International order as a referent object: a conceptions-based framework for international security analysis

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1. A notion under fire

- The general framework: the conundrum of security studies in the post-cold war era

"Security is by no means objective", assert Charles Philippe David and Jean-Jacques Roche in a recent work[1]. It has been often affirmed that security is an "essentially disputed concept", defined from moral, ideological and normative elements, rather than an "analytical" one[2]. Although it evokes "intuitive" ideas, as the absence of threats against the existence or "essential values" of someone or something, its precise contents are hardly defined. "Traditionalist", military-centered visions are at odds with some "alternative" approaches developed in the last years.

Recent transformations of the strategic global framework have been obviously a primary reason for this. Within the bipolar order, security's conceptual ambiguity was quite broadly recognized. Discussions about its conceptual value notwithstanding, however, few disagreed with relating it essentially to the (military) question of threat of a major interstate conflict or, worse, global confrontation. In the post-cold war period, this "strict" conception was seriously damaged, in spite of some analytical attempts to restrict security studies exclusively to military (use of force) aspects of interstate relations[3]. As David and Roche pointed out, the end of strategic bipolarity encouraged reflections about the multiplicity of threats and sources of insecurity and boosted pleadings for a multi-track approach to security problems that include elements others than military ones. Consequently, the concept of security was "expanded" by practitioners and scholars, in order to deal with this "new" strategic environment. Innovative approaches, as illustrated by the work of Barry Buzan and other "Copenhagen School" scholars, intend to integrate economic, social, cultural and environmental issues at the core of security-related thinking in a coherent way[4].

This "horizontal extension" (broadening) of security go along with its application to "reference objects" different from the State, such as individuals, groups or nations, or the

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"world's community" – the so-called "vertical extension" (widening) of the concept[5]. These two movements, however, are not made in a separate way: several recent analytical proposals consider simultaneously a different reference object and non-military threats[6]. Therefore, several "new security concepts" have been proposed, more or less successfully: human security, total security (or "world security", according to the authors), "societal security", "environmental security", "economic security" and, from the critical security studies perspective, "individual security". As Ole Waever has noted, adjectives added to the concept of security indicate sometimes the "reference object", sometimes the "type" of security, and sometimes "means" to provide security[7]. An example of this last case is "cooperative security", defined as "…activity among states to lessen the likelihood of war, or its consequences should it occur, that is not directed at any specific state or group of states": while without replacing the interstate framework, it stresses the futility of states' individual, isolated efforts to ensure their security in an interdependent world[8]. However, in most cases neither the considered reference object nor the nature of threats are no longer the same than in "traditional" vision. Hence, rather than an "expansion", it is perhaps more accurate to describe the current situation as the "explosion" of the old concept of security: new ways of security studies also involved theoretical reflections, which gradually changed our understanding of its very essence[9].

- International security: precarious theory, ambiguous practice

Among this set of concepts, international security is a particularly elusive one. If the theoretical "blow up" of security as a whole have certainly contributed to its current state of (in)definition, international security has always been a diffuse concept - even, for some, one "not - concept", a notion without a valuable theoretical base[10]. Conceptual problems of the root concept of security are reinforced by doubts about the relevance of its application to the international system (as a whole). Predominance of a "realist" approach which presupposes anarchy as the essential character of an international system primarily made up of states is probably linked with this "conceptual inexistence": in realists' world, all that matters is state's security: the adjective "international" would evoke the existence or the relevance of a "supra-state" entity (international society, international community), perceived by realists like delusional[11]. It is useful to recall that even the term "international security" as a specific concept is relatively new: although United Nations Charter evokes "international peace and security", international security is nowhere independently mentioned in the Charter. Indeed, it only appeared forcefully in international relations studies as late as the Seventies, as reflected

in parution of the International Security journal. In some measure, it coincides with the emerging of "interdependence" in the field of security and the dilemmas which can emerge when each State is concerned exclusively with its national security[12]. But, as a specialist pointed out, international security studies re-examined the traditional subjects of "national security": disarmament (with special emphasis on nuclear proliferation), military balances, and so on[13]. To be sure, *International Security* journal did propose a somewhat specific definition of the field, seen as… "embracing all of those factors which have a direct bearing on the structure of the nation-state system and the sovereignty of its members, with particular emphasis on the use, threat, and control of force". The "structure of nation-state system" would appear there as the distinctive element of international security. However, subsequent works in the journal have been oriented to subjects closely related to national security (including, for example, internal politics related to national defense policies). Similarly, Barry Buzan and his colleagues vaguely define international security like "relations between collective units and how those are reflected upward into the *system*". [14] On the basis of a (constructivist) general vision of security like a discursive political act, they suggest that "... something is designated as an international security issue because it can be argued that this issue is more important than other issues and should take absolute priority"[15]. However, nothing in this argument seems to restrict the concept to "international" security, since this rise in a subject to the absolute political priority level is the essential feature of securitization in general, according to these authors. Although they specifically retain the assumption of the existence of "units of security" others than the states, their definition does not establish a clear demarcation line between national and international security. Others, like Buzan's colleague Ole Waever, forcefully argue that the concept of international security is indissociable of national security's one; indeed, he explicitly rejects the existence of an "international" reference object different from the state[16].

A similar observation rises from a revision of other attempts to model the expansion of the concept of security: not a single author retains "international security" as a concept having a clearly defined "reference object" or specific contents, contrary to, say, human security, "total security", or "societal security". Still, a conclusion emerges: the meaning of "international security" cannot be dissociated of general transformations operated in the comprehension of security as a whole.

Obviously, conventional visions of international security, centered on military issues, are contested not only by rising theoretical perspectives, but also by new strategic realities. At the

opposite of the bipolar confrontation era, the global environment that emerges in 1989 - 1991 is essentially characterized by uncertainty and by the absence of an "universal framework" to interpret the new international system, to identify the menaces and to face them on hierarchical basis[17]. In the nineties, subjects as internal conflicts, human right violations, organized criminality and international terrorism, and even the economic and environmental problems, were brought into "international security agendas", including the Security Council's one, whose practice has validated a broader interpretation of threats to international peace and security[18]. Most of these subjects have a double external - internal nature, and consequently stimulated discussions about the split between "domestic" and "external" questions[19]. But these evolutions did not lead to a new unifying vision; inversely, the only apparent consensus today relates to the need for a redefinition of international security. Very often, indeed, calls for this redefinition are made on a normative basis, making of them little more than a plea for a particular vision about what "international security" *should* be. It is possible to say, like Pierre Hassner, that "it would be still premature to identify a clear definition of [international] security by analyzing the current debates"[20]… or even accept John D. Steinbruner's more pessimistic conclusion: "a valid and broadly accepted conceptualization of international security probably will not emerge to replace the cold war formulation for quite some time, if ever"[21]. But perhaps it is also possible to look for some useful insights in the very new theoretical developments that undermine traditional approaches, in order to give some meaningful sense (although not necessarily an "objective" one) to this notion.

2. Toward a conceptions-based framework

- New approaches of the security studies and the subjectivization of security

As discussed above, for some theorists, particularly constructivist scholars, time has come to revaluate the very nature of the concept of security, to cease referring to the security studies as "neutral" tools: rather than to seek "the" concept of security, we should focus on the specific uses, interpretations and senses that various actors give it. "Securitization" – i.e., the process of attributing to something the nature of security problem – is conceived, such as we will see, like a discursive and political act, as showed in the various contributions of the School of Copenhagen: an issue becomes a "security problem" to the extent somebody names it in that way[22].

The security studies become by this way an object of analysis themselves. Jef Huysmans identifies three levels of analysis in the study of the nature of security[23]. A first level focalizes on analyzing different uses of the term, and propose a definition that synthesizes its essential contents. This is the case, for instance, in Buzan's *People, States and Fear*. The second, more "refined" level is the *conceptual analysis*: it lies in exploring security speeches to try to "condense" their meaning, using a whole of questions that will make possible to specify the implicit concepts in the debates on the security debates and policies. David Baldwin provides the best example of this way[24]. Finally, Huysmans says, the higher level of the analysis is reached when one explores the way in which the discursive references to security are used to articulate thinking about larger subjects, and in particular to reduce uncertainty (on the social relationship, the interaction between the subject and its environment, etc). The core of this level is about exploring the auto-referential aspect of security – that is, how the recourse to the "security speeches" makes it possible to reduce the insecurity as a subjective condition[25], by providing a framework of meaning which makes possible for an actor to order rationally his relations with the environment. That is what Huysmans calls "ontological security", in opposition to "daily security" – i. e. taking "exceptional measures" of protection face to perceived threats. In Huysmans's terminology, security is analyzed in the third level as a "*thick signifier* ", it is to say a conceptual category which articulates a wider meaning linked to the general framework in which it is used. This level thus leads us to discuss broader problems, concerning the role of security – and the speeches around it – in social relations[26].

Accordingly to Huysmans, then, the act of securitization is a "secondary mediation" process: an attempt to order and "rationalize" the relationship between the political actor and his environment, and doing so, reducing uncertainty and fear of the social entity face to a complex context – the primary mediation being the organization of actions against the issues and problems identified during this process of rationalization. Therefore, "securitization" is based on considerations which exceed the strict framework of the actor and the concrete situation that he is facing[27].

Huysmans's (and in a lesser extent Baldwin's) proposals can be seen as a useful and further development of a subjective perspective of security – i.e. its interpretation as a "essentially contested concept". Traditional visions, and even some contemporary developments, consider in effect that security can be "objectivized". Consequently, security studies should be used to identify the "real" threats, as well as the "good" responses; in other terms, the security studies must be used to better detect the "objective" nature of security and to build a security

strategy[28]. Hence, it represents an instrumental vision of the security study. In the other hand, the "subjective" approach asserts that security is exclusively a political construction and suggests that security studies' purpose is to explain various speeches and to detect various elements (normative, political, cultural...) that inspire them. Consequently, these perspectives entail changing views about the relationship between security policy-making and security studies: last ones are no longer seen as inputs for strategists, and politics as well as "ideology" underlying security thinking become the central object of analysis. Thus, the security studies can only be used indirectly for the formulation of a policy – for example, by providing elements of comprehension of the security speeches of other actors (partners, competitors, enemies).The relative and subjective character of security is perceived from this perspective as inherent to its nature, and not as an accidental condition – even if in the presence of a "unifying threat" perceptions can largely converge. As remarked by Ronnie Lipschutz,

> "Conceptualizations of security – from which follow policy and practice – are to be found in *discourses of security*. These are neither strictly objective assessments nor analytical constructs of threat, but rather the products of historical structures and processes, of struggles for power within the state, of conflicts between the societal groupings that inhabit states and the interests that besiege them. Hence, there are not only struggles over security among *nations*, but also struggles over security among *notions*"[29].

- "Conceptions" as an analytical instrument in the international security study

So far, international security is in a double dead end, epistemological and political. Epistemological, because the nature of security in general is today immersed in an essential and conceptual blur – and consequently, any concept of security suggested can be regarded as partial and "biased", as the reflection of a political vision, rather than of an "objective" understanding of reality; political, because in the uncertain international environment of the post-cold war period, international security *practices* do not provide neither broadly accepted hints to define it. Both constructivist developments of security studies and recent international evolution show that an attempt to get a single definition of international security from the various discourses of security is likely to be futile. Actors and observers of international security can interpret, even define it in different ways, and adapt it to their specific perceptions of international context, political priorities and convictions.

Still, as this interpretation evokes strongly the distinction between *concept* and *conceptions*, it seems possible to argue that "international security" could still be useful as an instrument of analysis, if we focus on the study of *conceptions* that are specific to the actors, while letting aside the search for one (hypothetical) universal, "objective" concept.

In the field of security studies, conceptions have not been the object of a rigorous theoretical analysis, despite the high number of references to them. Indeed, many works directly apply the term to particular cases, however without specifying how specifically a conception is understood. Some more theoretical works make use of this notion but do not establish any specific framework. Ole Waever, in particular, evokes the distinction conceptions/concept in a retrospective of conceptual history of security[30]. But for Waever, this difference was a matter of historical accuracy: to apply an analytical concept of security based on contemporary thinking to other periods in which its importance or its meaning was not the same ones, it would be necessary to establish "an analytical significance of security independent of the conceptions of the actors"[31]. David Baldwin's analysis is an attempt to precise the meaning of "security", the common denominator "underlying various conceptions of security"[32]; however, "conceptions" meaning and scope are not discussed, and seem to be simply equivalent to "uses". Therefore, we need to explore how this distinction has been used in other fields in order to refine its possible application as an analytical notion for international security.

As it is well known, the distinction conception/concept was initially proposed by John Rawls to analyze the concept of justice. For Rawls, the concept of justice evokes " *a proper balance between competing claims* ", while conceptions of justice refer to different "*set of principles for identifying what determines this balance* " [33]. In the field of political science, Stephen Lukes applied it to his study on power. For Lukes, "any given conception of power and of authority (and of the relation between them) can be seen as an interpretation and application of its concept"[34].

Evocatively, Lukes considers power as an "essentially contested concept", and explicitly describes it in that way[35]. Indeed, it is because an universally accepted vision does not exist, and consequently because of the confusion on the scope and contents of the concept of power, that it is possible to assert the existence of different conceptions for various actors. So, Lukes aims to offer "… a formal and abstract account of the concepts of power and authority respectively which inhere within the many conceptions of power and authority that have been

used by particular thinkers within specific contexts, in development from and in reaction to one another ". For him, this account should lead to redefine the notion in a (intended) more comprehensive way[36]. It is interesting to observe that Lukes's goal is ultimately very close to Baldwin's conceptual analysis purpose[37].

Taking inspiration from Lukes scheme, a conceptions-based framework would be based on the postulate that each actor, either in an explicit or implicit way, built his own definition (conception) of the international security, depending on his own perception of the international environment, and express it more or less explicitly in its actions and discourses. Thus, meanings of "international security"[38] would not rise from a single concept but from multiple, political approaches specific to the actors; and its relevance would not depend on its intrinsic qualities as an analytical concept, but on its use as a "signifier", in the sense considered by Huysmans.

Like Stefano Guzzini points out, although the distinction concept/conceptions presupposes a common "hard core" between various interpretations, it does not imply necessarily an exhaustive (taxonomic) definition, let alone a "neutral" concept. Still, while without claiming the existence of a concept of international security (not even a "formal and abstract" one), we can try to detect this "hardcore" working at the more refined levels of analysis identified by Huysmans[39]. The second level (conceptual analysis) implies, as mentioned above, to ask an array of essential questions. We will retain three: Security, for whom? Security, against what? Security, how? The first question, however, convey us to the problematic central point: the reference object of international security. It introduces, then, the more general discussion of the use of this concept as a *signifier* (Huysmans's third level), articulating a reflection on the relations between order and chaos.

- International security as a thick signifier (and international order as its "hardcore")

Indeed, we can argue that the specificity of international security lies precisely in the fact that it introduces the idea of an *international order* as a specific "protected object" – it is to say, by asking for the reference object ("security for whom?"), the "wider framework" is indeed the central element of the conception (not conceptual) analysis.

In spite of deep dissentions, most specialists agree to consider that the general concept of security is inseparable of the idea of protection against the threats (real or perceived) against

the values, the principles, the interests or the very existence of a reference object[40]. In the case of "national security", while discussed in the details, identity of this object remains clear: the state, the political unit whose continuity and integrity must be preserved. On the other hand, for the "Human Security" perspective and for the Critical School Theory, the reference object is the individual, whose fundamental rights and freedom must be protected.

But what do the adjective "international" imply when added to "security" in the actors' discourses? The specific feature of various uses of "international security" in discursive acts and academic works is the fact that the "protection" which calls upon is not supposed to be related to a state in particular. That is, indeed, the common feature of the various speeches and (rare) specific definitions of international security: they evoke a certain configuration of the relationship between the states, a particular way of structuring international relations, or in other terms, a certain (political) *international order*: Certain elements or behaviors would represent a threat for the security of this order *as a whole* (the "system", as defined by International Security editors and Buzan). While some specific "threats to national security" are likely to be considered simultaneously by one or more actors as "threats to international security", a speech act to "prove" their systemic effects is the *sine qua non* condition for it. This speech act, consequently, may become the object of discussion and analysis.

This notion of an international order as a supra-state entity will constitute for international actors the object to "defend" when transforming some question in an "international security" issue. The distinctive "hardcore" underlying different conceptions of international security is therefore the use of international order as a reference object, regardless the "organizing principle" that it is based on: international security is a meaningless notion in a entirely anarchical world, where every state becomes concerned exclusively with its own (national) security[41]. Following Lukes, every conception should be regarded as both an *interpretation* of this hardcore by an actor (it i.e. the way it conceives the very notion of "international order") and an *application* to its particular situation (i.e. its perception about the material reality of this order and of the threats against it).

The example of the United Nations collective security system may be useful to make clear this point. The United Nations Charter, by considering the response vis-à-vis the "threats against international peace or security", supposes an order of Sovereign states which do not make use of force in an aggressive way: aside from individual and collective self-defense, the only case in which use of force is authorized correspond to "collective defense" (within the

framework of an action authorized by the Security Council) Indeed, to synthesize the Charter's conception of international security, we usually talk about "collective security". But the evolutions of the international system severely weakened the relevance of this approach, founded on the existence of a solid agreement between the great powers that became quickly obsolete. Presently, states (and notably the most powerful one!) do not consider themselves fully constrained by the Charter's provisions on this matter – and their practice have failed to reflect the UN "collective security" conception[42]. Yet, despite this "deliquescence" of the collective security model, the main international actors (including States, international organizations, and NGO) do not defend openly a chaotic system, exclusively based on power and deprived of all regulation: at different degrees, they advocate a regulated order, a certain architecture of the international system, even if this order could be ultimately based on relative strength.

The international order, of course, is an object of reference less precise than the state, whom the core principle – sovereignty – while confronted with innumerable challenges and criticism, is however theoretically well established. International order does not represent a "material" reality comparable to the State, this one having a formal and "positive" existence as a unit; in contrast, not only attributes, but even founding principles of international order are disputed[43]. Furthermore, states have a "legal personality" and may be seen as expressing their views through speech acts of governments. These ones, *on behalf of the states*, can define an issue as a threat against the states themselves and invoke the necessity of exceptional protection measures (i.e. to securitize this issue). In other terms, in the case of national security referent object and securitizing actor can (formally) coincide. At the opposite, in the case of international security (just as, say, human or individual security), international actors invoke in their security speeches a referent object larger than themselves, crediting it of specific attributes. At some extent, they *create* by their discursive act the reference object to protect. Consequently, we need to conceive international order exclusively as a "discursive reference object", a signifier covering various senses depending on the actor who uses it. Hence, evocations of international security in the actors' speeches involve a particular manner to conceive the relationship between the states, to imagine the international life, just as references to "security" carry on a particular conception of social relations, or even of relations between life and death. Thus, the link between international security and international order gives to the former the nature of "thick signifier": it articulates a reflection beyond the "primary mediation" (daily security) questions, to retake Huysmans's terminology. Indeed, a conception of international security would represent a vision of the

relationship between the international actor and his context, and of this context itself, by calling upon a framework – the conception of the international order defended by this actor – which represents the supreme effort of rationalization of an uncertain environment.

Conclusion: some implications on contemporary security debate

If the notion of international order may introduce a distinctive, meaningful content for international security, this one should not be so quickly discarded as an analytical instrument, particularly in the present context. As it has been recently pointed out, "the last ten years have witnessed stimulating and often animated debate on very basic questions about the post–Cold War international order and the role and likely fate of major players within that order"[44]. Since international order is not a clearly defined entity but a mental construction of securitizing actors, is unlikely that a consensus is going to appear in the coming years. If this debate is there to stay, a conceptions-based framework could provide useful insights to coherently interpret, analyze, and compare the implications of different visions of international order on (international) security debates. At the extent that the "referent object" is not the same for all actors, their threat perceptions (and proposed responses to identified threats) are likely to have distinctive features.

The initial discussion of various international orders could be done particularly on the basis of different typologies. There have been different proposals, on the basis, among others, of the centralization of the political power[45], or the "founding principles" of international system[46]. Comparing conceptions of international order would be, of course, only a first, but essential step. Further developments, possibly through classic fundamental questions like "security against what?" (threat perception) or "security, how?" (responses to threats), could be helpful in analyzing the relationship between identified conceptions, and clearly focusing the analyst's work on security speeches, while letting aside as far as possible normative assertions.

Presently, this perspective could be particularly applicable to transatlantic relations, since order representations have become one of the most popular subjects in contemporary work about "transatlantic split". Recently, American conception of international order has been increasingly discussed in terms of "empire", "hegemony", or "unipolarity"; In contrast, European (or, more accurately, "U-European") conception is more associated with "security governance" and other "postmodern", less state-centered visions of political order[47]. In terms

of Michel Walzer's typology of international orders, based on the political degree of centralization, American conception of international order would be nearer of what Walzer names "global empire"; on the other hand, U-European conception would be favorably inclined to something between "strong international society" and "high density global pluralism"[48]. Obviously, a further, systematic study of the extent, importance and temporality of this evolution would be necessary; nevertheless, the framework described above could be useful to argue in a more coherent way about the implications of noticed differences on the existence (o not) of a transatlantic identity in terms of international security discourses.

REFERENCES

[1] Charles-Philippe David and Jean-Jacques Roche, *Théories de la sécurité* (Paris: Montchrestien, 2002), p 85

[2] The application of the expression "essentially disputed concept" to security and the subsequent idea was first proposed in one of most often quoted studies: Barry Buzan, *Peoples, States and Fear. An Agenda for International Security Studies in the Post-Cold War Era* (Boulder (CO): Lynne Rienner, 1991), 2nd ed., p. 7. The expression was first proposed by William Ballie to describe the concepts which "essentially involve endless disputes about their proper uses on the part of their users", it is to say, the concepts whose the meaning is inevitably and indefinitely a ground for dispute. William E. Gallie, 'Essentially Contested Concepts', *Proceedings of the Aristotelian Society*, Vol. 56 (Winter 1955-56). Since then, the concept was frequently used and enriched, in particular in the works of William E Connolly. See for example William E Connolly, *The Terms of Political Discourse* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1993).

[3] The best example is Stephen Walt, 'The Renaissance of Security Studies', *Mershon International Studies Review* No. 41 (1991), p. 211-239. A seminal work in the controversy about ambiguities of the notion of security is Arnold Wolfers, *National Security as an Ambiguous Symbol*, in Wolfers, Arnold, *Discord and Collaboration. Essays on International Politics (*Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press, 1962), pp. 147-165

[4] Barry Buzan, Ole Waever, and Jaap de Wilde, *Security: A New Framework for Analysis* (Boulder: Lynne Rienner, 1998). To be sure, some specialists see in this "expansion" of security field an attempt to perpetuate the relevance of security studies as a discipline - i.e. a response to the "threat of irrelevance" from security specialists. See: *Cultures & Conflits* No. 19-20: *Troubler et inquiéter : les discours du désordre international* (Paris: Centre d'études sur les conflits, fall 1995), and particularly articles by Didier Bigo, 'Grands Débats dans un Petit Monde. Les débats en relations internationales et leur lien avec le monde de la sécurité', and John Mueller, 'Scénario catastrophe : désordre après la guerre froide'. However, non-military questions actually were a matter of analysis in former security studies, before these ones became almost entirely devoted to Cold War issues. Cf. Jean-Jacques Roche, *Quelles politiques de sécurité pour l'après-guerre froide ? Une approche réaliste de la sécurité à l'aube du XXI°siècle.* Cahier Raoul-Dandurand, n. 5. (Montréal: Quebec University, April 2001).

[5] Laurent Goetschel, 'L'Union européenne et la sécurité collective', in *Relations Internationales* no. 86 (summer 1996), pp. 143-161. This distinction between "horizontal" and "vertical" extension was first proposed by Emma Rotschild, 'What is Security', *Daedalus* Vol. 124 No. 3 (1995), 53-98.

[6] See, among many texts discussing the scope and the ambiguity of the concept of security and its "expansion" in the post-cold war period : Ayse Ceyhan, 'Analyser la sécurité : Dillon, Waever, Williams et les autres', *Cultures & Conflits* (Fall 1998).; Ronnie D. Lipschutz (ed.), *On Security* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1998); Björn Möller, *The Concept of Security: The Pros and Cons of Expansion and Contraction.* Paper for joint sessions of the Peace Theories Commission and the Security and Disarmament Commission at the 18th General Conference of the International Peace Research Association, (Tampere, Finland, August 5-9, 2000); Sarah Tarry, *'Deepening' and 'Widening': An Analysis of Security Definitions in the 1990s*. Department of Political Science University of Calgary ; Simon Dalby, *Geopolitical Change and Contemporary Security Studies: Contextualizing the Human Security Agenda*, Institute of International Relations University of British, Columbia: Working Paper No.30 (April 2000); Malcolm Anderson and Joanna Apap, *Changing conceptions of security and their implications for EU justice and home affairs cooperation*, Center for European Policy Studies: Policy Brief No. 26 (October 2002). For a useful synthesis, see David A. Baldwin, 'Security Studies and the End of the Cold War' , *World Politics* Vol. 48 No. 1 (Princeton: Center for International Studies 1996), pp. 117-141.

[7] Ole Wæver, *Security: A Conceptual History for International Relations* Paper for International Studies Association annual meeting (New Orleans, March 24-27, 2002).

[8] Michael Mihalka, *Cooperative security: From Theory to Practice*. In: Richard Cohen, and Michael Mihalka, *Cooperative Security: New Horizons for International Order*. The Marshall Center Papers, No 3 (April 2001), p. 35. Cooperative Security is very close to the notion of "common security" suggested by the Commission Palme and also called "mutual security" or "reciprocal security". See also *Common Security, A Programme for Disarmament* – The Report of the Independent Commission on Disarmament and Security Issues (Palme Commission) (London: Pan Books, Ltd., 1982). Some analysts point out that common security and cooperative security, though very close related, are not equivalent concepts. See in particular Olav F. Knudsen, *The concept of cooperative security and its relationship to policy*. Paper for the conference 'Reframing the Security Agenda of the 21st Century', ISA 42nd Annual Convention (Chicago, February 21-24, 2001), as well as a comprehensive document on common security: Andy Butfoy, *Recasting common security*. Department of International Relations – Research School of Pacific and Asian Studies, Working Paper No.1995/8 (Canberra: Australian National University, September 1995). The Japanese concept of "comprehensive security" – retaken by ASEAN - is close to the concept of cooperative security, but its scope is more clearly regional. Finally, other authors assert that these trhree notions (common, comprehensive, and cooperative security) must be understood like forming part of one more general conception of security; see David Dewitt, 'Common, Comprehensive, and Cooperative Security', *The Pacific Review*, Vol 7, No 1 (1994), pp. 1-15

[9]For a useful systematization of the various theoretical currents in the security studies, see also Ian Manners, *European [security] Union: from existential threat to ontological security* Copenhagen Peace Research Institute, Working Paper 5/2002. For a very complete history of the historical evolution of security since antiquity, see Ole Wæver, *Security: A Conceptual History for International Relations*, op. cit. A short general presentation of the evolution of the concept of security in the environment of the post-cold war, specifically applied to the European case, is proposed by Harald Müller, *Terrorisme, prolifération : une approche européenne de la menace*, Cahiers de Chaillot n°58 (Paris : Security Studies Institute UEO, March 2003). For a discussion on the place of different security perspectives in international relations theory, see Robert Jackson, et Georg Sørensen, *Introduction to International Relations - Theories and Approaches* (Oxford University Press, 2003) (2ème ed.), chapters 8 and 9.

[10] "As concepts, *neither individual or international security exist.*..There is no literature, no philosophy, no tradition of "security" in non-state terms; it is only as a critical idea, played out against the concept and practices of state security, that other threats and referents have any meaning". Ole Wæver, *Securitization and Desecuritization*. in Ronnie D. Lipschutz, (ed.). *On Security, op. cit.* (emphasis in original).

[11] It is interesting to note that "theories" based on "supra-state entities" ("international civil society", "global governance"…) are often classified as "idealist" approaches (in opposition to realism). Cf. David and Roche, *Théories de la sécurité*, op. cit., pp. 101 – 103. For a classic criticism of the description of international system as anarchy, see Alexander Wendt, *Anarchy is What States Make of It: The Social Construction of Power Politics*, op. cit.

[12] What, as we saw, was also the case for concepts already evoked such as "cooperative security" or "total security". From a theoretical point of view, the question of the interdependence of security perceptions is also at the center of the notion of "security complexes". See Barry Buzan et. al., *Security: A New Framework for Analysis, op. cit.* (particularly chapter 1 and conclusions) and Barry Buzan, *People States and Fear, op. cit.*

[13] David Baldwin,. *Security Studies and the End of the Cold War, op. cit*., p. 124. For example, we may quote the definition (of international security) proposed by Lawrence Freedman… which corresponds entirely to Stephen Walt's notion of national security!: "International security addresses questions of force: how to spot it, stop it, resist it, and occasionally threaten and even use it". Lawrence Freedman, 'International security: changing targets', *Foreign Policy* (spring 1998).

[14] Buzan et. al., *Security: A New Framework for Analysis, op. cit.*, p. 208. Emphasis added.

[15] Ibid, p. 24

[16] In a somewhat confused way, Waever asserts: "International security does not negate national security, rather it contains the assumption that true national security can only be realized as international security, while international security aims not at securing something international but at providing national security in a healthy way". Ole Wæver, *Peace and Security -- two concepts and their relationship*, in Stefano Guzzini and Dietrich Jung (eds.), *Copenhagen Peace Research: Conceptual Innovation and Contemporary Security Analysis* (London: Routledge 2004), p. 9. For Weaver, the "international" sense of the concept of security is, indeed, national security's one: see Ole Weaver, *A Conceptual History for International Relations*, op. cit., p. 46-50

[17] Charles Zorgbibe, *L'avenir de la sécurité internationale* (Paris : Presses de Science Po, 2003), p. 21.

[18] David M. Malone, 'Le Conseil de sécurité dans les années 90 : essor et récession ?', *Politique étrangère*, 2/2000 (summer 2000). For an analysis of agenda making process, see Johan Eriksson & Erik Noreen, *Setting the Agenda of Threats: An Explanatory Model*. Uppsala Peace Research Papers, no. 6 (Uppsala (Suède): Uppsala University Press, 2002)

[19] Particularly in Didier Bigo's work. See for example Didier Bigo,. *Internal and External Securit(ies), the Mobius Ribbon*, in Mathias Albert et al, *Identities, Borders, and Orders* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2001)

[20] Pierre Hassner, *Nouvelles perspectives de la sécurité internationale*. in: UNESCO. *Quelle sécurité?* CAB-97/WS/3 (Paris: Unesco, 1997).

[21] John D Steinbruner, *Principles of Global Security* (Brookings Institution Press 2000), p. 11.

[22] Like Ole Waever recently synthesized it, "Security is a self-referential practice. It is by labelling something a security issue that it becomes one – not that issues are security issues in themselves and then afterwards possibly talked about in terms of security." See Ole Wæver, *Security agendas old and new, and how to survive them*, Universidad Torcuato Di Tella, Working Paper nº6 (Buenos Aires : Universidad Torcuato Di Tella, September 2000), p. 8, and Ole Weaver, *Securitization and Desecuritization*, op. cit.

[23] Jef Huysmans, 'Security! What do you mean? From Concept to Thick Signifier', *European Journal of International Relations*, Vol.4 No.2 (Londres : SAGE Publications,1998), pp. 226 - 255

[24] David Baldwin, *The Concept of Security* in : *Review of International Studies*, Vol. 23, No. 1 (January 1997), pp. 3-26.

[25] For the distinction between objective and subjective contents of security, see Arnold Wolfers, *National Security as an Ambiguous Symbol*, op. cit. This author then defined security in an objective double-direction - as "the absence of threats to acquired values" - and subjective – as " the absence of fear that such values will be attacked " (p. 150)

[26] Huysmans push the argument so far to assert that the concept of security implies a particular metaphysics, a particular conception of the relationship between life and death based on the simultaneous fears of death and of

the unknown (Huysmans, op cit., pp. 231 - 238). More concretely, Buzan *et. al*. deduce from his analysis the need for replacing the analysis of security as a question of politics (the decision to deal with a problem as a security issue, i.e. justifying the adoption of exceptional measures, beyond "normal politics"), rather than as an "ontological" question. Cf Barry Buzan *et al*, *Security: A New Framework for Analysis*, op.cit.

[27] Huysmans, *op. cit.*

[28] Concerning the "nature" of the security, authors from the Critical Theory perspective are rather near to an "objective" vision of security - that is, they conceive this one like having real contents, independent of actors' speeches. On the other hand, they dispute the focus of traditional perspective on the State, insisting on the centrality of the individual – "the true" reference object of security; in the same way, they adhere to a broader vision of threats, by stressing the importance of nonmilitary factors. However, several of the representatives of this approach insist on "conservative", even reactionary nature of the traditional security theories, which legitimate the maintenance of the existing structures of power (and in this point they assert the political nature of the security theories and speeches). That is because the concept of *individual emancipation* plays a leading role in these authors' work. By the way, critical security studies take a partially normative step, which wants to be revolutionary, compared to the "mainstream" security studies and which are defined mainly in opposition to "realism". So, Barry Buzan *et al.* critical studies are "objectivists" concerning security but "constructivists" about social relations and international order (Cf. *Security: A New Framework for Analysis, op. cit., p. 205*). Voir Richard Wyn Jones, *Security, Strategy, and Critical Theory*. *op. cit.* ; Keith Krause et Michael Williams, (eds), *Critical Security Studies: Concepts and Cases* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, and London: Pinter, 1997), and Ken Booth, Steve Smith (eds), *International Relations Theory Today* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1995).

[29] *On Security*. Ronnie D. Lipschutz, op. cit., emphasis added. We adopt, then, some aspects of the constructivist perspective, by considering that rather than a single, "true" concept of security, there are different interpretations *built* by the actors. C*onstructivism* was explicitly used for the first time to design a perspective in international relations, and more particularly in security studies, in 1989 (by Nicholas Onuf). But the "seminal work" is actually Alexander Wendt, 'Anarchy is What States Make of It: The Social Construction of Power Politics', *International Organization* No. 46 (1992): 391-425. For more details on this approach and its place in the theory of the international relations, see: John Gerard Ruggie, 'What makes the world hang together? neo-utilitarianism and the social constructivist challenge', *International Organization* Volume 52 No 4 (Autumn 1998). See also: Alexander Wendt, *Social theory of international politics* (Cambridge : Cambridge University Press, 1999). For a criticism of recent evolutions of constructivist studies in international relations, see Jennifer Sterling-Folker, 'Competing paradigms or birds of a feather? Constructivism and neoliberal institutionalism compared', *International Studies Quarterly* 44:1 (2000), 97-119

[30] Ole Wæver. *Security: A Conceptual History for International Relations*, op. cit.

[31] Ibid, p. 2

[32] David Baldwin, 'The concept of security'; op. cit, p. 5

[33] John Rawls, *A Theory of Justice*. Clarendon Press, Oxford, 1972, p 10.

[34] Steven Lukes, *'Power and Authority'*, in : Tom Bottomore and Robert Nisbet, (ed.), *History of Sociological Analysis* (London: Heinemann, 1979), p. 634, quoted by Stefano Guzzini, *"Power" in International Relations: concept formation between conceptual analysis and conceptual history*, Paper presented at the 43 rd Annual convention of the International Studies Association in New Orleans, (March 24-27, 2002).

[35] Stephen Lukes, *Power: A Radical View* (London : Macmillan, 1974), particularly pages 4 – 6. In this earlier work, Lukes presents his central idea (i.e. that a conception can be seen like an interpretation and an application of the concept) in a more tentative way, limited to the three conceptions specifically discussed in it. It is in *' Power and Authority ', op. cit*., that he generalizes his conclusions for every possible conception of power.

[36] Stephen Lukes, *' Power and Authority ', op. cit*., p. 634. Lukes's definition of power is "relational" and, indeed, considerably formal "A exercises power over B when A affects B in a manner contrary to B's interests"). Stephen Lukes, *Power: A Radical View*, *op. cit.*, p. 4.

[37] Nevertheless, as Lukes's epistemic foundations were more clearly established, the comprehensive, abstract concept that he developed eventually became a central reference for the analysis of power.

[38] It is possible, of course, to argue that this reasoning is also applicable for the basic notion of security. But as explained above, the particular situation of "international security" as a fuzzy analytical category pleads more forcefully for a "subjective" approach.

[39] Stefano Guzzini, "*Power" in International Relations, op. cit.*, p 5. the "independent analytical significance" that Ole Waever calls for in the case of security can be seen as corresponding to this "hardcore".

[40] "Concepts of security have, however, one principle thing in common – they are based on fear of actual and potential attacks on public authorities, persons and property". Anderson et Apap, *op. cit.*, p 2. A similar appreciation is proposed by Barry Buzan and its colleagues, for whom the criterion which defines a security issue is the fact that it is announced by an actor like an existential threat against a reference object (*Security: A New Framework for Analysis*, *op. cit*., p. 4). By doing this, they follow the traditional definition proposed by Arnold Wolfers (see note 25).

[41] So, in our view, when Waever affirms that the concept of international security is inseparable of national security and exclusively limited to guarantee the states' security, he neglects the fundamental distinctive element - the "mediation" role that the concept of order plays. Admittedly, the concept of international security is often evoked from the state-centric point of view; nevertheless, it is the accent on the protection of a *particular system of relationships* between the states (and not on their individual survival) as well as on *systemic effects* of an issue which make the difference between "international" and "national" security. Neglecting the question of possible different configurations (not necessarily the "realist word") of international order, Weaver seems to join implicitly the realist perspective on this subject. Even some (national) threat definitions are, indeed, also reliant on the existence of an order beyond "states' jungle": as an author pointed out, a notion as "rogue state" make no sense out of the framework of an international order. See Charles Zorgbibe, *L'avenir de la sécurité internationale, op. cit.*, p. 36

[42] Recent developments have, of course, reinforced this trend. Nevertheless, UN legal framework on use of force had been long ago declared "dead" by some analysts. See Anthony C Arend and Robert J. Beck, *International law and the use of force : beyond the UN Charter paradigm* (London; New York: Routledge, 1993). For latter applications of the same argument to the current debate, see Anthony Clark Arend, 'International Law and the Preemptive Use of Military Force' The *Washington Quarterly*, Volume 26 Number 2 (spring 2003), pp.89 –103.

[43] Nicole Gnesotto identifies three possible "founding principles" of international order: strength, international law, and values. Nicole Gnesotto, *La sécurité internationale au début du XXIème siècle.* in : *Ramsés 2000 – Annuaire des Relations internationales* (Paris : Institut Français de Relations Internationales, 2001)

[44] Steven E. Miller, 'International Security at Twenty-five: From One World to Another', *International Security* 26, no. 1 (Summer 2001): 5-39, p. 28. And Miller added : "This roster of questions is more consequential politically and more challenging intellectually than the substantive agenda of the mature Cold War period".

[45] Michael Walzer, '*De l'anarchie à l'ordre mondial : sept modèles pour penser les relations internationales*', *Revue Esprit.* No. 5 2001 (Paris : May 2001), p. 142 – 157.

[46] Nicole Gnesotto, *La sécurité internationale au début du XXIème siècle*, op. cit.

[47] See, for example Elke Krahmann, *American Hegemony or Global Governance? Competing Visions of International Security*. Paper presented to ISA Annual Convention (Montreal, March 16-20, 2004).

[48] This "transatlantic opposition" would be mirrored in security studies: as Weaver points out, European scholars have developed a set of perspectives less "state-centric" than realist/neorealist approaches. At some extent, these new views could have inspired U-European "doctrine" on international security. See Ole Wæver, *Aberystwyth, Paris, Copenhagen –New 'Schools' in Security Theory and their Origins between Core and Periphery*, Paper presented at the annual meeting of the International Studies Association (Montreal, March 17-20, 2004).