

# Human security and environmental security in haiti politics essay



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In order to answer this essay question, we should first define what humanitarian disaster is, as well as what we mean in terms of human security and environmental security. Then it's important to see beyond the earthquake, the consequences in the human and environmental security. The last part of this essay is about understanding of the merger of environmental security with human security in relation to humanitarian disasters.

### Humanitarian disaster

A humanitarian disaster is an event or series of events which represents a critical threat to the health, safety, security or wellbeing of a large group of people. For instance, armed conflicts, disease, famine, drought, natural disasters, technological disasters and other major emergencies may all involve or lead to a humanitarian disaster. For the Belgium-based Centre for Research on the Epidemiology of Disasters humanitarian disaster is a situation or event, which overwhelms local capacity, necessitating a request to national or international level for external assistance; an unforeseen and often sudden event that causes great damage, destruction and human suffering.

The U. N.'s Inter-Agency Steering Committee (IASC) defines a complex emergency as a humanitarian crisis in a country, region or society where there is total or considerable breakdown of authority resulting from internal or external conflict and which requires an international response that goes beyond the mandate or capacity of any single agency.

The following criteria allow characterizing a disaster humanitarian: A situation has deteriorated significantly. The event (earthquake, bombings, epidemics, etc.) or its consequences (lack of drinking water, food, health care, shelter) caused casualties (killed, wounded victims and survivors, patients, etc.) and risk endanger the lives of thousands of people if they are not rescued. The uniqueness and magnitude of the disaster plunged the population in a distress situation (risk of suffering emotional high and sustainable travel to a security zone, health issues, famine, etc.). The event has caused substantial destruction of property (houses, schools, institutions, industries and health care structures destroyed, roads and bridges cut, etc..) and altered human geography (e. g., crop flooded without physical destruction). It has an impact on the functioning and activities of people and calls into question the continuity of social organization destruction or alteration of its functional networks (networks of production, distribution and consumption of energy, food, drinking water and medical care, movement of goods and people, and communication systems information, education, policing and management of dead bodies). These consequences are durable or complex. The situation surprised the institutional. It threatens the chain of different decision units and reduces the time available for decision. National institutions are unable or lack the determination to bring relief to affected populations. It is important at the outset to differentiate between contexts: the situations caused intentionally by human beings (armed conflict) and after crisis situations a natural disaster or an epidemic.

## Human Security

'The concept of human security involves a fundamental departure from an orthodox International Relations security analysis that has the state as the exclusive primary referent object. Instead, human beings and their complex social and economic relations are given primacy with or over states.'

(Thomas, 2001 page 161)

'Human security refers to an emerging paradigm for understanding global vulnerabilities whose proponents challenge the traditional notion of national security by arguing that the proper referent for security should be the individual rather than the state. Human security holds that a people-centered view of security is necessary for national, regional and global stability' (John Podesta & Peter Odgen, 2007/2008, page 115)

'At base, human security is a manifestation of a Kantian internationalism and cosmopolitanism that is unsatisfied - not dissatisfied but unsatisfied - with a traditional interpretation of international politics'.(Bajpai, 2000 page 52).

Human security poses the Individual in the centre. It has its roots in Enlightenment, in humanitarian law, and in the new perceptions on individual and human rights. The United Nations Development Program 1994 includes the term. Human security is divided in seven elements: economic security, food security, health security, environmental security, personal security, community security and political security. 'The report also makes a further distinction that subsequent authors have struggled with: between 'chronic threats such as hunger, disease and repression' and 'sudden and hurtful disruptions' (UNDP, 1994 page23).

'Human security indicates a multidisciplinary and holistic approach to security, based on the belief that there are links between both heterogeneous problems such as underdevelopment, human rights and safety of civilians during armed conflicts.' (Mack 2004 page 48) The scope is to improve and assure the well-being of individuals against potential threats. Human security not only protects, but also enforces people and societies as a means of security. There are two main approaches of human security that have been undertaken by the governments of Canada and Japan. The first one is the Canadian school approach. Canadian school recognized that individuals must be in centre of policy formulation. The Canadian conception of human security thus seems to emphasize on the prevention of physical violence and the promotion of human rights. Furthermore, given the nature of threats confronting individuals, it was widely accepted that a broadening of security was imminent. Human Security is much more than the absence of military threat. It includes the security against economic privatization, an acceptable quality of life and a guarantee of fundamental human rights. 'This concept of human security recognizes the complexity of the human environment and accepts that the forces influencing human security are interrelated and mutually reinforcing.' (Axworthy, 1997, page 183). It recognizes the links between environmental degradation, population growth, ethnic conflicts, and migration.

The second approach of the human security was introduced by the Japanese School. According to Keizo Obuchi, Prime Minister, human security is a concept that takes a comprehensive view of all threats to human survival, life and dignity and stresses the need to respond to such threats. Some of

threats to human security are global warming, transnational crime, refugees, human rights violations, AIDS, terrorism, landmines and the use of child soldiers. The Japanese adoption of the term stresses the importance of economic development and provision for basic human needs. This concept is much closer to the idea of human development and thereby tries to address the structural causes of insecurity.

In the words of Heinbecker, human security is about 'the ability to protect people as well as to safeguard states'. (Heinbecker, 1999, page 6)

### Environmental security

The review of conditions of security began in the middle of the Cold War during the 1970s and 1980s. The core of this examination was the idea that states would have to overcome the absolute self-defined security policy and to heed the concerns of the neighboring countries for safety. To this end, the Barry Buzan in the study, *People, states, and fear*, refers to the removal of the traditional security. He highlights generally the need for a security approach based on political, economic, social, environmental as well as military terms.

Since 1983 supported the integration of environmental considerations in term of national security.

Threats to national security can be displayed in green forms in the sense that environmental events, such as military and economic, can damage what is considered the physical basis of the state, perhaps to such an extent as to threaten the idea of state and institutions

Thus, environmental problems can threaten the security of a state, the level which can cause grinding in the key-natural state institutions consisting of citizens, its territorial integrity and natural resources.

This entire period until the end of the 1980s was the essential first generation of environmental safety in which the term emerged a transnational perceiving reality, the core of which is environmental catastrophe previous results are mainly of human nature.

In the beginning of 1990's, the second generation of environmental security appeared giving great importance in natural resources and their management. School supporters argue that renewable resources year after year are rare especially in areas where there is a lack of technological, social and political style to adapt. The continuous surge in global demographic problem will lead to increased demand for resources while the ever increasing deterioration will reduce the substantial offer. Furthermore, the reality of the unequal distribution of resources concentrated in the hands of a few structural conditions will cause the scarcity of large segments of the population of many countries.

Abundance, not deprivation is likely to lead in conflict situations because different social groups set as their objective the seizure of resources for their own benefit.

The value of natural resources lies in the profile they have built. The rarity of the abundance of social construction is defined and related to human desires. In terms of political economy, the conditions of the means and forces of production often determine what is necessary and what is not.  
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A recent comprehensive overview of the environmental security field observes that the environment is the most transnational of transnational issues, and its security is an important dimension of peace, national security, and human rights that is just now being understood. Over the next 100 years, one third of current global land cover will be transformed, with the world facing increasingly hard choices among consumption, ecosystem services, restoration, and conservation and management.

Environmental security is in centre of national security comprising the dynamics and interconnections among the natural resource base, the social fabric of the state, and the economic engine for local and regional stability; and that, while the precise roles of the environment in peace, conflict, destabilization and human insecurity may differ from situation to situation and they are still being debated in relation to other security and conflict variables, there are growing indications increase an underlying cause of instability, conflict and unrest. By and large, environmental security exists in terms of natural resources as state's national interest.

Case study: Haiti and the earthquake in 2010

A brief history

Haiti is the poorest country in the Americas, which is two hours by air from Miami, accessible tourist destination in the Caribbean with warm seas and dreamy beaches, but with "difficult" location, also very "dense" population composition. Lasted for 30 years, the dictatorship imposed by the family Duvalier. After 1986, is a very turbulent period of political crisis for more than



20 years started. Oftentimes, international sanctions were imposed, of course, no way helped the local economy.

Haiti has a population of 10 million. The men cut down trees from the hills around the towns of wood for the stove, or fire eating. Political corruption is widespread and the concern of residents is to have one meal a day. Slums are growing from year to year, the area of the capital Port-au-Prince, which hit both suffering from earthquake. The huts cannot stand the rain, which may occur and drowned, and certainly no readily imagine, what resistance in earthquake 'offering' the shack. This is a war state, the diplomatic, political, economic field. Poverty in Haiti finally has. Much compensation from drug trafficking, and Latin-American charges passing through the island country en route to the U. S., the first consumer world of drugs.

The terrible hurricane of 2008 has cost Haiti about 15% of GDP. It was just one of a hundred hurricanes, tropical storms, floods damaged in Haiti since 1900 and that international assistance for them, and when he arrives, "minimal", as the same diplomatic source.

The fatal earthquake in 2010

In January 2010 a strong earthquake struck Haiti causing thousands of deaths and enormous material destruction. 300. 000 people lost their lives cause by the fatal earthquake. The earthquake was the deadliest natural disaster ever in the Western Hemisphere. The previous problems such as the pervasive poverty, urban overcrowding, unplanned urbanization and environmental degradation, and the earthquake multiplied the impact of the earthquake.

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Extensive damage to reinforced and non-reinforced buildings has started to appear. Houses, public services, governmental, private commercial buildings as well as roads, infrastructure, public utilities and productive activities have born important losses that remain to be assessed and evaluate. Most worrying of all are important damages recorded on hospitals, fire stations, health centers, water, sanitation and school facilities.

The hue devastation threatens political and socio-economic stability and poses huge recovery and reconstruction challenges. A major humanitarian crisis compounded by the weaknesses of government and deep poverty that could become very difficult to control. The disaster prompted postponement of legislative elections and casts uncertainty over whether presidential elections can be held at year's end as planned and when the states can work normally.

The earthquake produced urgent reconstruction costs estimated at \$12 billion, destroyed over the major landscape of Port-au-Prince and several towns and villages close by and flattened the seats of all three branches of government along with fifteen of the seventeen ministries, police stations and a number of courts. More than two and a half months after the quake struck, hundreds of thousands of Haitian citizens continue to experience severe hardship and increasing crime, violence and sexual abuse in precarious, spontaneous settlements in Port-au-Prince. Many others are holding out in the locations they have fled to after the disaster, which, however, are unprepared to guarantee their livelihoods.

Seismic risks in the region were known, but when the earthquake hit, the government had not the capacity, as well as the experience and preparedness to respond immediately to a disaster of that magnitude. The inability of government to provide a timely and direct response to chaos that followed the quake was a reality. Governments had not been capable of providing minimum basic services to the population before the natural disaster, assuring the human security and protect the civilians.

Resources dedicated to public information and awareness were lacking. Citizens had no clue on how to react in the event of earthquake. At the time of the earthquake, there were thus serious deficiencies in government, community and citizen preparedness and response networks. Additionally, Haiti was vulnerable to natural disasters because of its institutional weakness, environmental exploitation and lack of modern infrastructure. Having confirmed that the magnitude of the disaster was clearly beyond its capacity, it appealed for international assistance and declared a fifteen-day state of emergency on 18 January.

Haiti witnessed a quick and large emergency response from abroad, with an outpouring of private as well as foreign government donations that now total \$2.2 billion. United Nations announced it would release 10 million dollars from the emergency fund to build the country's reconstruction. Canada, France, Spain, Japan, Saudi Arabia, the UK, the EU and the Union of South American Nations countries have contributed. 'Cuba has provided the largest medical contingent, over 900 professionals with little cash but rich in expertise and with some financial support from Venezuela that announced that sends 50 people team of humanitarian aid, bringing food, medical

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equipment and medicines for the earthquake victims.'(<http://www.in.gr/news/article.asp?IngEntityID=1094044>).

More than two months after the earthquake, hundreds of thousands of Haitians are living under very bad conditions for an uncertain period. Provisions say that it will take years to rehabilitate livelihoods and restore normal economic activity. Dealing with the situation will require unprecedented national consensus and an adapted and reinvigorated approach to international cooperation. These circumstances will compound the huge political, economic, social, and security challenges.

Security and the rule of law are fundamental for Haiti's transition from the emergency and relief phase to reconstruction and preservation of the stability gains attained before 12 January. Fortunately, there is a base on which to build. There were a big number of aid organizations that help the People in Haiti overwhelm the difficulties such as the HNP, the troops of United Nations. In the very difficult post quake circumstances, they also serve as a deterrent to crime and violence. The organizations have to resume full responsibility for public security once these forces leave, but the evolving security context requires a careful withdrawal plan but criminal activity, including rapes, killings, kidnappings and cocaine drops, continues and may even be on the rise. Increasing incidents of sexual violence are said to be occurring in displaced settlements, which requires an aggressive police response, with assistance from UNPOL. Social unrest remains a risk due to political discontent and frustration, as some 1.5 million persons continue to suffer severe hardships several months after the earthquake. While

government and aid agencies continue their efforts to cater to basic needs, <https://assignbuster.com/human-security-and-environmental-security-in-haiti-politics-essay/>

they must speed up provision of emergency shelter to close to 700, 000 persons, 200, 000 of who remain at high risk of floods and mudslides and are still without adequate refuge from seasonal rains and the approaching hurricane season.

'Out of 17 prisons, eight have been totally or partially damaged, and 5, 130 prisoners escaped (including all 4, 215 prisoners from the Penitence National). This is equivalent to 60 percent

of the total prison population; an estimated 75-85 percent were in pre-trial detention'.(UNDP page 1) This poses perhaps the greatest threat to security, people have to face except the suffering caused by the earthquake, and the possibility to be in peril and insecure for their lives.

To recapture prisoners effectively and lawfully, all three components of the security system such as police, justice, and prisons, have to function.

Such re-organization would not only strengthen capability to respond to the enormous post-earthquake challenges, but also take the wind out of the opposition's untimely calls for a change in government.

Taking everything into account, we are in position to conclude that Haiti, a fragile state with corruption, human right problems, poverty, social-economic difficulties, does not offer the indispensable for protecting its own citizens. Located in a so dangerous region damaged by climate change and natural disaster (environmental insecurity) nothing worked normally to decrease all this suffer.

## Conclusion

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The relationships between the environment and human security are certainly close and complex. Environment makes the conditions for living but also humans make their environment convenient for living. Efforts to protect nature will fail unless they simultaneously advance the cause of human betterment; efforts to better the lives of people will fail if they fail to conserve essential resources and life support systems.

The case study of earthquake in Haiti teaches us that in the temporal dimension, '(the long latency period of dangers, such as, for example, in the elimination of nuclear waste or the consequences of genetically manipulated food, escapes the prevailing procedures used when dealing with industrial dangers)'(Beck, 2002 page 3) Haiti's geopolitical position affected rapidly human security and extensively the development in the area .

A great deal of human security is tied to peoples' access to natural resources and vulnerabilities to environmental change and a great deal of environmental change is directly and indirectly affected by human activities and conflicts.

More recently, it has become increasingly clear that much of the interaction between nature and society most significant for sustainable development occurs in what we call the missing middles. Risks, threats to and opportunities for sustainable development do not emerge primarily at global or local levels, but at intermediate scales, where both broader trends and the particularities of place come together.

Human security offers much to this vibrant field of sustainable development.

Sustainable is a global agenda for change combining the concept and <https://assignbuster.com/human-security-and-environmental-security-in-haiti-politics-essay/>

practices of development, with the new ways of considering old problems as well as international co-operation and co-ordination. Sustainable development involves co-operation on a global scale. Sustainable development is about integration: developing in a way that benefits the widest possible range of sectors, across borders and even between generations. Most notably, a human security highlights the social dimension of sustainable development's three pillars the environment, the economy and the society. Goals should be set, actions taken, and progress assessed at disaggregated levels commensurate with respect for the welfare and dignity, the needs and rights, of human beings.

But efforts to advance human security will do better to frame their activities based on an interdependent, place based, and dynamic worldview analogous to that offered by sustainable development than by adopting a perspective that sees environment merely as a set of threats to human security. Thus, the field of security should be broadened to a more comprehensive notion of 'sustainable security'. Sustainable security is less anthropocentric because it values the environment in itself and not merely as a set of risks. This more expanded field facilitates critical integrations of state, human and environmental security, and parallels the three linked pillars of society, economy and nature central to the field of sustainable development.

The environment is connected to human security. In this case, the inputs and outputs of the equation are broadened. Environmental threats are linked to their overall impact on human survival, well-being and productivity, in other words, aspects of human security. Human beings and social relationships

become the objects, or preferably subjects, that are to be secured from environmental threats not states.

Environmental change can have direct and immediate effects on wellbeing and livelihoods. For example, water scarcity may not cause war but still engender insecurity by contributing to dehydration-related death, reducing food production, and undermining livelihood opportunities. The environment impacts human survival, well-being and dignity, all aspects of human security. Environmental change can have a variety of impacts ranging from health to economic productivity to political instability, and so on.

Environmental threats can also affect a diversity of subjects ranging from individuals, families, communities, social organizations, various identity groups. A single environmental threat can potentially have adverse effects at multiple scales from the household to the planetary. Environmental change or a humanitarian disaster caused by environmental instability can have a significant impact on the lives of people today.

These changes may also extend into the future to impact the lives of generations to come. Water resources, again, provide an illustrative example of these different types of effects and their complex interactions

Only on threats overlooks the environmentally related opportunities available to improve human security. Protecting and enhancing the environment can have very positive consequences for people's livelihoods, well-being and opportunities for fulfillment. While environmental degradation increases the potential for deprivation, displacement and disempowerment, ecosystem integrity is likely to reduce vulnerabilities. The environment is



directly relevant to the lives and well-being of all people, especially the most destitute, in developed and developing countries alike. A humanitarian disaster, for example the earthquake in Haiti destabilizes first the environmental security and then human security.

At this point and taking everything into consideration, we would conclude that environmental security is deeply connected to human security, because human is depended on environment. The high risk regions provide a low security to humans. And here government comes, because earthquake is not so much predicted but, there must exist the infrastructure to deal with such disasters though. So, thus sustainable development aims to improve the conditions of human life, while preserving the environment in the short and especially long term. Sustainable development aims at economic development that is efficient, socially equitable and environmentally sustainable. The idea is not new. Many cultures through the centuries have recognized the need for harmony between environment, society and economy. The point is the systematic approach to deal with the problems collectively.