

# Conference in Florence



Quality of Life. Reflections, Studies and Researches in Italy

Firenze, 9-10 Settembre 2010

<b>NUMERO SESSIONE</b>	5
<b>TITOLO SESSIONE</b>	Qualità della vita, pubblica amministrazione e società civile: strategie di analisi e intervento

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<b>TITOLO</b>	Security, quality of life and development. A holistic approach

## ABSTRACT

Montesquieu claims, "When . . . virtue ceases, ambition enters into those hearts that can admit it. . . . One was free under the laws, one wants to be free against them. Each citizen is like a slave who has escaped from his master's house. What was a maxim is now called severity; what was a rule is now called constraint; what was vigilance is now called fear. There, frugality, not the desire to possess, is avarice. Formerly the goods of individuals made up the public treasury; the public treasury has now become the patrimony of individuals" The disappearance of political virtue and the rise of ambition or the desire for power and physical pleasure would be at the basis of loss of capabilities. This results in a desire for 'freedom' intended as being free from laws, for self- fulfillment rather than self-restraint or self-government.

The UNDP concept of 'human security' underlines the importance of severe threats' absence: 'Job security, income security, health security, environmental security, security from crime – these are the emerging concerns of security all over the world'. According to Sen, 'Human security is concerned with reducing and, when possible, removing the insecurities that plague human lives'

Human security, in its broadest sense (Commission on Human Security), includes the absence of violent conflict, human rights, good governance, access to education and healthcare, positive right for each individual to get opportunities to fulfill own potential.

Sen's concept of development similarly considers security as an intrinsic aspect of development, whose goals are freedom and expansion of human capabilities, social cohesion and absence of conflicts.

Traditional approaches often front security by defensive policies. As an intuitive consideration, the perception of strong security measures generates an insecurity feeling, as it reveals the presence of threats. Own security depends mainly on defensive abilities.

From a more rigorous perspective, security is not falsifiable, as it holds until the next incident occurs. A single insecurity state is instead falsified every time a single threat or true causal factor disappears. Democracy and freedom highly reduce insecurity. Defense against threats will be limited to those cases not depending on those causes.

GDP, strongly criticised since decades as a measure of development, still rules economic systems without considering the goal of capabilities' expansion. The conception of development having as a main goal pushed capital accumulation and individual success hardly allows reducing insecurity and increasing freedom. Too often individual security relies upon ineffective defensive policies. A particular example regards more inclusive governance of energy infrastructures and their particular criticality and complexity.

Concepts such as development, well-being, security and freedom are strictly interrelated. Individual capabilities are based on collective capabilities. Even in free market economies, the human needs listed in Maslow's pyramid, sometimes cannot be marketed at all. Some other times, they can be marketed but only in presence of regulatory support or instances of collective governance or agreements (see food, housing, employment, healthcare, family policies, free fresh water availability, security and safety, police services and national defense, defense of property rights), for the reason that they are however basic needs or public goods. They are often object of political debate, because their absence means absence

of development and rise of social conflict. The more those goods are shared among larger parts of population, the less we experience social conflict and political instability.  
Security, hardly achievable individually, is the result of a more holistic thinking. Individual security and freedom implies the security and freedom of all.

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