



Security: A HUGE Concept

**Úrsula Oswald Spring
CRIM-National University of Mexico
UNU-EHS/MRFChair on Social Vulnerability
23 - 25th July 2008**

security

2. Human security

3. Environmental security

**4. Gender Security a historical
feminist approach**

-feminist empiricism

-epistemological feminism

-postmodern feminism

-standpoint feminism

**5. Situated Knowledge, gift economy
and social movements**

Objective, Subjective, Intersubjective Security

- Wolfers (1962) pointed to two sides of the security concept: “Security, in an **objective** sense, measures the absence of threats to acquired values, in a **subjective** sense, the absence of fear that such values will be attacked”.
- From a **constructivist approach** in international relations ‘security’ is the outcome of a process of social & political interaction where **social values & norms, collective identities & cultural traditions are essential**. Security is **intersubjective** or “what actors make of it”.
- Copenhagen school: security as a “**speech act**”, “where a securitizing actor designates a threat to a specified reference object and declares an existential threat implying a right to use extraordinary means to fend it off”.
- Such a process of “securitization” is successful when the **construction of an “existential threat” by a policy maker is socially accepted** and where “survival” against existential threats is crucial (Brauch, 2008).

Human, Gender, Environmental Security

| Determination Which security? | Reference object: Security of whom? | Value at risk: Security of what? | Source(s) of threat: Security from whom or what? |
|-------------------------------|---|---|---|
| National security | The State | Territ. integrity | State,substate actors |
| | | | |
| Human security | Individual, humankind | Survival of humankind people | Nature, state, globalization |
| Environmental sec. | Ecosystems, rural and urban systems | Sustainability | Humankind, Nature |
| Gender security | Gender relations, indigenous people, minorities | Equity, identity, social relations, solidarity, tolerance | Patriarchy, totalitarian institutions (élites, governments, religious fundamentalism, dominant cultures), intolerance |

HUGE

- Human, Gender and Environmental Security (HUGE) combines a **wide gender concept** (vulnerable) including children, elders, indigenous and other vulnerable groups with a human-centered focus on environmental security and peace challenges and analyzes the patriarchal, violent and exclusive structures within the family and society questioning the existing process of social representation-building and traditional role assignation between genders by overcoming the consolidated women discrimination, but also some narrow feminist approaches of male-female opposition anchored (Oswald, 2001, 2004, 2006) .
- It **reorients 'human security'** to create equity, development and conflict resolution through social organization, specific governmental policies, private ethical investments and legal reinforcements by stimulating sociopolitical participation of women, young and elders. At the international level HUGE improves free and equal access to world and regional markets without trade distortions. It stimulates further world **solidarity** to support the poorest countries with financial aid, technological support and debt relief.

- As a **holistic** concept, HUGE includes 'environmental security' concerns where a healthy environment, integral management of natural resources, prevention and remediation practices reduce vulnerability of hazard impacts. **Hazard-prone countries** are enabled to develop technical, economic and human support to reduce social vulnerability, to progress in internal organization and to stimulate **bottom-up resilience-building**, supporting rapidly and efficiently regions affected by social and natural disasters, counting also on efficient external help, effective early warning, evacuation, disaster support and reconstruction in regions affected by social and natural disasters.
- As **nonviolent conflict resolution** is a central part of personal and social identity in a world where processes of unification and diversification are occurring quicker than ever in the past history, human beings have a basic necessity to simplify and to put order into complex realities through social comparison. The upcoming systems of values, ideas and practices creates simultaneously processes of living together offering persons and groups the possibility to get familiarized with the social and material world, on behalf contradictory messages and behaviours.
- Finally HUGE includes the consolidation of **participatory democracy** and governance, promoting conflict prevention, nonviolent conflict resolution processes and peace-building; a 'huge' solidarity process of sustainable & equal development.

What is Human Security? (Brauch, 2006)

- **“Freedom from want”** by reducing societal vulnerability through poverty eradication programs (UNDP 1994; CHS 2003; Ogata/Sen: Human Security Now, **Japanese**);
- **“Freedom from fear”** by reducing the probability that hazards may pose a survival dilemma for most affected people of extreme weather events and weapons (landmine ban; UNESCO, HSN), **Canadian approach: Human Security Report (2005)**
- **“Freedom to live in dignity”**: Kofi Annan: **In Larger Freedom (2005)**
- **“Freedom from hazard impact”** by reducing vulnerability & enhancing coping capabilities of societies confronted with natural & human-induced hazards (**UNU-EHS 2004**; Bogardi/Brauch 2005; Brauch 2005a, 2005b).

What is Gender Security?

- Refers to the process of socialization to “**become**” a **gendered** human being; a man or a woman, depending on the position of the social structure.
- Gender security is **socially constructed** and **systemic** within the present patriarchal society, and it is normally taken for granted. The relations are linked to gender status—ethnicity/race, class, age and minority status— in relation to the model of reference. **Equity and identity** are values at risk. The source of threat comes in first instance from the patriarchal hierarchical and violent order, characterized by exclusive, dominant and authoritarian institutions such as non-democratic governments, churches and élites.
- The symbolic distribution of space and time assigns the male the **public sphere**: production, *res publica*, *homo sapiens*; and the **women the private**: reproduction, home, *homo domesticus*. The distribution of power acquires also generic forms. Men exercise a hierarchical and vertical power of domination and superiority.

Feminist Empiricisms

- Experiences provides the sole and gives justification of knowledge. They cannot be separated in disciplines, methods, assumptions and canons
- For Quine (1963) a) observation is thoroughly theory-laden; b) another project within science where our own practices of inquiry are empirically researched; c) division between facts and values; d) individualist inquiry reduces bases for naturalized behavioral and neuro-psychology; but feminism is concerned on inquiry of social practices relating to gender, race, class and other bases of inequality
- Feminists exposed androcentric and sexist biases of scientific research, related to social and political factors and through construction of knowledge oppression in maintained.
- Analyses for underlying bias, displacing evidence; pragmatic approach stresses plurality of aims: *paradoxes* shows social interests helping deconstruction of social representations; *procedural* approach controls bad biases by appropriate social organization of inquiry; *moral realist* approach argues that social and political value judgments have truth-values within feminist approach.

Empistemic Advantages

(Elizabeth Anderson, 2006)

- Women have generated new questions, theories and methods
- Gender has played a causal role in scientific transformation
- Defense of these changes as cognitive, unjust socially, exclusive, hierarchal and violent

Situated knowers

- **Embodiment: knowledge located in space and time, inside view, different position and knowledge**
- **First person vs third person knowledge, interpretation of external symptoms (I am here and now)**
- **E\$motions, attitudes, interests and values: source of security and transparency**
- **Personal knowledge of others (difference Erkenntnis and Wissenschaft): others interpret differently their behavior, with different skills**
- **Cognitive style: background beliefs, worldviews, mind sets**
- **Epistemic relations to other inquirers (informants, students, interlocutors)**
- **Situated knowledge relates formal with informal forms; affect attitudes (doubts, certainty, confidence); justify deepness; questioning authorities, create confidence, empower other as subject**

Standpoint Theories

(Hardsock, 1987; Rose, 1987; Smith, 1974; Mac Kinnon, 1999; Collins, 1990, Harding, 1991; Longiono, 1990 ; Butler, 1993)

- Represent world from a articulated socially situated perspective giving epistemic privilege or authority
 1. Social location: privileged perspective
 2. Scope of privilege: what question or subject?
 3. Aspect of social location: social role, subj. identity
 4. Ground of privilege: what justifies it?
 5. Type of epistemic superiority: greater accuracy, ability, sensitivity
 6. Relative perspectives of others
 7. Modes of access to perspective (location, within, training)

Feminist Postmodernisms

- Poststructuralist and postmodernist theories attempts against universality, necessity, objectivity, rationality, essence, unity, totality, foundations and ultimate truth and unique reality. Particular situatedness and contestability of claims or systems of thought serves to critical and libratory functions.
- “Discursive fields: signs get their relative meaning from their relations to other signs in a system of discourse. Not fixed in meaning neither time (critic of Kant). No whole truth exist, no definite set of terms. Actions and practices are linguistic signs going beyond themselves as metaphors and metonymy. Meanings are constantly subverted by other actions and postmodernisms celebrate ironic, parodic and campy renditions of conventional behavior as politically liberating (Butler, 1993).
- FPM view the self as constituted by signs, but with social twist, occupying multiple social identities (women, mother, worker, black, poor, heterosexual...) and tensions among conflicting identities open space for disrupting discourse systems, individually constructed.

Gender as mode of social situation

- Role: man and women different social roles (military, childrearing)
- Norms: Men assertive, logic, strong; women deferential, modest, weak: a society expect to conform to those roles
- Performance and behavior: not fixed trails, but increasingly more flexible and variable
- Identity “All the ways on might understand oneself to be a man or a women...with any subset of gender norms, roles and traits ascribed (Anderson: 2006:4)” and understood, while repudiated others (stereotypes, racism)
- Symbolism: gendered representations through conventional association, imaginative projection and methaphoric thinking: male space (garage) women (kitchen)

Gift Economy, Civil Society and Democracy

- Southern spirituality, gift economy and ethical behavior based on deep human values are mechanisms to overcome the present regressive globalization.
- During the last 25 years four times more democratic governments were elected by civil society worldwide, compared with the former 25 years.



Thanks for your attention

uoswald@gmail.com

<http://www.afes>

[press.de/html/download_oswald.html](http://www.afespress.de/html/download_oswald.html)