.int/cms/en/sites/iom/home/about-migration/facts--figures-1.html> .

² The Global Commission on International Migration was launched by the Secretary General of the United Nations in 2003 with the mandate to create a framework that would allow the international community to respond to the issue of mass migration.

³ The Geneva Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees has defined these overt forms of persecution

migratory act might appear in all respects to be “voluntary,” in “reality the decision to move is made within a context where the individual or group is faced with no alternatives since staying in situ is not a realistic option” (Kothari 2002, 20). Endemic poverty, paired with the absence of a political voice, can precipitate migration as a survival strategy (Global Commission on International Migration 2005, 68).⁴

Both alternatives—migration that is forced by human rights abuses or persecution, and migration that results from a severe lack of economic, political, and social opportunities, on the other—diminish, if not effectively eliminate, the ability of persons to “migrate out of choice rather than necessity.” To create a world in which individual persons are as free from fear and from want as is humanly possible, the international community must engage in comprehensive development efforts.

Addressing the Root Causes of Migration: Investing in Development

Rather than trying to deal with migration on the back-end, as the state-security model tends to do, the human security model seeks to identify and alleviate threats that lead to forced and irregular migration. The UN Nations former Secretary General, Kofi Annan called on the international community to “take a more comprehensive look at the various dimensions of the migration issue, which now involves hundreds of millions of people and affects countries of origin, transit and destination [and] to understand better the causes of international flows of people and their complex interrelationship with development” (Report of the United Nations General Secretary 2002).

Perhaps the most obvious development needs are economic. Disparities in wealth between the poorest and the richest countries have expanded rapidly in the last two centuries, with differentials in income between them having grown from 3 to 1 in 1820 to 72 to 1 in 1992 (UNDP 1999, 38). Approximately 1.3 billion people in the developing world live in extreme poverty, or on less than \$1.25 per day, 780 million people lack access to potable water, and roughly 2.5 billion people, or 40 percent of the world’s population, do not have access to safe sanitation facilities (The World Bank 2012; Salaam-Blyther 2012, 1). Poverty of this magnitude sets the conditions for eruptions of violence and conflict, and increases the likelihood of forced migration (in response to conflict) or migration in search of a better life. Alleviating these conditions through long-term economic development brings with it the promise of greater stability for those who benefit from such growth and new opportunity.

That said, it is important to note that in the short term initiatives to promote economic development may encourage, rather than discourage emigration. With the expansion of capitalist markets globally, disruptions occur in local economies for a variety of reasons,

to include persecution on the basis of race, nationality, religion, membership of a particular social group or political opinion.

⁴ A third alternative is worth noting here as well: situations in which the poorest of the world’s poor who are stuck in a state of systemic, absolute poverty and are unable to migrate as a consequence of their total lack of resources. Migration is only a realistic alternative for those “who may be considered poor, but are not necessarily amongst the chronically poor... the chronically poor are the most excluded, they are unable unless forced to choose migration as a way of mediating their excessive marginality” (Kothari 2002, 14).

including increased mechanization which decreases the need for manual labor, land consolidation which can undermine traditional approaches to land ownership and tenure, and the construction of foreign-owned factories which can weaken the local peasant economy. These economic disruptions can *increase* the likelihood of migration, at least until the relevant economies have re-stabilized and economic opportunities have emerged. In addition, because economic development helps to enhance livelihoods within a given locale, there is also the possibility that people who had considered emigrating, but could not afford it, will gain access to more capital or otherwise be able to move and will decide to do so (Massey et al. 1993, 446).

Creating economic opportunity, including dignified working conditions and the absence of exploitation of workers and the environment, would be an important step in providing a long term “solution” to human insecurity. Easing some of the underlying causes of human insecurity would, in turn, ease some of the pressures that promote international migration. With this in mind, “from a human security perspective the movement of people should be looked at comprehensively, taking into account the political, civil, security, economic and social dimensions affecting people’s decision to move” (Commission on Human Security 2003). Human beings cannot be analyzed simply from the framework of *homo-economicus*; a range of factors beyond economic considerations play an important role in decisions to migrate.

Human rights also need to be honored in migrant sending, transit and receiving nations. Attempts to understand the underlying causes of migration have to take into account the fact that “the absence of peace and security, human rights violations and the varying degrees of development of judicial and democratic institutions are all factors affecting international migration” (The UN International Conference on Population and Development 1994, par. 10.1). Political and social conditions strongly influence the likelihood that people will “choose” to migrate. The responsibility to respond to human security threats, and in particular human rights abuses, discrimination and violence that can cause migration, lies with national, regional and international authorities. It is important to engage in preventive efforts that can defuse these threats prior to their reaching a crisis level, given that “the prevention of violent conflict is far better and more cost-effective than the cure” (Report of the Secretary General 2001, 1).

Determining who is primarily responsible for responding to the humanitarian, economic, and political crises that drive migration can be complicated. What role should sub-national authorities have in responding to crises and at what point does their failure to respond require intervention by “higher level” authorities? When, where or how (if at all) should the international community intervene in a potential or active crisis? The Westphalian model still guides international relations and state sovereignty remains an important philosophical principle that needs to be taken seriously. The principle of subsidiarity may also offer useful guidance in determining when national, regional or international authorities have a responsibility to act. This principle dictates that issues should be addressed by the authority that can effectively handle them and is closest to them, typically the most local and least centralized authority.

Often, the initial responsibility lies with the national sovereign who is obligated to take the necessary “efforts to ensure accountability and good governance, protect human rights,

promote social and economic development and ensure a fair distribution of resources” (Commission on Intervention and State Sovereignty 2001). In cases of state-sponsored persecution or when the sovereign is ill-equipped to respond to the threats to human life and dignity, the international community or regional authorities will need to take a more proactive role, whether through “development assistance and other efforts to help address the root cause of potential conflict; or efforts to provide support for local initiatives to advance good governance, human rights, or the rule of law; or good offices missions, mediation efforts and other efforts to promote dialogue or reconciliation. In some cases international support for prevention efforts may take the form of inducements; in others, it may involve a willingness to apply tough and perhaps even punitive measures” (Commission on Intervention and State Sovereignty 2001).

Migrants’ human security and the human rights framework

Having discussed how a human security paradigm addresses the causes of migration, it is important to touch on the threats that migrants face and the abuses they endure in transit. From a human security perspective, it is crucial to put into place legal protections for people on the move and to establish institutions and structures that can effectively enforce those protections.

Such threats are particularly acute for forced migrants, irregular migrants, women and children, and other vulnerable populations. Sexual abuse, for example, is unfortunately an all too common experience, particularly among young women and girls who reside in camps and who “may be subject to sexual exploitation by the very people there to care for them, including peacekeepers, humanitarian workers and even teachers” (Kirk and Taylor 2007, 14). A recent study co-sponsored by UNHCR and Save the Children-UK that focused on sexual violence against refugee children in Guinea, Liberia and Sierra Leone found that the most frequent exploiters of children in camps were agency staff from local, international, and UN agencies. The report called for reforms that included education programs for those at risk, greater community involvement within the camp and the surrounding locale, and more widespread enforcement of legal standards (UN High Commission for Refugees and Save the Children 2002).

Sexual and physical violence is also a threat in transit, particularly for irregular migrants who move outside of established legal channels. The report, *Invisible Victims: Migrants on the Move in Mexico*, which was issued by Amnesty International in 2010, highlights some of the threats that migrants in Mexico confront as they head to the United States and Canada, including kidnappings for the purpose of extortion by criminal enterprises in which local police are all too often complicit. As many as six in ten migrant women and girls without legal status are sexually assaulted during their migration. Hundreds of unauthorized migrants go missing or are killed each year as they head north toward the United States, presumably due to violence, exposure to the elements, or dehydration (Amnesty International 2010). Although the report focuses specifically on migration through Mexico to the United States, it is easy to imagine that similar threats confront migrants across the globe.

Both human trafficking and human smuggling pose a continual danger to migrants. Human smugglers often exploit and even enslave migrants, including into lives of prostitution

(Talsma 2012). Human trafficking offends human dignity and the human rights set forth in the *The Universal Declaration of Human Rights* and related covenants and treaties. Migrant detention and the denial of due process protections in the deportation process also raise human rights concerns. Family separation due to deportation, lack of access to health care and education, and additional forms of labor exploitation also requires careful study and reforms to existing political structures, laws and policies.

Conclusion

It will become increasingly difficult to sustain an enduring, reliable national security framework without a strong response to that conditions that create human insecurity. A focus on human security holds out the promise of identifying and responding to emergent threats to human persons and, in doing so, avoiding crises that could prove destabilizing. This framework provides the international community with the opportunity to address and stop potential crises from becoming actual ones. It can also help to identify the underlying causes of forced migration and point to solutions that will help make the migration process more rational and humane.

The Commission on Human Security and the Global Commission on International Migration have put forth some broad recommendations regarding critical and pervasive threats to human security that the international community should address. Among these recommendations is that states not simply implement restrictive immigration measures in attempting to address irregular migration, but should respond to the underlying causes of migration. This could include the implementation foreign aid strategies that seek to buttress local economies so that people have economic opportunities in their homeland. It could also entail governments pressuring the leadership of other countries to respect the human rights of its citizenry so as to maximize freedom and opportunity. Such efforts would help to create a context in which migration occurs more frequently by choice rather than necessity.

States and the international community should ensure that people have the opportunity to meet their basic needs, exercise their rights, and realize their potential. People should not be forced to migrate in search of the conditions that would allow them to live secure and dignified lives. International migration should be managed more effectively through greater consultation and cooperation between states at the regional level, and more effective dialogue and cooperation among governments and between international organizations at the global level. Dialogue must be based on an appreciation of the close linkage between international migration and development and economic security, which include trade and foreign aid policy, state security, and the implementation of political institutions that can protect human rights. Finally, receiving countries should assist newly arriving migrants to integrate and should promote social cohesion. Integration efforts should be actively supported by local and national authorities, as well as by employers and other members of civil society. They should be based on a commitment to non-discrimination and gender equity.

The above recommendations provide some preliminary guidelines related to the safeguarding of human security and the protection of migrant populations, but further research and analysis is needed on these issues. For example, since World War II the influence of non-governmental organizations and multinational corporations has become more pronounced,

as has the challenge they pose to traditional state-centered authority. To what extent will this shifting balance of power affect human security considerations and, in the process, either promote or alleviate pressures that drive international migration?

The role of religious institutions also provides a promising area for further research under the human security paradigm. To what extent do the social teachings of religious bodies promote an ethic that supports a human security paradigm or one that continues to support a more traditional, state-centered security model? Understanding the extent to which the moral and political traditions of religious institutions are in alignment with a human security perspective could offer strong support for this paradigm. It could also open up new and potentially fruitful platforms for discussion between thinkers with secular and those with religious worldviews.

While institutional considerations of this sort are important, particular threats to human security deserve substantial attention. Climate change and environmental degradation are increasingly important drivers of migration, as people are forced from their lands because of rising sea levels, prolonged droughts, and other forms of hazardous weather. How should the international community respond to “environmental” migrants, and what steps should be taken to address the causes of this kind of migration? Furthermore, how can the international community help to prevent humanitarian crises that are related to conflict over natural resources and dwindling economic opportunities in certain parts of the world, which often result in situations of social instability and mass migration? While this essay provides an overview of the relationship between the human security paradigm and mass migration, more research is needed into the causes of mass migration and effective responses under a human security paradigm.

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