

# SECURITIZATION OF THE ENVIRONMENT: ARE HUMAN SECURITY AND RESPONSIBILITY TO PROTECT FOR EVERYONE?

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## ABSTRACT

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In this article we discuss how securitization processes, especially concerning environmental issues, are developed in a partial and limited way according to power and status articulations embedded in the architecture of the international system. To do so, we considered the theoretical framework developed within the context of the 1990s, with the evolution of the International Security Studies. In practice, we must consider that, in the last decades, several States have been involved in a greater dynamic of protection and resolution of environmental problems that affect their citizens and territories, making use of concepts such as Human Security and Responsibility to Protect in order to justify political actions. However, new responsibilities attributed to the 'international community' have not reached the degree of universality that those concepts presuppose per se. In this sense, with our discussion we show that, in a similar scenario of environmental disasters, "fragile" and "failed" States often suffer from substantive sanctions of the United Nations, including humanitarian interventions, as opposed to the inertia concerning powerful States in the international system. Our conclusions corroborate the so-called "harmony of interests," a term discussed by Edward Carr more than 70 years ago, and which continues to be applied to most part of international normative evolution by the great systemic power politics.

**Keywords:** Securitization. Environment. Human Security. Responsibility to Protect.

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## INTRODUCTION

New approaches to International Security and processes to broaden the security agenda have been highlighted in studies on the field as well as in practices and policies conducted by the States. In this scenario, concepts, such as Human Security and Responsibility to Protect, demonstrate the emergence of a new conception of sovereignty, increasingly understood as a responsibility, which has significantly broadened the duties of the State regarding its population, emphasizing the notion of popular sovereignty. Thus, bearing in mind the evolution of a theoretical and normative context, the discussion we propose in the article will start from the analysis of the new scenario that emerges in the field of International Security with the end of the Cold War and with the development of new concepts, since such events gather, in the center of the debates, actions of the States in a new architectural proposal of the International System. Based on a theoretical contextualization and discussion, we propose a situated and centered analysis of state responses produced within this normative environment, focused on the security of human beings. To do so, we shall analyze two distinct cases involving environmental issues in which the concepts of Human Security and Responsibility to Protect were put to the test: the Haiti earthquake, which occurred in 2010, and the Hurricane Katrina in the United States of America, in 2005.

The proposed analysis emerges from a concern about populations that compose state structures and, nevertheless, find themselves unprotected amid the organization of the International System in sovereign States that, despite the incorporation of a humanitarian discourse, preserve their interests and prerogatives of management and control of populations in their territories. Thus, we may state that our proposal to reflect and question is relevant based on two main axes: a) the present moment faces the growth of theories that plead the need for analyzing more comprehensive threats to state security and new political subjects, in addition to the State, to be protected; and b) the articulation of new theoretical concepts is followed by a movement in the practice and politics of International Security, with discussions in *ad hoc* commissions and with new proposals for solving crises (VIOLANTE, 2017b). In this sense, with our discussion we pave the way for reflections on a broader debate, within International Relations, on the importance of the international normative context for the behavior of actors. It is worth reflecting, then, on the potentially varied and conflicting standards and behaviors, which

involve articulations between narratives about state authority and control over territories and their populations; commitments and responsibilities of protection of human beings; and possibilities of interventions for humanitarian purposes.

New ways for thinking of International Security, with a discourse focused on issues that threaten individuals, regardless of their insertion in a given State, provide some constraints in terms of state sovereignty. From the mobilization of concepts, such as the Responsibility to Protect, the mobilization of the so-called international community to ensure international standards of humanitarian protection of individuals throughout the planet becomes a potential threat to traditional modes to imagine the sovereign political association. However, it is not a question of stating that the sovereignty of the State is a concept outdated or in the process of disappearing, but rather of questioning new possibilities of applying this same concept from a humanitarian perspective. In this sense, the perspective we present here enables the analysis of new security paradigms that, when interested in dealing with issues beyond state prerogatives, help transforming the way sovereignty is perceived, contributing to the survey of an assertive debate not only on the organizing principles of International Relations, but also on how standards are implemented by the States.

## **BETWEEN THE STATE, THE HUMAN, AND THE ATTRIBUTION OF RESPONSIBILITIES:**

### **REVISITING CONCEPTS**

Considering the so-called evolution of International Security Studies, with the development of Security field, in order to encompass new themes and agendas for management and control purposes, we intend to address part of the debates on state (or national) security, human security, and the Responsibility to Protect – concepts that are crucial for the analysis of some securitization processes. Despite the complexity and breadth of the analytical task, we considered, for the purposes of didactic exposition, the need to delimit a succinct theoretical discussion on the evolution of the International Security field, highlighting the main issues to address the development of these new theoretical concepts and their proper contextualization.

In the 1990s, the field of International Security Studies witnessed a significant change, regarding its analytical, political, and normative composition, with the rethinking of the traditional “state-centered” agenda, towards a new incorporation of themes. Such transformation demonstrates coherent efforts towards a new political imagination for the sovereignty issue, which is less perceived as being situated only in the States and, increasingly, justified as centered on the idea of an individual, with the consequent rethinking of responsibilities involved in the state protection of citizens. In this sense, the field of International Security starts to present itself from a new perspective, theoretically and politically, exchanging the discourse of sovereignty as control or authority (albeit without entirely giving up on it) for the narrative of sovereignty as responsibility in relation to portions of human beings (those categorized precisely as citizens of a certain State).

New practical and theoretical concerns regarding the field of International Security emerged in addition to a search for changing the emphasis of the bipolar period on state security and its reestablishment on the safety of human beings (RODRIGUES, 2012). Some theorists, particularly those from the Copenhagen School<sup>4</sup>, such as Buzan, Waever, and Wilde (1998), pleaded the expansion of the International Security agenda, perceived as having to encompass new factors beyond the military scope, as well as the new threats beyond those arising from state enforcement – all without completely disregarding the military security of the State and its traditional forces. In this sense, if International Security was historically understood, simply, in terms of traditional threats to state sovereignty and its territory (THOMAS and TOW, 2002), with the end of the Cold War new attempts to explain what makes human beings safe emerged. Taking this into consideration, the logic of national security, i.e., the logic of “maintaining the power of State over its territory and the assurance that it would persist in time as a sovereign unity in the face of threats posed by other States” (RODRIGUES, 2012, p. 12, free translation<sup>5</sup>) proved to be inadequate for supporting practices and studies on International Security.

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<sup>4</sup>This school is based on studies on International Security. In its theoretical evolution, mainly in the construction of a new architecture of International Security post-Cold War, its authors began to present elements of the Realistic, Institutional-Liberal, and Constructivist theories. From these analyses, the so-called “new fields of security” emerged: the military, political, economic, societal, and environmental (BLOWER, 2014; VIOLANTE, 2017a), thus being interested for our discussion.

<sup>5</sup> All citations were free translated.

The scenario of transformations, evidenced here, had a significant emergence of issues considered transnational in nature, such as access to food and natural resources, quality and the need to preserve the environment as well as the economic and social development of populations. Such themes were, thus, incorporated into the security agenda of Governments and into the field of International Security Studies, increasingly focusing on the idea of being human. The alleged concern for welfare and protection of those who are part of political communities was seen as an evidence of the inadequacy of the traditional security-related approaches, guided by the principles of territorial defense and national interests. Hence, the perspective of State security, or the so-called national security, with its security understanding in terms of maintaining the State power over its territory and ensuring persistence in time as a sovereign unit in the face of threats of other States, has become restricted, although not completely abandoned (RODRIGUES, 2012). In other words, a range of new themes seen as security threats have emerged, which trigger political action and governmental discourse in favor of management and control such as human mobility, environmental disasters, and scarcity of natural resources.

In a post-Cold War scenario, marked by movements of transformation concerning sovereignty and the logic of security that prevailed until then, with the inclusion of non-military and non-state issues, the approach of Human Security emerged as an attempt to situate the individual, and not the State, at the center of security issues, without damaging the primary role of the State in the classic task of providing security. Moreover, explaining the etymology of these issues, the concept, according to Buzan, Waever, and Wilde (1998), securitization can be understood as a more extreme version of the politicization of a subject, since any public question can be situated in a spectrum that comprises from what is not politicized, going through what is politicized, and until reaching the securitized. In this sense, the individual dimension contributes to securitization movements alongside several traditional components, which provide the broadened structure of International Security.

It emerges, then, as a normative milestone, 1994 publication of the Human Development Report (HDR) of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), with the explicit defense of the adoption on the part of States of the new concept of security, from “**the exclusive** emphasis on territorial security to a greater focus on the safety of the population” (UNDP, 1994, p. 22, emphasis added). This report brought to the center of

the debates the prospect of permanence, to some extent, of the traditional security agenda through the transformation of its emphases – with the assertion that security is also linked to **economic, social, environmental, and health-related needs as well as to attempts to remove the use of force and violence from the daily lives of individuals** (BOER and WILDE, 2008, emphasis added).

The aforementioned report would evidence the emergence, here analyzed, of some crucial changes in the International Security field, with the alteration of the emphasis on the territorial State to the human being, and the pursuit of security without using weapons (KENKEL, 2008). Such attempts to change and evolve International Security Studies, and also practices and policies of the States, did not, however, present more compelling efforts to specify and clarify principles and concepts to be used under the auspices of Human Security. According to Paris (2001), the concept of Human Security ends up, then, resembling the concept of “sustainable development,”<sup>6</sup> considering that everyone seems to be in agreement with their importance, although there is no clear definition of its real meaning. Most of the criticism regarding the lack of precise definitions necessarily goes through the movement of expansion, almost limitless, of threats and sectors, from which security could be thought of and triggered as justification for political actions and positions. In face of this framework of indefiniteness, critical theorists accuse this new concept of politically empty, since, according to Paris (2001, p. 93) “if human security means almost anything, then it does not actually mean anything.”

The permanence of a theoretical and conceptual imprecision paves the way for discretionary applications within the context of government practices of populations. Paris (2001) argues that the majority of those who support the concept seem to have varying interests in keeping it inaccurate. For the author, under the vague idea of Human Security, different actors could be gathered, such as a coalition of middle powers, development agencies, and Non-governmental Organizations seeking a common goal: to raise resources that were previously devoted to state security in their traditional bias. In addition to criticism to the imprecision of the concept and its political implications, other theorists mention that the practical reinforcement of Human Rights, in this new security approach, is limited

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<sup>6</sup> For this article, sustainable development refers to meeting the needs of current societies, without compromising the possibility for future generations to meet their own demands (RIBEIRO, 2005).

by the way it was supposedly developed. Boer and Wilde (2008) point out that Human Security was developed as a typically “western” concept, only applicable to developing countries<sup>7</sup>, which emphasizes possibilities for intervention in these locations. This criticism, corroborating the analytical proposal of our article, reinforces that, in order to make sense and have coherence, the concept of Human Security should be applicable to all regions with the same notion of importance and urgency, since “[...] if poverty is the issue, it is not only poverty in India, but also poverty in the United States of America or Poland” (BOER and WILDE, 2008, p. 237). This statement of the authors involves, precisely, the need to contemplate other parameters and variables in addition to poverty as an evaluation criterion. However, the lack of specific criteria has become characteristic of this new concept of security, for powers with greater relative power in the international system to use at their free will, as in a “harmony of interests” sustained by morality, as Carr (1981) demonstrated over 70 years in the interwar period.

Inserted in the discussion on Human Security and within the context of possibilities of humanitarian interventions, the creation of the concept Responsibility to Protect, in a report of the *International Commission on Intervention and State Sovereignty*, referred to the duty of the international community to protect the people of the States, although only when a government in question is unable to or is unwilling to bear that responsibility, or even when it is responsible for crimes against portions of its population itself. This proposal underwent a consolidation process and was approved at the 2005 United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) as one of the principles that should guide the action of its member States. It is worth noting, however, that only the United Nations Security Council could make the final decision on any armed intervention under the humanitarian auspices of Human Security and the Responsibility to Protect (ICISS<sup>8</sup>, 2001; KENKEL, 2008). Nevertheless, there are good examples in which the application of this new responsibility has become discretionary. The post-Haiti earthquake intervention in 2010, and the non-intervention of the international community in the case of Hurricane Katrina in New Orleans (USA), in 2005, are emblematic events and

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<sup>7</sup> The inclusion of the sentence “developing States” is provocative to the reader, since it comprises, as a whole, much more States than only those called “failed” and/or “fragile,” and pariah States, which will have their definitions explained throughout this article.

<sup>8</sup> International Commission on Intervention and State Sovereignty.

represent, more specifically, the environmental issue and its securitization from a biased humanitarian perspective.

The creation of the concept of Responsibility to Protect has generated, as well as the concept of Human Security, some debates about the possibility that the said humanitarian interventions would be legitimated based on a discourse centered on the protection of the human being, even when driven by traditional security issues, such as the so-called national interests of great powers, in search of, for instance, access to raw materials and resources or production of the most convenient political stability to guarantee profits. According to Rodrigues (2012, p. 17), the Responsibility to Protect led to the definition of a “good practice of sovereignty – when States watch over and foster the rights of their citizens – and the bad practice of sovereignty – when forces of the state violate the rights of their citizens.”

In the highest position of decisions concerning such sovereignty practices there is the United Nations Security Council, despite criticism of the possibility that military interventions should be authorized only based on a reduced portion of the most powerful countries. In this sense, the approval of the concept of Responsibility to Protect evidences that “the granting of rights, as usual, did not come without the determination of duties, courts, coercive interventions, and the establishment of a security to be maintained in the name of the good of humanity” (RODRIGUES, 2012, p. 19).

From these theoretical concepts, we question – from a perspective of situated practices and policies – whether the principles covered by Human Security and the Responsibility to Protect have been homogeneously applied to States or whether they only respond to different and relative state interests. It is noteworthy that the lack of justifications, based on the understanding of when and how more concrete interferences of international organisms in conflict regions (whatever they are) should take place, have been commonly pointed out as a pretext to use and legitimize military interventions by States with greater relative power in the International System. Therefore, we criticize the fact that humanitarian aid has its objectives usually misrepresented by political issues, aligned with common interests of systemic powers.

Within this context, it is considered that the still so-called “great powers” began to use humanitarian intervention in a more recurrent way, either in its regional areas, or in areas of interest in the field of International



Security. In 2002, for example, the document “Rebuilding America’s Defenses,” made clear the concern of the USA with the said new threats and the “failed States” and “fragile States.” In this scenario, social issues, politicians, terrorism, immigration, as well as other issues affecting human security, capable of influencing the North American interests, began to be treated from the perspective of monitoring for alleged purposes of security, thus making them susceptible to intervention (BERTONHA, 2011) – albeit subject to complex articulations and negotiations between the permanent members of the United Nations Security Council, in which the interests of members entitled to veto are not always in unison or coincidental with those of the USA.

On failed States, according to Buzan and Hansen (2012), they are seen by the so-called international community as unable to adequately govern their territory and population, representing a risk for the welfare and safety of the latter, in addition to being regarded as a threat to international security. As for the “fragile” States, although there is no consensus on its definition, the most widespread understanding corroborates that proposed by the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD)<sup>9</sup>, according to which the state fragility concerns the disability or lack of political will to ensure basic governmental functions such as poverty reduction, promotion of development and protection of human rights, and the safety of the population. However, we must consider the difficulty in establishing clear dividing lines between such concepts that, in most cases, are overlapped. There is also another classification for these justifications, that of the pariah State, a State that has a conduct considered to be in disagreement with international standards, or a behavior not accepted by the United Nations Security Council, at the upper limit, in a “threat to international security” scale. More explicit examples of this typology in the last years were some former allies of the Western powers decades ago, such as Iraq and Libya; on the other hand, Iran, the declared enemy of the West since the 1979 Islamic Revolution, has recently reversed this situation by signing the agreement of peaceful use of nuclear energy in July 2015<sup>10</sup>; currently, North Korea is the most prominent enemy due

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<sup>9</sup> Debate on the concept available from the website of the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD). States of Fragility Reports. Available from: <<http://www.oecd.org/dac/conflict-fragility-resilience/listofstateoffragilityreports.htm>>. Access on: Feb. 01, 2018.

<sup>10</sup> Irã e potências mundiais chegam a Acordo Nuclear [Iran and world powers reach an agreement on Nuclear Energy]. Globo.com website. Available from: <<http://g1.globo>>.

to the development of its nuclear program and threats to the balance of forces in the region. In this sense, the categorization practices of States can be seen from the perspective of the interests in maintaining conceptual inaccuracies that allow political actions of intervention, interference, and assistance on behalf of an alleged international community.

In addition to actions of the strongest States on a world power scale, the potential “ascension of the rest<sup>11</sup>,” so propagated by Zakaria (2008), has not evolved as expected in the last decade. In a conjuncture of expanding the security agenda by the inclusion of “new threats,” such as terrorism, migration, piracy, and environmental disasters, the trajectory of the alleged ascension of developing countries has been delayed or redirected, mainly regarding countries deemed less advanced and classified as of average income<sup>12</sup> according to UN criteria. In this understanding, the Brazilian idea, with a critical approach to greater “empowerment” of the so-called developing nations, multilaterally, presented itself in the proposal of President Rousseff’s diplomacy, in 2011, at the UN. The Brazilian intent to replace the concept of Responsibility to Protect with the Responsibility *when* Protecting, aimed not only at a simple semantic change, but also at a more substantial criticism of power relations between countries. Thus, the excesses of coercive actions employed in the last conflicts by the great powers were criticized, including in operations under a UN mandate, throughout the period in which the concept of Responsibility to Protect was in force (VIOLANTE, 2017a).

The performance of Brazilian chancellor Antonio Patriota, with criticism of the use of military interventions and the proposal to reformulate the concept of Responsibility to Protect, aimed at a more appropriate strategy in terms of guaranteeing the protection of individuals in operations conducted for humanitarian purposes. Furthermore, it is noteworthy the search for restoring the control on the part of countries affected by measures taken in the international security plan, especially

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com/mundo/noticia/2015/07/reuniao-fecha-acordo-sobre-programa-nuclear-do-ira-dizem-agencias.html>. Access on: Feb. 01, 2018.

<sup>11</sup> The “ascension of the rest” is understood as the change in the power relationship between emerging nations such as Brazil, China, and India. It does not concern the decline of the USA power in the XXI century, but the difficulty of the USA in understanding that they cannot achieve their national goals without the cooperation of other actors (ZAKARIA, 2008).

<sup>12</sup> Least Developed Countries are considered the poorest in the world, according to UN socioeconomic criteria. These countries receive assistance from the international community for the sake of development. Middle-income Countries are one step ahead of the Least Developed Countries, but they also demand significant international cooperation.

in actions of direct military intervention, and considering the gaps the concept of Responsibility to Protect created together with countries deemed fragile and/or failed. However, the proposal to combat abuses and exaggerations of power did not succeed even among the BRIC countries, except for South Africa (SARAIWA, 2016). Conversely, among States with the greatest resources of power, the perspective evoked by the counterproposal of the concept of Responsibility to Protect raised new debates on the practical and ethical limits of military interventions as well as on the broaden participation of States in the projects and attempts to reformulate the architecture of the international system.

With the discussion proposed in this study, based on the exposition of some theoretical concepts and their critical analysis, we primarily aim at providing a conceptual basis and a practical-normative context, from which we may reflect on specific political actions. In other words, the transformation efforts of International Security Studies and the normative architecture of the International System, since the production of new concepts and principles, which work to support political actions, cannot disregard an analysis that comprises specific practices conducted in this new scenario. Therefore, we must critically reflect on some distances between political discourse and State practice, surveying their ambivalence – even without the academic pretense of necessarily solving them.

## **NATURAL DISASTERS WITHIN A NEW NORMATIVE CONTEXT: AN ANALYTICAL PERSPECTIVE BASED ON HAITI AND THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA**

Political instability in Haiti, due to the renunciation of the elected President Jean-Bertrand Aristide in 2004, has caused conflicts that have significantly impacted the country's economy and institutions. The crisis experienced by Haitians in this period caused South American States to gather joint efforts for a regional initiative under UN leadership, which would be known as the *United Nations Stabilization Mission in Haiti* (MINUSTAH). Such initiative was led by Brazil and was composed of, mostly, military personnel from South American States and, to a lesser extent, from France, Spain, India, Jordan, and the USA, among other countries. According to Hirst (2007, p. 1), this mission was guided by some particular principles, such as: "maintaining order and security; encouraging political dialogue aiming at national reconciliation; and

promoting economic and social development.” The author also mentions that justifications for creating the MINUSTAH were based on the perspective of a political, economic, and social reality lacking control, with institutional collapses and an escalation of violence, which took over the country from the year 2003. Furthermore, she states that the mission would not only be limited to maintaining the local order, but also to encompassing various tasks such as public security, humanitarian aid, protection of human rights and the environment, in addition to economic development.

The MINUSTAH was considered a success until the end of 2009, from the perspective that it would be possible to verify, in the country’s scenario, positive results of the South American cooperation in the fields of social policies, economic development, human rights, and institutional strengthening. Thus, until the natural disaster, which struck Haiti in 2010, with the occurrence of a significant earthquake, there was an evolution in the institutional reorganization of the country. The earthquake, which occurred in January 2010, resulted in about 250,000 wounded people, 1.5 million of homeless people, and more than 200,000 were killed, leading the international community (mainly the UN and the USA) to create a new system of guardianship superimposed on the Haitian State, within the framework of a peace operation (HIRST, 2011). This new intervention has expanded the military and police contingencies of MINUSTAH, and produced the dilution of its regional character, increasing the presence and weight of the US political and economic leadership. Hence, despite an initial pattern of improvement in Haiti, under the regional proposal by MINUSTAH, the earthquake added new emergencies to the list of vulnerabilities that already marked the country, such as destructions caused by hurricanes, occurred in 2008, and payments of debts in the international system, which obstruct investments in relevant national sectors such as healthcare, education, and infrastructure.

Concerning the Brazilian participation in MINUSTAH after the loss of the strong South American regional character, we may state that, even after the significant US military interference in the 2010 earthquake episode, the Brazilian assistance given to Haiti remained the same, only with a few modifications (BRAGA, 2009; 2010; ROMÃO, 2012). The greater assertiveness of the South-South Cooperation, which emerged in the Lula and Rousseff Governments (2003-2016), provided a policy on containment of greater damages, with actions that ensured, along with other countries, the integral forgiveness on the part of international creditors to the Haitian foreign

debt, in addition to the implementation of new developmentalist projects for infrastructure, agriculture, healthcare, and education, autochthonous areas of its strong Technical Cooperation for International Development (VIOLANTE, 2017a). Nevertheless, the action of South American countries has become modest before the considerable protagonism assumed by great donors, making the continued presence of South America being more due to solidarity with the humanitarian task than due to the real capacity of these countries to “create features in the field of democratic governability and sustainable development” (HIRST, 2011, p. 68).

With this new phase of the intervention, Haiti, which at the beginning of the XIX century initiated the processes of independence and abolition of slave labor, “200 years later was compelled to accept the partial suspension of its sovereignty, as the only way to avoid its extinction.” More than a consequence of the environmental disaster that struck the country in 2010, the partial suspension of Haiti’s sovereignty proved to be the result of a complex historical conjuncture, which combined “misfortunes, wreckage, and international and local negligence” (HIRST, 2011, p. 71), which further deteriorated the country’s social and economic conditions and reached its apex by means of the earthquake’s manifestation. Haiti, then, began to be considered a failed State, which did not possess the conventional prerogatives of a sovereign State (KRASNER, 2004; 2005). The establishment of a shared sovereignty seemed the only way to restore the capacity of government over the Haitian population and territory. In this sense, the alleged concern with “new threats” weakened the sovereignty of the country, under the justification of humanitarian aid<sup>13</sup> and with the “unreasonable presence of military contingencies” (HIRST, 2011, p. 74). Although we can state, with some certainty, that the aid of countries with greater resources of power has provided crucial humanitarian emergency contributions to the country, it is also worth noting the lack of more assertive actions concerning development<sup>14</sup>, years after the natural disaster.

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<sup>13</sup> Humanitarian aid has been developing over the past two centuries. Its practice is based on seven fundamental principles, unanimously adopted at the 20th International Conference of the Red Cross, in 1965, which are: humanity, impartiality, neutrality, independence, volunteering, unity, and universality. Of these principles, the top three are highlighted as the most important ones.

<sup>14</sup> Development assistance is deemed as the necessary development for restructuring and pacifying a society. It has a more political character than humanitarian aid, but they are not completely dissociated. Humanitarian aid, in a broad sense, comprises development aid (VIOLANTE, 2016).

Although the 2010 earthquake has worsened the Haitian domestic situation and drawn even more international attention to the vulnerability condition that marks the country, according to the Failed State Index, since the beginning of its publication, in 2005, Haiti is one of the fifteen “most failed States in the world” (PETRUS, 2012). Nevertheless, Haiti has considerable strategic and geopolitical importance for US security, mainly from the launch of the National Strategy for Maritime Security (2005), which aimed to broaden the cooperation platforms in the States and in Regional International Organizations, in order to create safe and supportive environments for regional security – thus covering the US security. Such a scenario of concern about US security in its regional environment is also evident in later periods, with the creation of the so-called United State Africa Command (AFRICOM) in February 2007, and the reinforcement of the United States South Command (USSOUTHCOM), in 2008. Thus, the context, for example, of reactivating the fourth US fleet can be seen as seeking to promote the US national security objectives in this Atlantic maritime site, being used as an instrument of military cooperation, technical training for civilians, and military and humanitarian aid (VIOLANTE, 2017a).

In addition, the capital of Haiti, Port-au-Prince, is only 1140 km, or even 593 nautical miles from Miami, in the state of Florida. It is a very small distance, and the world is increasingly dominated by disparities and concerns arising from political, economic, and social crises, motivated by the North x South conflicts and the so-called “new threats.”

The case of Haiti can be seen as emblematic from the critical perspective of the International Security field, since it clearly represents the establishment of bonds between the field of development and security within the post-Cold War context. As published in the 1994 United Nations report entitled *An Agenda for development*, conflicts in remote areas were deemed a source of security- and development-related concerns in other regions and States of the world. In this context, biggest security threats are seen as directly related to the so-called “failed” and developing States, which must be the target of international policies, supposedly directed towards a development that helps in achieving lasting peace and International Security. Hence, it would be necessary to reconstruct these States in order to prevent security conflicts and threats in several regions. In the Haitian scenario, measures for state reconstruction and development promotion would necessarily be the presentation of an

alleged good behavior, linked to the country's adoption of values and principles disseminated by international donors, composing a neoliberal agenda of precepts. The ability to formulate the agenda of transformations in Haiti would, then, be in the hands of external actors (especially the USA), who would take over the tasks of donating financial resources and providing armed missions in the territory (CASTRO, 2013).

Failed States are commonly perceived as "lacking something, if compared, to some extent, with the West and, therefore, in need of a helping hand" (BUZAN and HANSEN, 2012, p. 305). In this sense, in the face of places and regions that are supposedly broken, the so-called International Community – especially the USA and the UN, through its Security Council – proposes, to itself, a form of active action by peacekeeping missions, humanitarian interventions or partnerships in areas where "[...] their populations could be governed, allowing new geopolitical arrangements, and boosting many businesses between intergovernmental agencies, NGOs, corporations, governments" (RODRIGUES, 2012, p. 38). Thus understood from a perspective of state failure, Haiti emerges on the international scenario as the source of potential issues and threats in the field of security (becoming, for example, the origin of unwanted migratory flows), making its management and control to be legitimated based on a strengthened narrative of protection of human beings.

Based on the US scenario, we may also reflect on the (non-) application of concepts of Human Security and the Responsibility to Protect, which we addressed here. In the USA, within a context prior to Hurricane Katrina, which shook the Gulf Coast in the country in August 2005, the city of New Orleans was already characterized, as Levitt and Whitaker (2009) state, by racial segregation and high rates of poverty.

The state of Louisiana was also seen as one of the most unequal and with the lowest quality of life in the country, with a population mostly composed of black and poor people – demonstrating, thus, the high degree of racial segregation that persists in the USA, even after the lawful end of slavery. It is noteworthy that, before Hurricane Katrina, 28% of New Orleans residents lived below the poverty line and most of them – over 53% – lived in deep poverty. Besides, the portion of the population of the city, formed by black and poor people, lived in the most vulnerable areas, which also received less protection from storms – which are very common in the region. New Orleans emerges, then, as one of the US metropolitan cities more racially segregated, according to the Brookings Institution.

This region is marked by great racial inequality, individual prejudices, institutional racism, and concentrated poverty. Hurricane Katrina is commonly pointed out as one of the deadliest and most costly disaster in the US history, which blew on August 23, 2005, during the Atlantic hurricane season. The hurricane devastated the northern and central part of the Gulf Coast of the USA, and the greatest losses occurred in New Orleans. However, the storm did not cause destruction in this city alone, but throughout the Mississippi coast to Alabama, unveiling weaknesses, prejudices, and inequalities across the Gulf Coast and the US society. Damages caused by the storm were estimated at more than 75 billion dollars, resulting in more than 1,417 deaths (LEVITT and WHITAKER, 2009; CASTRO, 2013).

Still, we may say that the passage of Hurricane Katrina was not unexpected, since the vulnerability of the region to this type of natural disaster was known, and warnings of the arrival of the hurricane were given in proper time for an emergency governmental response. In other words, we can state that the destruction of the area may have not resulted from inadequate warnings, but rather from the lack of actions on the part of national, state, and local authorities. Therefore, despite knowledge of the vulnerability of New Orleans in the context of a natural disaster in the proportion of Hurricane Katrina and warnings issued by meteorologists before its occurrence, the government (at state, local, and national level) failed in its duty to protect the lives and properties of its inhabitants (NUNN, 2009).

Greene (2009) contributes to the perspective that government failure in the context of the Hurricane Katrina was evident and well documented. Greene states that the US Senate Committee, which investigated what became known as “Katrina failure,” characterized the governmental action as a long-term failure. The same Committee also noted, according to the author, that US government officials failed to pay due attention to previous warnings regarding the approaching hurricane for making mistaken decisions before and after its arrival, and for not providing effective leadership and adequate response capacity within this context. For complementing this perspective, Nunn (2009) also states there were no safe places to shelter the population in the event of storms, nor a plan for evacuating the city for those who did not have access to private means of transportation and, after the passage of Katrina’s, there was no proper coordination of efforts to rescue the victims – there were no food



supply, no access to drinking water, no medical facilities, and corpses were simply left on the streets of the city.

This natural disaster revealed to the world that not only States considered fragile or failed are those with management problems, with potential impact on the populations' lives. Inadequate public policies in a great power, such as the USA, which have a high degree of development, have evidenced the poverty pockets, in which thousands of citizens live aside from developed societies. After the passage of Hurricane Katrina, there was a differentiated treatment of the universality proposed by principles of the Human Security and the Responsibility to Protect, unlike the actions applied by the so-called international community in Haiti. We can state, with some certainty, that the maintenance of the North American sovereignty, in its traditional model, without the application of new normative instruments established by the UN, occurred in the USA not by formulating preventive public policies, but by the position of power and prestige they occupy in the international architecture. There was much negligence in the application of resources to mitigate the effects of the environmental disaster, as well as to prevent it, with lack of adequate public policies in the context of the emergency scenario and contingent plans for rescuing and assisting the victims (CASTRO, 2013).

The words of former President Barack Obama, ten years after the event, in a statement given to the WWL-TV channel, during a visit to New Orleans, reiterate such perspective. The former president said that Katrina changed from a natural disaster to a "man-made disaster," since "the city was full of inequalities, with many people, especially poor black people, with no good jobs, with no affordable healthcare services, nor a decent household<sup>15</sup>."

Bearing this in mind, a question proposed by Levitt and Whitaker (2009) emerges: could the richest and most powerful country in the world abandon some of its poorest citizens at a time when they needed their government the most? For these authors, Hurricane Katrina has evidenced the racial inequality in the USA, with high levels of poverty and vulnerability, which occur from the intersection between categories, such as class and race, and which manifest themselves in specific places

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<sup>15</sup> *Tragédia em 2005 deixou rastro de destruição na costa leste dos EUA; capital mundial do jazz foi a cidade mais atingida* [2005 tragedy left traces of destruction on the east coast of the USA; the world's capital of jazz was the most impacted city]. *Último Segundo IG*. 2015. Available from: <<http://ultimosegundo.ig.com.br/mundo/2015-08-27/dez-anos-do-furacao-katrina-veja-antes-edepois-de-nova-orleans.html>>. Access on: May 27, 2017.

– precisely the segregating spaces, where the most vulnerable North Americans live and remain highly susceptible to natural disasters. The history of slavery, which marked the city of New Orleans as a large slave market, is thus entangled in a gift of governmental abandonment and absence of public power, in guaranteeing the basic rights of its most vulnerable population.

Within this context, international intervention under the principles of Human Security and the Responsibility to Protect was not considered as an application possibility in the country, and there was an international response only in the form of donations in cash or provisions of other types of assistance. Still, not all aid provisions were accepted by the USA, depicting the influence of international political relations at the expense of the primary principles of humanitarianism in Humanitarian Aid – physicians made available by Cuba were rejected as well as the supply of fuel below the market price on the part of Venezuela (SILVA, 2008).

The UN, through the United Nations Development Programme (1994), states that the loss of Human Security can be both a slow and silent process and an abrupt and noisy emergency – as a result of human action, i.e., of the choice of their political actions, coupled with the results of forces of nature followed by a humanitarian tragedy. The non-direct or more incisive intervention of the so-called international community, in the case of the USA, can demonstrate that the incessant pursuit of universality of humanitarian principles, which should affect the sovereignty of States not complying with the rights of their citizens, takes place from broader considerations on positions of power and state interests in each international security scenario. Therefore, the need for analyses of locally determined policies and practices emerges more clearly, in such a way that it is possible to evaluate transformations in terms of theoretical concepts and international standards, proposed for the architecture of the International System. By the analysis of the two cases here illustrated, we may establish different patterns of action and management of complex emergency crises, which seem not to merely comply with the criteria evidenced by Human Security and Responsibility to Protect.

## FINAL CONSIDERATIONS

The post-Cold War scenario, mostly marked by the lack of traditional enemies and classic security issues, enabled a vast field for the emergence of a new international normative structure, permeated by concepts such as Human Security and the Responsibility to Protect. However, questions must be raised about securitization processes of several themes and issues, included in the security agenda of the States from the perspective of these new concepts. Within this context, environmental disasters and factors are just one of the frameworks in which humanitarian interventions have been established and justified. Moreover, we may highlight, in addition to this scenario, the occurrence of humanitarian military interventions for complex emergencies and the non-compliance of Human Rights, and the lack of democracy and freedom, among other factors. However, it is noteworthy that most part of these concepts are endowed with a western character, not applicable to other regions of the world, which enables to question the legitimacy of governmental practices, justified from a particular perspective of the best way to conduct life in political communities.

The development of the Human Security process emphasizes the complexity and multiplicity of components of International Security, bringing to the (theoretical and practical) agenda new themes such as food, environmental, and economic security, among others. Hence, we would broaden the range of threats and sectors to be included in the security field for management and control purposes. However, we would not only have the broadening of threats, but also the alteration of their character, since they would be understood as directed not only to the States, but also to individuals, regardless of their insertion into a particular state organization. In other words, it emerges, at least in the conceptual and theoretical framework (and in the governmental discourse), the perspective that the security of human beings should be treated as a matter of universal nature, being relevant both in rich and developed States and in poor and developing States. Despite this universalistic and egalitarian bias for the treatment of security issues and its implications on the lives of individuals, our primary objective was to question, based on the practical and situated cases, the concrete application of this perspective. The common classification of countries into categories of strong, weak, or failed States, often aiming at interests of a restricted “international

community,” draws attention to processes that relativize the practical application of a new normative structure – also created, to a great extent, without the effective participation of other States, in addition to a specific group in their privileged positions at the UN.

The analysis, based on the approached theoretical concepts, also enables questioning the evolution of sovereignty standards, with compelling efforts to challenge the “validity of the preponderance of the State survival at the expense of Human Rights” (COSTA, 2011, p. 5). In this sense, Human Security and the Responsibility to Protect can also be understood as an attempt to reformulate the primary concept of International Relations – the sovereignty of States. This would increasingly be seen as a responsibility that States have to ensure the welfare and safety of human beings, and not just as a final and absolute authority of given territory and its population. Thus, the emphasis on concerns and threats regarding individuals can significantly change the location of sovereignty, with its repositioning concerning human beings, rather than its historical link with the State. In this scenario of transformations in the architecture of the International System, Human Security and the Responsibility to Protect can be understood as concepts used to legitimize certain humanitarian military interventions, which challenge the traditional standards of non-intervention and absolute sovereignty.

The prospect that the greatest threats to International Security emerge from States classified as “failed” helps to delineate, in political practices and actions, a singular framework for implementing new international concepts and standards, assisting in legitimizing humanitarian military interventions in certain locations, with proposals that include sharing the sovereignty of these States. Therefore, with the analysis of the approached cases, we sought to demonstrate that the emphasis on threats from States deemed “failed” has the potential to obscure Human Rights violations in other parts of the world, with the failure of the assumption of universality supported by the concepts in question. Thus, despite the two regions briefly analyzed – Haiti and the USA – adequately meeting the requirements for adopting a Human Security strategy, the international action in each of the cases has been fundamentally diverse, complying, yet, with the traditional notions of power and prestige, which continue to prevail in the architecture of the International System.

There is no naivety in believing that shared sovereignty could be temporarily applied to this federal state of the USA. Firmer actions of the international community could have been taken, including rediscussing the Responsibility to Protect and a new role of the UN in face of the present and the new composition of power that has been presented in the ascension of the rest. Hence, the way has been paved to questions about the validity of the new theoretical concepts and international standards, considering an analysis beyond the political and governmental narratives.

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