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## **HUMAN SECURITY AND THE GOVERNMENTALITY OF NEO-LIBERAL MOBILITY: A FEMINIST PERSPECTIVE**

Thanh-Dam Truong

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## 1 INTRODUCTION

Transnational migration and its implications for human security as a policy field constitute one of the most complex issues of our time. Current experiences of displacement and security spans between a cyber world characterized by hyper mobility of finance, technology, information and the ‘cosmopolitan’ values of a ‘flexible citizenship’ (Ong, 1999) to the world of human trafficking and smuggling of migrants and refugees as a mode of mobility adopted by people who cross borders on foot, by boat, trucks and planes who are often abandoned to die when arrangements break down (Eschbach/Hagan/Rodriguez, 2001; El-Cherkeh/Hella, 2004). The extant legal vacuum reflects unresolved conflicts of interest at different levels and poses a great challenge to the right to mobility as an expression of the liberal ideal of individual liberty.

Current defining of international migration – for policy-making particularly – has tended to fragment the entirety of cross-border movement as a process. This fragmentation has led to much tension between different policies and their goals (public order, economic competition and efficiency, human security and rights). Formally defined 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” (IOM, 2004a: 33), international migration is legally and socially differentiated, tending to reflect the ‘anatomy’ of a stratified global society.<sup>1</sup> The last three decades has witnessed the erosion of regimes of international migration based on welfare and humanitarian concerns, and the ascendancy of multilateral initiatives in migration management guided by the logic of trade and finance, foreign policy and national security – often shifting the seat of decision-making away from labour and welfare departments (Pellerin, 2004). Gender and age appear significant in determining who participates in what regime of migration and for which types of work (Kampadoe/Doezma, 1998; Agustin, 2005; O’Connell

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<sup>1</sup> Four bodies of international legislations are directly relevant to the mobility of people across-border. They are: (1) The Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees (1951) and the 1967 Protocol Relating to the Status of Refugees which extended the geographical scope of refugee law (henceforth the Refugee Convention); (2) The United Nations Protocol to Prevent, Suppress, and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children, supplementing the Convention against Transnational Organised Crime (henceforth the UN Trafficking in Persons Protocol), (3) International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of their Families, henceforth the UN Migrant Rights Convention, and (4) Mode 4 of the General Agreement on Trade in Services (GATS) of the World Trade Organisation (WTO).

Davidson, 2003). Regulatory regimes tend to be shaped by labour market demands, selective preferences of states and practices of intermediaries (Lucas, 2006). The demise of the Refugee Convention has opened the scope for market-based practices of refugees and migrant smuggling.<sup>2</sup> The implementing of anti-trafficking policy has brought to light the degree to which a given social and cultural setting is conducive to human trafficking, smuggling and re-trafficking. The evidence points to some broader social processes that either disrupt livelihood systems (such as militarized conflict) or gradually erodes their sustainability (such as unsuccessful institutional reforms, or financial crisis and capital flight).

Breaking from the convention that treats different social worlds of transnational migration as mutually exclusive legal categories, this paper offers a perspective on their reciprocal implications. Drawing on Foucault's insights on governmentality, we emphasize the significance of thoughts underlying political discourses, practices of discipline and control over mobility. We highlight the nature of intersectional domination of gender, class and race as being contingent on a one-dimensional vision of liberty in neo-liberalism as a political rationality. We argue that human security as a project that seeks to address the daily security of the most vulnerable – of which people on the move constitute a significant group – can no longer afford to remain locked in a positivist framework of interpretation. It needs a combination of methods and a more contextually based '*dispositif*' – or an analytical disposition that provides a critical entry point to study the order of legal, moral and scientific discourses and practices of security on different scales. Sensitive to relations of inter-dependency and intersectional domination, feminist theory can help open up new space to build a political rationality that does not treat different categories of security as distinctive and self-contained, but as elements in a web of mutually implicating relationships and as matters of social injustice systemic to global capitalism as a whole.

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<sup>2</sup> The introduction of the categories of 'asylum seekers' and 'voluntary return' in the European Union for management purposes has undermined '*non-refoulement*' as the core principle of the Refugee Convention (Samers, 2003).

## 2 NEO-LIBERAL GOVERNMENTALITY, GENDER AND CULTURE

A specialist in systems of thoughts, Foucault has contributed to analytical practices about the historicity of specific discourses, the concrete questions concerning the institutional complexes of power. His concept of neo-liberal governmentality – first introduced in 1979 – is an important bridge between analyses of micro power with the reordering of reality at the macro level. Broadly defined as a complex network of relationships between thinking and ruling, neo-liberal governmentality has been identified by Foucault as a shift in the rationality in the conduct of government and relations with its subjects. This shift is premised on the active consent and subjugation of the governed through indirect techniques of control without a corresponding responsibility of the state (Foucault, 1997). His methods probe into an ensemble of institutions, procedures and supporting forms of knowledge, and relate these to issues of political economy and apparatus of security.

Rather than departing from a particular view on human nature (such as natural rights), he posited the view that the question about what ‘we’ are should be addressed as being entirely political and historical, as it reflects the politics immanent in history and a history indispensable for politics (Foucault, 1997: 288). This analytical disposition provides the space to bridge the study of governmentality with gender and cultural studies – by way of discourse analysis as a method and knowledge/power as conceptual tool – to trace the historical production and reproduction of gendered and cultural subjects as intersecting processes shaped by movements in structures of political economy and security concerns. Beckwith (2005) proposes two meanings of gender that can find a home in the study of governmentality. As a category gender is the contextual and multidimensional mapping of socially constructed identities, values, conventions and practices conceived as masculine and/or feminine – often overlapping with other categories such as race, class, age and religious affinity. As a process gender can be tracked through two vectors of significance: (a) the differential effects of policies and structures on men and women, and (b) the codification of gender norms in institutions and structures that carry different implications for men and women.

Processes of the (re) codification of gender under neo-liberal governmentality began with what Hindess (2004) regards as the mutation of liberalism as a political rationality, or what Lemke (2001) refers to as an epistemological shift on three

accounts: (a) the relationship between the state and the economy, (b) the basis of government, (c) the notion of the individual. Neo-liberalism in the reigning version of the Chicago school inverts the classical role of the state from a controller of the market to an object of control by the market, based on the claim of market being a superior organization principle. The neo-liberal political project seeks to create a society characterized by the cultivation and optimization of socially grounded differences (Lemke 2001). The basis of its government is the concept of self-government articulated through notions of ‘personal responsibility’ and ‘self care’ in an ‘entrepreneurial’ culture – an artificially created form of behaviour tied to rational calculation, economic prosperity and well-being in a personal and institutional sense. Freedom becomes predominated by market freedom. The aim is to reform what was considered as ‘the devastating consequences of public sector growth’ (Salskov-Iversen/Hensen/Bislev, 2000) and to change the ‘dependency culture’ among the dispossessed (Cannan, 1995).

The subsuming of society (as an entity made up autonomous individuals and institutions) under the market (as a controller of the state) allows neo-liberalism to link the one-dimensional rational action of individuals and institutions to the rationality of the government. *Per pro* this submission of the social domain becomes encoded as an economic domain and allows a systematic expansion of the object addressed by the market – from criminality and penal administration to development of human capital.<sup>3</sup> This eventually colonizes the entire social world with criteria of economic efficiency, including that of public administration. Empirical studies on governmentality in many fields have produced rich and fascinating findings on the current structural reforms worldwide (Dean, 1999; Rose, 1999; Cruiskshank, 1999; Rankin, 2001; Larner, 2000; Triantafillou/Nielsen, 2001; Lemk,e 2001; Larner/Walter,s 2004; Tyner, 2004). Finely grained differences apart, a converge of views exists on how the application of values and practices of the private sector to the public sector gradually erases a century-old tradition of distinction between both spheres, and the ambivalence about the contextual meanings of ‘empowered’ subjects.

From the standpoint of everyday life, by way of transferring the care for citizens as a duty of the state to ‘self-care’ as an obligation of individual entities (person, firm, family) neo-liberalism undermines the intrinsic worth of societal care as

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<sup>3</sup> In other words the notion of ‘society’ becomes equated with the notion of ‘market’.



an essential element in the human relationships in several ways. The epistemological grounding of a human person in the market gives prominence to its entry and maintains a marginal attention to moments prior to and after exit. The neo-liberalist concept of care omits the relational dimension between people, something that feminist ethics of care insist as significant. Feminist perspectives on the ethics of care have been built on the recognition of dependence as a universal feature at various moments in the human life cycle (infancy, illness, old age, death). Caring for dependents is a feature commonly associated with women's social role in the family, but often 'naturalized' in theoretical and policy discourses (Himmelweit, 1999). Feminist attempts to extend the social value of care beyond the family and gender relations and to provide a broader perspective on care have offered a view of care as the enactment of other responsibilities of citizenship – the concern for one another, the civic virtues of empathy, patience and solidarity – as relevant to democracy and professional practices (Sevenhuijsen 1998).

On the empirical level, Jenson and Sineau (2001) have illustrated how the redesign of the welfare state in Western Europe State over the last decades has been characterised by the demise of family values due to a mixture of forces, including feminist demands for gender equality, shifting political and democratic configurations, changing labour markets and employment needs. Contradictory tendencies – seeking to reduce the role of the state in the care sector while simultaneously stimulating the participation of women in the labour market as a means for their empowerment – has led to serious care gaps (Anderson, 2001; Kurian, 2006). State responses have not gone beyond the call to balance work and family life by introducing care leave entitlements applicable to both genders and creating horizontal forms of care provision in communities (Risseuw, 2006; Bettio/Annamaria/Villa, 2004).

The gendered reality of care remains problematic, primarily because of its time- use and commoditization – an issue that has been omitted in the neo-liberalist equation on self-government and efficiency (Williams, 2002; Danby, 2004). Care in all forms requires social time, something that the market cannot accommodate unless such time is mediated through the cash nexus. The diversion of social time to cash-related activities remains guided by gendered priorities and cooperative conflict because the biological time remains outside of the neo-liberal reasoning – except via the family as a mode of self-government. A consequence of the emphasis on self-care

and de-emphasis on dependence is the devolution of the responsibility for social care – for those who are unable to care for themselves or who are not culturally attuned to markets – from the state to an ill-defined realm occupied by voluntary associations with competing agendas and no constitutional obligations. As an equalizer, the market offers care at a price tag – often circumventing state regulations – to those who can afford when the family and community fail. Niches of market-based care provision as a commodity have emerged and been incorporated in global circuits of labour and production (Sassen, 2000; Parrenas, 2002; Hoschild/Ehrenreich, 2002; Agustin, 2003; Escriva, 2005).

Turning to post-colonial societies, the project of the modern state has been in many ways incomplete. In some social formations – such as the ‘developmentalist’ state East Asia and in South East Asia – the family remains in a crucial position in facilitating flexible accumulation, regional and global competitiveness in the early stage of industrialization. High growth rates achieved through labour discipline have forged a four-tier system of industrial work. The first is the wage earner, constructed along male norms with a formal wage system and protection. The second is the casual worker constructed along female norms and confined to temporary, part-time contracts, piece rates and irregular work. Such norms can be allied irrespective of the gender of the worker. The third is the dependent housewife – responsible for the maintenance of the workforce and care work – who may or may not combine unpaid care work with paid work. The fourth is the paid “reproductive workers” who take up either different forms of sexualized services in prostitution and entertainment, or domestic services (Truong, 1999). Semi-formalisation of work in commercial sexual services and care provision arise in parallel to the growth of a consumer society (Lim, 1998, Chin, 1998; Li/Findlay/Jones, 1998; Chang/ Ling, 2000). Both trends in consumption in high-income countries have led to the formation of intra-regional and international networks of labour transfer in areas previously confined to kinship and extended family. Increased use of private services by double-income middle-class families becomes a matter of principle more than an exception. The expansion of commercial sexual services originally contingent on military bases of the United States for reasons of national security became transmuted into a sex industry to support tourism services as an export product (Truong, 1990).

In countries with fragile states – as in the case of Sub-Saharan Africa and countries in transition from state-led communism to a market-led form of governance

– the violence of the neo-liberal discipline is manifest in the growing social polarisation, poverty and the collapse of local care systems, affecting mostly the young and elderly (Holzner/Truong, 1996; Truong, 2005). The experiences of transition and structural reforms in the greater majority of countries in Central and East Europe and Sub-Saharan Africa indicates a different articulation of neo-liberal governmentality – premised on the disciplines imposed by international financial institutions to create a new competitive environment for their integration in the global market. This has produced a crisis of social reproduction characterized experiences of human security and insecurity as moments in a continuum mediated by unjust social structures. The prolonged economic and social destabilization of these regions has induced massive population movements and facilitated the formation of trafficking and smuggling networks, targeting those eager to search for a secure life space (IOM 2001<sup>4</sup>, 2003). A shift of incentives in resource allocation based on price without due attention to the ways in which care relations and sexual relations are organized has undermined care systems based on traditional norms of kinship, friendship and neighbourhood, while strengthening market norms in commercial sex. A serious structural distortion of values has occurred: the sex sector yields higher returns than the care sector and leads to a mutation of livelihoods by which many women who migrate in search for work must accept the provision of sexual services as work in order to care for themselves and loved ones (Truong, 2003a, 2003b).

In brief, the obliteration of the social embedding of the ‘free’ agent combined with the use of the market as an instrument of individual choice and empowerment in some contexts have produced proliferated forms of gender conflict intersected with age, class and race on different scales. At first sight, while classical liberalism or state-led socialism did offer political projects for family security defined as welfare – albeit their inherent structures of domination – neo-liberalism did not offer anything to post-colonial societies except forging autonomous and risk-taking individuals irrespective of their social location in the anatomy of the global society. The global spreading neo-liberalism has contributed to the formation of locally specific versions of political

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<sup>4</sup> A report from the IOM counter-trafficking project in Kosovo suggests that 82.25 per cent of the women seeking assistance from the project went abroad to seek jobs, 71.25 per cent went with false job promise and 83.13 per cent ended up in the sex industry, 50.63 per cent did not have any relation with the recruiters, and 45.75 per cent left the countries of origin without an international passport because they were told that they did not need one (IOM 2001: 7-8). Many have been found to return home for new recruits, i.e. they have chosen to become pimps, as one option to earn money and avoid the brutality of unwanted sex by multiple men each day (Hughes 2000).

rationality against which the social construction of the new ‘subjects’ of mobility (as having agency) and the interpretation of choices (autonomous or forced) must be analytically placed.<sup>5</sup>

### **3 COUNTERING NEO-LIBERALISM: HUMAN SECURITY AS A POLITICAL RATIONALITY**

The representation of human security as a field of intervention first emerged in conjunction with concerns for ethics in resource use in development activities. Within the disarmament and development nexus Mahbub ul Haq (1994) queried the ethics of governments giving budgetary-allocation priority to armaments over and above providing milk for children. ‘We need today a new concept of human security – reflected in the lives of the people, not in the weapons of their countries’ (ul Haq, 1994: 116). To him switching spending from military to development activities constitutes an ethical action, which all governments should be encouraged to pursue. In an endorsement of the neo-liberal principle of individualism, he argued that channelling resources in the direction of human development – the enhancement of human capabilities – would contribute to a levelled the playing field, currently distorted by class, gender, ethnic and religious barriers. An improved level of human development, he suggested, would lead to better economic performance by developing nations and a more healthy competition in the global market.

Since this intervention, the concept of human security has been subject to new debates from a variety of angles. Rather than treating peace and war them as binary opposites Thomas (1999) views the proliferation of forms of human insecurity that has emerged since in the 1990s (such as intra-state violence, forced migration and environmental destruction) as the result of a newly polarized global social structure. She regards neo-liberal reforms worldwide in the 1980s and 1990s as a phase of transition of capitalism - from national to global – which has generated new forms of human insecurity for which collective responses are required. In her view the human security project cannot succeed if based on neo-liberal individualism, which she defines as the problem rather than solution. Her way of resolving the human

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<sup>5</sup> These may range from a rationality that sees the dependency of migrants’ remittances as an efficient means to solve national fiscal burdens or redress the decline of foreign investment, or the dependency on the trade in narcotics, small arms and organized crime to maintain the apparatus of state-security, or the management of diversity by forcing conformity through brute force.

insecurity question would involve a taming of the neo-liberal ideology at global level along with fostering collective efforts to protect and enhance the human development of vulnerable groups – the latter in combination with a rights-based approach to extant political systems.

From another perspective, Sverre Lodgaard (2001) sees the links between state security and human security as a matter of legitimacy. Failed states, he suggests, are states that no longer provide effective governance and therefore invariably have fallen down in respect of the provision of human security. His view on human security is based on the rule of law, public order and peaceful management of conflicts. To maintain its legitimacy, the state has to comply with an expanding body of international law that seeks to provide – from a plethora of rights-platforms – protection of citizens from torture, arbitrary arrest and detention, gender-specific violence, child abuse, mishandling of refugees, organized crime and the results of armed conflict between factions within a state (Lodgaard, 2001: 3-7). He places the concept of human security within the framework of governance, wherein it is defined as the daily security of groups of people vulnerable to violence during conflict situations. In other words, ensuring human security is a matter of identifying and targeting problematic states, and protecting groups of people living under problematic conditions – generated by the failure of governance. In his view, policies for security (state as well as human) are future-oriented; hence the objective should be prevention. The key phenomenon that needs preventing is physical violence provoked by mankind; therefore the concept of human security should be narrowed down to direct and personal violence (Lodgaard, 2001: 8). Human security as an outcome of a global economic disorder does not appear very prominent in his argument. He places economic security in the definitional boundaries of human development, which he believes cannot be mixed with human security. This position is backed by a nine-point agenda of the Human Security Partnership between Canada and Norway and a number of other states.<sup>6</sup> This covers land mines, International Criminal Court, Human Rights, International Humanitarian Law, women and children in armed conflict, small arms proliferation, child soldiers and northern cooperation (Acharya, 2002). Theorizing from the perspective on women's everyday experience of security feminist

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<sup>6</sup> Austria, Chile, Greece, Ireland, Jordan, Mali, the Netherlands, Slovenia, Switzerland and Thailand are members of this network.

scholars have argued that the human security discourse cannot ignore the gendered nature of the state, civil society and their capacity for structural stratification at all levels (Blanchard, 2003). Ensuring human security requires a process of deep transformation beyond and above the normative level.

From the perspective of societies in Asia affected by the 1997 financial crisis and subsequent economic meltdown, the experience of human security depicts a vision of inter-connectedness rather than compartmentalisation. Human security policy goes beyond protecting human life in conflict situations and encompass such as objectives as ensure the survival and dignity of individuals as human beings.<sup>7</sup> This view is also echoed by Amartya Sen (1999) in an approach to development policy which he labels ‘development as freedom’ (Acharya, 2002). He brings out the indivisibility of the three generations of human rights (political, socio-economic, and cultural) and provides empirical illustration on the causal relationship between freedom and human flourishing, and between the absence of freedom and human misery.

Indeed, East and Southeast Asia’s experience of the social and political impacts of the financial crisis reveals a reality of human security that is systemic rather than compartmentalized. In the aftermath of this crisis, these societies experienced the spiral effects of economic failure on the different dimensions of human security. At one level the crisis has set back the high performance in human development achieved through previous years of growth and investment, causing new forms of poverty and re-enforcing old forms (ILO, 1998; Truong, 2000). The rise in communal violence, illegal migration, human trafficking and organized crime in the region – as exacerbated by the economic downturn – has brought to the fore the inter-state character of human security, when it mainly affects the least protected (and especially migrants, women and children).

Against this backdrop governments and civic groups have become more aware of the significance of economic and societal security and not just security as assured income and physical protection for particular individuals and groups. The experience of the Asian crisis shows that human insecurity in daily life can be the results of economic insecurity that intensifies inter-community competition and promotes

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<sup>7</sup> Statement by Director-General Yukio Takasu at the International Conference on Human Security in a Globalised World, Ulan-Bator 8 May 2000 (<http://www.mofa.go.jp>).

personal insecurity. Violent responses for self-protection or self-enhancement can be deployed as the annihilation of the other and generate a process by which different identities – religious, gender, ethnical – one by one became an object of attack and a rallying point for oppositional politics and violence that can spread like bush fire, quickly spilling over to new issues and new states.<sup>8</sup>

From this perspective, security policy (state and human) cannot but take serious notice of issues such as structural inequality, unstable economic systems, and identity politics. To follow Lodgaard's definition of the objective of security policy (state or human) as prevention, the experience of the Asian crisis tells us that prevention does not rest only with problematic states or with the violation of rights of groups of people living under problematic conditions. Prevention also concerns the problematic environment in global political economy characterised by the ease of capital mobility that can abruptly destabilize the performance of economic systems and the livelihoods of populations. The issue is not just a matter of the failure or legitimacy of individual states; the failed legitimacy of global neo-liberalism as an economic doctrine is also an issue (Stiglitz, 2002).

Placed in its original context of development ethics, the equation in the human security framework would extend beyond the choice between armament and human development to cover also the choice between a widening of economic liberalism and social protectionism. To rephrase Mahbub Ul-Haq's equation, we need to fashion the concept of human security that is not just reflected in the fluctuation of our stock exchange, but as well in the consolidation of harmony and co-operation between different communities in society to build locally rooted social arrangements that can assure income and protection for the most vulnerable, particularly in times of economic distress.

Cultural politics of resistance based on the insistence of the recognition of differences has tended to overemphasize the bearings of history on the subject, without offering an alternative referent to what constitutes the human being when undressed of history and culture. Such politics have adopted a socially embedded

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<sup>8</sup> Religious tension in Indonesia initially erupted between Muslim Indonesian and Christian Chinese, targeting initially at Chinese women as objects of sexual violence. Gradually, all women including Muslim women became the epicentre of male violence. The attack on Bali in October 2002, and threats of similar attacks in tourists resort in Thailand allegedly link with the Al Qaeda reveals the weakness of a secular approach to human security that ignores issues of subjective religious identity in conditioning acts of violence.

approach to ontology based on a definition of a self, its knowledge and action as being encumbered by historical bearings (gender, race, colonial and post-colonial experience). Through this approach, an attempt is made integrate experience, insight and struggle of particular social groups – deprived of recognition and respect by wider currents of social interaction – into alternative visions of egalitarian politics. There is resistance to assigning a standardised definition of the human person. This seems to stem from the collective awareness of how variants of biological reductionism have historically justified social domination on the basis of gender and race (Sayers, 1982). Regrettably, this resistance has also left the political arena in a vacuum. This arena is therefore vulnerable to a gradual shift towards cultural reductionism or a line of argumentation that privileges an over-determining role of culture. An absence of consensus on what constitutes ‘culture’ led to a neo-liberalist form of pluralism by which the idea of multiculturalism has become not more than ‘a vague metaphor for a coalition of separatisms’ (King, 1996: 18).

Advocating the diversity of identity without a core referent runs the risk of discontinuity in the search for sameness as an intellectual and social project. A socially embedded approach to ontology for the purpose of psychological emancipation and political empowerment of disfranchised groups shows its limits when unable to recognise the human being (male or female, white or coloured) beyond the cultural subject. The stress on uniqueness of specific groups and difference with other groups has led to an involutory turn among identitarian cultural movements (Giri, 2005). In conflict situation, the assertion of uniqueness and rights can become internally repressive – more concerned with the collective identity than individual members irrespective of intra-group domination – or externally destructive – capable of fuelling cleansing campaigns once identities become intertwined with issues of material power such as resource and territoriality.

Against this background, ontological insecurity may be considered at the same time a psychosocial and a historical problem. At this juncture the issue is what art of government best assures ontological security, resolves cultural conflicts – as problems of overt as well as discreet processes of domination – and address intersectional domination. The ethical equation in human security as ontological security may be framed as the choice between the promotion of plurality of standpoints of cultural subjects or the search for a communicative subject capable of recognizing capability and vulnerability as two sides of human nature, and thence of epistemic and political



humility. A new mode of knowing and valuing that sanctions a new mode of conduct is much needed.

#### 4 CONCLUSION

Neo-liberalism has created a new style of government wherein economic values are more and more inscribed in the social domain without a corresponding inscription of social value in the economy. The emancipation potential of the new market-led society is fragmented and so far effectively foiled by the concept of self-government and enlargement of citizenship rights without an effective state as an equaliser. The key political question for human security as inclusive of the protection of people on the move is how to address the obsolete but powerful demarcation of the ‘domestic’ (self), and the ‘foreign’ (distant others). The ‘self’ and ‘others’ have become intertwined in processes of global production, reproduction and consumption – beyond discreet social and political units. As Faist (2005) points out we need new concepts capable of addressing the transnational nature of wellbeing. Foucault’s insight on a historical conception of the art of government may help to fulfil the task ahead: to assess the philosophical underpinnings of human security, the role assigned to historical forces and the ethical forces invoked. An art of government that seeks to promote human security as global peace cannot avoid a dialogue on the cross-cultural conception of compassion and autonomous spiritual capability as the capability to appreciate interconnectedness, inter-relatedness of being, having, loving and reciprocity. It is a significant human quality – overwritten by self-centred rational calculation – in need of re-activation to promote a deeper cultural transformation from mutual negation into mutual recognition.<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>9</sup> The term compassion in Buddhist is inclusive of meditation as a set of practices that promotes what is called *prajna* or penetrating insight. In this regard, compassion cannot be taken as a given, it is a form of knowing that can be released through the will to discover inter-being.

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