Human Security as Ontological Security: A Post-Colonial Approach

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Abstract

This article [1] will critically interrogate the relationship between Human Security and Ontological Security from a broadly post-colonial perspective. For Anthony Giddens to be 'ontologically secure is to possess… "answers" to fundamental existential questions which all human life in some way addresses'(Giddens 1991:47). Religion and nationalism provide 'answers' to these questions in times of rapid socio-economic and cultural change (Kinvall 2004). The dislocation engendered by successive waves of neo-liberal globalization has resulted in the deracination of many of the world's inhabitants resulting in a state of collective 'existential anxiety' (Giddens 1991). Under such conditions, the search for ontological security becomes paramount. However, conventional understandings of Human Security as 'freedom from fear and want' are unable, from a post-colonial perspective- to provide the individual with ontological security since they operate with a culturally specific, Eurocentric understanding of the 'human' as 'bare life' (Agamben 1998). It will then be argued that *post-secular* conceptions of Human Security (Shani 2014) by acknowledging the role which culture and religion can play in providing answers to existential questions concerning the 'basic parameters of human life' are better able to 'protect' the ontological security of the individual in times of rapid global transformation in the post-colonial world given the centrality of religion to post-colonial subjectivity. This will be illustrated by the case of the global Sikh community. It will be argued that ontological, and therefore, Human Security rests on reintegrating the 'secular' and 'temporal' dimensions of *Sikhi* which had been severed as a result of the colonial encounter.

Keywords

Human Security, Ontological Security, Post-colonialism, Post-secularism, Sikhism

Introduction

The decision of the British people to reject continued membership in the European Union on June 23rd 2016 may be viewed as the latest nail in the coffin of the great elite-led neoliberal project of 'globalization'. In truth, the age of globalization ended over a decade ago[2] with the twin 'black Septembers' of 2001 (hereafter 9.11) and 2008 (hereafter the global financial crisis) shaking confidence in the liberal project of secular modernity and an emerging 'market civilization.'[3] Globalization[4] as a project sought to make the world safe for capitalism by constructing 'global' subjects. Rational, self-interested and autonomous, these *resilient* individuals would be able to look to themselves and not the state for security. It provided the *leitmotif* for a 'runaway world'[5] marked by transformation rather than continuity.

Security in the pre-global era was characterized by narratives of belonging to territorially-defined political communities. States provided not only *physical* (and in some cases material) security but also *ontological* security. Ontological security, according to Anthony Giddens, refers to a 'person's fundamental sense of safety in the world and includes a basic trust of other people. Obtaining such trust becomes necessary for a person to maintain a sense of psychological well-being and avoid existential anxiety.'[6] Globalization, however, challenged our very understanding of 'inside/outside'[7] by bringing the state and its monopoly of the use of *legitimate* violence over a given territory[8] into question. Many saw globalization to have ushered in a *global civil society* existing alongside a society of states characterized by the commitment to liberal values. The spread of liberal democratic institutions, a renewed commitment by both intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations to humanitarian activism and intervention, and growing trends towards regional integration within the EU led some to liken this nascent global civil society with Kant's idea of 'a universal civil society.'[9]

The events of 9.11 and the ensuing 'War on Terror' however, exposed this as a myth while exposing the impotence of the state to *physically* protect its citizens from *transnational* threats. Furthermore, as the global financial crisis of 2008 suggested, the state is not able to protect its citizens from the disruptions to everyday lives experienced as a result of integration within a global market. Nor, with the concomitant waves of legal and illegal migration, mainly from those areas of the postcolonial world deemed 'surplus' to the demands of global capital, can the state continue to define the political community in predominately *national* or *ethnic* terms. This is acutely felt in the European Union where the

free movement of labour within the region is guaranteed by Article 45 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union[10]. The challenge posed to narratives of belonging based on 'primordial attachments'[11] to an ethnically-defined national community is exacerbated by the possibility of the EU absorbing more migrants from the conflict-ridden areas of the Middle-East and North Africa (MENA) region. The spectre of a concomitant 'clash of civilizations' [12] continues to haunt Europe in the light of periodic attacks upon it by 'homegrown terrorists' from its migrant communities.

In such circumstances, 'Brexit' may not be considered a shock but is symptomatic of a retreat from the (neo)liberal project of globalization, exemplified in Europe by the rise of populist, autochthonous, anti-migrant political parties.[13] In the United States, this is mirrored by the election of President Donald Trump, a populist who favours unilateralism and tight immigration controls, and opposes the North America Free Trade Area (NAFTA), the Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP) and the right of people from seven Muslim majority states from even visiting the United States. What we appear to be witnessing in the West is not only a retreat from globalization but a rejection of cosmopolitan conceptions of *Human Security*[14] in favour of the search for communitarian narratives of *ontological security* in the reassertion of 'national' sovereignty and civilizational identities.

Argument and Structure

This article will account for the failure of conventional understandings of Human Security to provide ontological security in our 'global age,' from a broadly post-colonial perspective. By Human Security, I mean *the right of people to live in freedom and dignity, free from fear and want*. Ontological security, at its most basic, refers to *the psychological security of the self*. The argument is therefore that the right of people to live in freedom and dignity is based on the prior existence of a stable self which is able to engage and interact with others. If individuals lack ontological security, they are unable to establish relations of basic trust with other individuals and, consequently, are unlikely to be able to live in freedom and dignity, free from fear and want. Human Security, therefore, presupposes ontological security. However, ontological security does not necessarily entail Human Security. Individuals may find ontological security by belonging to communities which deny the right of others to freedom or dignity, whether on the grounds of culture, gender, sexuality, race or religion. Ontological security may, therefore, be found in reinforcing or strengthening the boundary between 'self' and 'other' or 'friend' and 'enemy.'[15] Human Security, however, attempts to

transcend this boundary by positing the universal category of the 'human,' which encompasses both 'self' and 'other,' as the primary referent of security. Human Security, therefore, attempts to ensure security for individuals without recourse to the 'friend-enemy' dichotomy. By postcolonial, I refer to any approach [16] which places emphasis on the formative impact of colonialism in the constitution of the present. A post-colonial approach to Human Security would bring into question the central assumptions upon which it is based by historicizing the abstract concept of the 'human' and questioning 'universal' aspirations to 'freedom' and 'dignity' which, it is argued, are deeply implicated in colonial regimes of power through the imposition of Eurocentric 'standards of civilization' [17] during the Age of Empire[18].

The emergence of Human Security as a response to the globalization of neo-liberalism will first be critically interrogated. The dislocation engendered by successive waves of neo-liberal globalization has led to the deracination of many of the world's inhabitants resulting in a state of collective existential anxiety.[19] Under such conditions of existential anxiety, the search for identity and community becomes paramount. However, 'secular' conceptions of Human Security as 'freedom from fear and want'[20] fail to take into account *ontological security*. Instead, the focus is on protection and empowerment. From a postcolonial perspective, it is argued that Human Security can be seen as the latest instalment of the 'civilising mission' of nineteenth century imperialism in that it seeks to universalize a Eurocentric conception of the 'human' as a rational, autonomous agent. The Enlightenment understanding of the human as an *individual* to be protected and empowered, furthermore, has a genealogy in the Judeo-Christian, and specifically Protestant, tradition which brings into question its claims to be 'secular'. It will then be suggested that, given this historical baggage, a 'post-secular'[21] understanding of Human Security which recognizes a multiplicity of different culturally embedded understandings of the 'human' and 'security' without prioritizing any one conception may potentially offer a more productive engagement with ontological security in times of rapid global transformation in the post-colonial world given the centrality of religion to post-colonial subjectivity.

This will be illustrated by the case of the global Sikh community. It is argued that both territorialized narratives of Sikh nationalism[22], as exemplified by the movement for an independent Sikh state, *Khalistan*, and deterritorialized narratives of *Sikhism* as a 'world religion'[23] may be considered quests for ontological security in a rapidly changing world *yet both are unable to provide human security*. For Giddens, to be 'ontologically secure is to possess, on the level of the unconscious and practical consciousness, "answers" to

fundamental existential questions which all human life in some way addresses.' Religion and nationalism, as Catarina Kinvall has pointed out, attempt to provide 'answers' to these questions in times of rapid socio-economic and cultural change.[24] Both religion and nationalism, however, are 'derivative discourses'[25] of colonial modernity and, as such, it is argued that *they cannot provide stability and coherence to the fractured post-colonial self.*[26] Consequently, they are unable to provide ontological security or human security in the 'post-secular' sense outlined above. Colonialism led to a *thinning out* of indigenous cosmological traditions and their reduction to an instrumentalized politics of identity. In the case of the Sikh cosmological tradition, the 'sacred' (*miri*) and the 'profane' (*piri*) are intertwined in the idea of *Sikhi*. This is encapsulated in the symbol *Ik Ōankār* which literally means 'One, whose expression emerges as Word'.[27] Colonialism led to the division of *Sikhi* into 'sacred' and 'temporal' domains; Sikhi*sm* became a 'religion' and the Sikhs became an ethno-national group. This splitting of the 'secular' and 'temporal' aspects of *Sikhi* as exemplified in the *Khalsa Panth* may be seen as a cause of ontological insecurity for many Sikhs[28] Although the *Khalsa* maintains a clear *embodied* boundary between 'inside' and 'outside,'[29] the commitment to a universality which recognizes difference in *Sikhi* transcends the 'friend-enemy' dichotomy and may, for Sikhs, be a source of *human* as well as ontological security. This understanding of human security,[30] however, is not based on the abstract universalism of conventional notions of Human Security but the security which comes from being part of a community where 'faith' is part of the lived experience of individuals rather than a secularized marker of communal identity.

Human Security: A Post-colonial Critique

The concept of Human Security was introduced to an audience of policy-makers through the publication of the United Nations Development Program *Human Development Report* in 1994. It was in part motivated by an attempt to tackle the 'downside risks' caused by neo-liberal globalization. Indeed, Human Security in its early days challenged not only the hegemony of the antiquated 'national security paradigm' which continues to dominate the theory and practice of International Relations (IR) to this day but also the material and ontological insecurities wrought by the 'Washington Consensus': the globalization of neo-liberalism. Human Security was defined as 'safety from chronic threats such as hunger, disease and repression' *and* as 'protection from sudden and hurtful disruptions in patterns of daily life – whether in jobs, in homes or in communities.'[31] The implications for our

understanding of security were manifold. In the first place, the referent object of security discourse was no longer the state but the individual; the state's claim to legitimacy lay in its 'responsibility to protect' the individual. Secondly, security threats were no longer seen as emanating from outside the state but also from inside. They existed *transnationally and on a global scale.* Thirdly, hunger and disease – the eradication of which had traditionally been seen as part of the 'human condition' which could only be alleviated through 'development', the adoption of modern techniques of social, economic and political organization- were effectively 'securitized'; their elimination an urgent priority for states and, by implication, the emerging 'international community'. Fourthly, safety from 'repression' opened up the possibility that the state, which was supposed to protect individuals from external threats, could itself be an agent-indeed, the principal agent, judging by a cursory history of the twentieth century- of human *insecurity.* Lastly, but most importantly for the following discussion, individuals should be protected from 'sudden and hurtful disruptions to patterns of everyday life' caused by participation in a rapidly globalizing capitalist world economy. This opens up the possibility of reconceptualizing security to take into account the insecurity felt by individuals who may or may not suffer material deprivations from participation in a global market economy.

Initially, the UNDP report failed to make inroads into security studies which continues to be dominated by advocates of national security but the adoption of Human Security by the United Nations General Assembly in September 2012 [32] and its institutionalization through the United Nations system through the Trust Fund for Human Security, suggests that, prior to the events of 2016, Human Security had become part of the global mainstream, a central plank of the post- Cold War 'liberal peace.'[33]

Simply put, the notion of Human Security is premised on the assumption that the individual human being is the only irreducible focus for discourse on security. Consequently, the claims of all other referents, including the nation-state, derive from the *sovereignty* of the individual.[34] State security, therefore, is based on *human* security; its legitimacy is based upon its ability to protect the individual. While most advocates of Human Security agree on the referent object of security discourse, they differ as to what the individual should be protected from. Conventionally a distinction is made between 'narrow' and 'broad' approaches. Whilst the advocates of the narrow approach prefer to ground Human Security in terms of 'negative liberty,' [35] the resolution adopted by the United Nations General Assembly (A/66/290) in September 2012 goes beyond a narrow focus on the responsibility of States to protect their citizens and appears to repudiate the use of force as a means of

protecting the individual from 'violent threats'. Human Security is understood as 'the right of people to live in freedom and dignity, free from poverty and despair'. 'All individuals, in particular vulnerable people,' the resolution continues, are entitled to freedom from fear and freedom from want, with an equal opportunity to enjoy all their rights and fully develop their human potential.'[36] This 'broader' definition bears the imprint of the UNDP report and the subsequent attempt by the Commission on Human Security (CHS) to provide a more 'positive' definition of human security. Human Security, according to the Final Report of the CHS, is seen as encompassing the 'vital core' of all human lives: a set of 'elementary rights and freedoms people enjoy' and consider to be 'vital' to their wellbeing.[37]

Human Security, notwithstanding its propensity to work *within* the prevailing post-colonial international order of territorialized nation states, shares with Critical Security Studies (CSS), an understanding of security as *emancipation*. For Ken Booth, 'emancipation' denotes the 'freeing of people (as individuals and groups) from the physical and human constraints which stop them carrying out what they would freely choose to do'. Emancipation, CSS scholars following Ken Booth argue, 'not power or order, produces true security'. Therefore, 'emancipation, theoretically, is security.'[38] Indeed, Edward Newman has argued that Critical Human Security Studies (CHSS) should adopt the approach pioneered by Critical Security Studies (CSS) and focus on the emancipation of individuals.[39] However, it is argued that this approach, from a broader post-colonial perspective, reproduces the Eurocentrism of much of Human Security discourse. First, Human Security, in either its conventional or critical instantiation, assumes that the individual is the primary and the *only* possible referent object of security discourse. Like CSS, Human Security seeks to 'denaturalize and historicize all human-made, political referents, recognising only the primordial entity of the socially embedded individual.'[40] However, the primordiality of the individual as a political referent is *assumed* and the genealogy of the liberal conception of the abstract individual, with which political theory is so enamoured,[41] in the Enlightenment remains unaccounted for. The Enlightenment constituted a break within the Western epistemological tradition, renouncing 'the "strong" cosmological or salvation-oriented assumptions of the classical and religious theories of natural law' in favour of secular reason which, according to Habermas, serves as the 'ultimate' basis of the legitimization of a state authority[42] and, therefore, of an international society composed of sovereign states. However, it also preserved what Walter Mignolo has termed the 'epistemic privilege' of Christianity. As Mignolo points out, 'it was from a Christian standpoint and perspective (i.e., the combination of epistemic principles and political interests) that the world was ordered and classified'. Thus, 'even when, during the

European Enlightenment, a secular epistemology replaced a Christian one and the authority of reason replaced the authority of God, the epistemic privilege was maintained.' [43] Human Security, in reproducing the Enlightenment view of the 'human' as an autonomous, individual actor, retains the epistemic privilege of Christianity within it. The 'human' of Human Security, in other words, may be unintelligible to other (non-Western) cosmological traditions[44] given its implicit Judeo-Christian origins.

Second, there are unmistakable continuities with the 'civilizing mission' of nineteenth century Imperialism which sought to actively impose a '*cultural conversion of non-Western states to a Western civilizational standard.*'[45] The agents of the contemporary 'civilizing mission', however, are no longer European empires, private companies such as the East India Company or missionaries, but an 'international community' centred on the United Nations system dominated by powerful Western states (most of which were colonial Empires) working in tandem with multinational corporations and selected international non-governmental organizations to institutionalize liberal peacebuilding in 'fragile' post-colonial states. They continue to speak to, for, and on behalf of, the 'subaltern' who are reduced to silence even when they engage with the 'local.'[46] As Oliver Richmond has observed, the 'emancipatory' approach to Human Security, associated with non-governmental organizations operating in the Global South at a grassroots level, aims to 'empower individuals and remove unnecessary restrictions' over their lives to enable autonomous agency.[47] However, it too, has been 'unable to transcend its liberal and neoliberal straitjacket' since it has failed to engage with the 'local' target population in *its own terms* and thus build 'legitimate' institutions. [48]

From Human to Ontological Security?

Richmond instead advocates a post-liberal human security which would build on existing institutional capacities and processes but would be sensitized to 'local alterity, resistance and accommodation, norms, customs, culture and identity, and an international social contract as the basis for Human Security and peacebuilding.'[49] Human Security, thus, becomes a site of contestation between the 'local' and the 'liberal'. This opens up the possibility of the emergence of a 'post-colonial' from of Human Security 'capable of organizing hybrid understandings of security in relation to the human subjects they produce and are constituted by rather than falling back on the often empty securitization of western forms of liberalism and realism.'[50]

However, Richmond appears to reify the 'local' without taking into account how processes of neo-colonial governmentality construct the local as a space distinct from the 'global' or 'international.' This makes a distinction between the 'local' and the 'liberal' problematic. Indeed, 'liberal Human Security itself may be understood as a 'local' form of secularized ethics particular to Western Europe. By engaging with other culturally embedded notions of security, 'liberal' Human Security may allow us to engage with other forms of the 'local.' But once its aspirations are universalized through the language of protection and empowerment by the 'international community', it *silences* other culturally mediated understandings of Human Security which are no less 'universal' and resonate with 'everyday life,' particularly in the global South.

Instead, it is suggested here that a 'post-colonial' approach to Human Security may benefit from dialogic engagement with *post-secular* thought, notwithstanding the Eurocentric assumptions upon which conventional understandings of post-secularism are based For Jürgen Habermas, the term 'post-secular' refers to societies where the continued existence of religious communities in an increasingly secularized environment necessitates, on the one hand, the inclusion of religious-based world-views into the public sphere, and, on the other, the *translation* of religious-based claims into secular terms in order to guarantee the neutrality of the public sphere. Since the constitutional state is only able to guarantee its citizens equal freedom on the basis of mutual recognition as members of a single political community, all norms that can be legally implemented must be formulated and publicly justified in a language that all the citizens understand. Religious claims should, according to Habermas, be permissible in the public sphere but barred entry into the 'institutionalized decision-making process' in order to guarantee the principle of neutrality of the state towards competing worldviews. Political decisions, therefore, need to be formulated and be justifiable in a language intelligible to all citizens.[51]

However, the translation of faith-based claims into secular terms requires not only that they be 'privatized' but rendered intelligible to a *specific* 'religious' tradition. As Talal Asad has persuasively argued, there can be no *transhistorical* understanding of religion.[52] Asad sees the emergence of 'religion' as inextricably linked to developments within Christianity and particularly its relationship with political power. Its genealogy in the Judaeo-Christian tradition poses problems for the entry of minority religious and/or cultural traditions into the public sphere, blurring the distinction between 'religious' and 'secular' claims. Secularism, as Asad[53] and José Casanova[54] among others have pointed out, can only be understood with reference to 'religion'. The 'secular' at one time was 'part of a theological

discourse (*saeculum*)' denoting the transition from a monastic life to the life of canons. After the Reformation, it signified the 'privatization' of Church property, that is, its transfer to laypersons and entry into market circulation. Finally, in the 'discourse of modernity, the "secular" presents itself as the ground from which theological discourse was generated…and from which it gradually emancipated itself in the mark to freedom.'[55] Consequently, the secularization of religious claims may require their insertion into an onto-theological framework which may be alien to the adherents of a particular 'faith'.

It is suggested here that, instead of *translating* faith-based claims into a secular language, an attempt should be made to understand these claims in their *own* terms. Sensitized to cultural difference, a post-secular understanding of human security should permit the articulation of multiple claims deriving from different religio-cultural traditions without prioritizing any one 'tradition' as having a monopoly over defining security.[56] Implicit in this argument, is the assumption that culture and religion *may* act as important forms of *ontological* security for the individual. This is not to suggest that culture and religion can automatically provide security for individuals through mere adherence to religious doctrine or routinized practices which may correspond to 'tradition'[57] but that they are resources that individuals can draw upon in times of rapid social and economic change. If, to paraphrase Marx[58], individuals make their own identities but not under conditions of their own choosing, culture and religion may act as both preconditions for, and constraints on, the exercise of agency. They can act as preconditions for the exercise of agency by providing a stable cognitive environment for the individual to interact with others and establish relations based on shared values or an ethical code which may transcend what Charles Taylor refers to as the 'immanent frame'[59]. Equally, culture and religion can act as constraints on the exercise of agency by restricting the scope for interaction with others whose values are articulated in different conceptual languages. This restricts the range of resources which individuals can draw upon when confronted by challenges which threaten established patterns of behaviour or even the existence of the self.

Ontological security may be understood, following Jennifer Mitzen, as 'the security of the self.'[60] A psychoanalytic term, the concept was introduced by R.D. Laing in his book *The Divided Self* (1960). For Laing, to be ontologically secure is to 'have a sense of …presence in the world as a real, alive, whole, and, in a temporal sense, a continuous person.'[61] Ontological security allows the individual to 'encounter all the hazards of life' from a 'centrally firm sense' of his or her 'own and other people's reality and identity.' Without ontological

security, the individual will be overwhelmed by anxieties that reach to the very roots of the individual's coherent sense of 'being in the world.'[62]

Laing identifies three forms of anxiety which threaten ontological security: engulfment, implosion and petrification.[63] Engulfment refers to the sense of the loss of identity and autonomy which an ontologically insecure individual experiences relating to others. Isolation is the preferred strategy used to preserve the individual's identity from engulfment.[64] Implosion, on the other hand, refers to the 'terror' felt by the individual as s/he experiences 'the world as liable at any moment to crash in and obliterate all identity, as a gas will rush in and obliterate a vacuum.'[65] The individual is defined by the emptiness s/he feels and 'reality' is experienced as *implosive*. Finally, petrification refers to a particular form of terror experienced whereby the individual is 'petrified,' in the sense of being rendered an 'it without subjectivity.'[66] Depersonalization is the common strategy used to deal with the 'intrusive' other. The act of turning the other into a 'thing' is, for the self, *petrifying*. Any other is a threat to the self by their very existence, rather than what they may or may not do.[67]

An ontologically secure individual is able to act autonomously because s/he has a stable sense of self and a 'biographical continuity'[68] which allows her or him to act consistently with regard to future relationships and experiences. Ontologically secure individuals are able to exercise *agency* because of the existence of a 'protective cocoon' which shields them from the many threats to their physical or psychological integrity.[69] Giddens had argued that basic trust is a '*protective cocoon* which all normal individuals carry around with them as the means whereby they are able to get on with the affairs of day-to-day life.'[70] This protective cocoon is a precondition for 'creativity': 'the capability to act or think innovatively in relation to pre-established modes of activity.'[71] Ontological security, for Giddens, resides in the possession of '"answers" to fundamental existential questions which all human life in some way addresses.[72] These existential questions 'concern the basic parameters of human life', and presume the following ontological and epistemological elements:

- *Existence and being:* the nature of existence, the identity of objects and events.
- *Finitude and human life:* the existential contradiction by means of which human beings are of nature yet set apart from it as sentient and reflexive creatures.
- *The experience of others:* how individuals interpret the traits and actions of other individuals.

- *The continuity of self-identity*: the persistence of feelings of personhood in a continuous self and body.[73]

Religious cosmologies, Giddens acknowledges, may provide answers to these questions by providing the *biographical continuity* necessary for the development of a stable self-identity. They provide us with a sense of who we are, who we have become, and where we are going by developing conceptions of the afterlife or cycles of rebirth which allow us to cope with the spectre of our own finitude. Giddens argues that 'in virtually all rationalised religious systems, explicit ontological conceptions are found.'[74]

However, the colonial legacy continues to cast a shadow on the quest for ontological security in the postcolonial world as will be discussed below with reference to South Asia. Colonization *re-articulated* local cosmological identities into 'global' narratives of 'religion' and 'nation' which became resources upon which post-colonial peoples could draw in their search for ontological security. Identities, following the Lacanian psychoanalytical tradition, come from the outside through a process of *identification*. Jacques Lacan (1977) argued that they are inherently 'fictional' constructs: all identities are 'imaginary' based on the fundamental misrecognition (*méconnaisance*) of the child with its *imago*.[75] The ontological insecurity felt by many post-colonial subjects results from this misrecognition with Eurocentric categories causing a split in the 'self.' This is best illustrated in the work of Frantz Fanon, a contemporary of Lacan. In *Black Skins, White Masks* (1952), Fanon, accounted for the fragmentation experienced by racialized, colonial subjects forced to put on 'white masks' in order to integrate into a world not of their making. The promise of acceptance into white, colonial society elicits a desire to assimilate but is continually deferred leading to a profound sense of humiliation, anxiety and (ontological) insecurity. 'The colonized', in Fanon's words, is 'elevated above his jungle status in proportion to his adoption of the mother country's cultural standards' yet is unable to be accepted due to her/his 'black skins.'[76] Consequently, the racialized (post) colonial subject is, in Homi Bhabha's words, 'almost the same but not quite.'[77] However, in many parts of the post-colonial world, this fragmentation of the 'self' is not necessarily expressed in terms of inferiority but *difference* from the West.[78] The West, however, continues to profoundly influence the psychic structures of postcolonial subjectivity even when it appears absent, representing an idealized 'mirror' through which post-colonial subjectivity is (mistakenly) constituted.

'Thick' and 'Thin': The Colonial Construction of 'Religion'

The concept of 'religion' (as opposed to religio-cultural traditions) in the post-colonial world was an imported cultural category imposed upon indigenous societies by the colonizing power as part of a regime of *colonial governmentality*. For Foucault, governmentality referred to the: (1) 'the ensemble formed by institutions, procedures, analyses and reflections…which has as its target population, as its principal form of knowledge political economy, and as its essential technical means apparatuses of security'; (2) 'the tendency which, over a long period and throughout the West, has steadily led towards the pre-eminence of over all other forms (sovereignty, discipline etc.) of the type of power which may be termed 'government', resulting, on the one hand, in the formation of a whole series of specific governmental apparatuses (*appareils*), and, on the other, in the development of a whole complex of knowledges (*saviors*);' and (3) finally, the process, or rather the result of the process, through which the state of justice of the Middle Ages, transformed into the administrative state during the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, gradually becoming 'governmentalized.'[79] However, as Partha Chatterjee has pointed out, there were significant differences between governmentality as it developed in Europe and the governmentality which emerged in the colonies. While 'governmentality' in Britain treated the 'population' as a homogenous, undifferentiated mass of individuals, 'colonial governmentality' recognized and built upon seemingly 'primordial' categories of 'race' and 'religion' through the introduction of censuses, separate electorates and employment opportunities for ethno-religious 'communities.'[80]

The colonial state facilitated the imagination of collective indigenous identities, including the Indian nation, through the introduction of modern scientific techniques of classification and enumeration that transformed the political landscape of South Asia and continue to shape its politics today. The introduction of the Censuses in particular transformed previously 'fuzzy' into 'enumerated' communities.[81] As Bernard Cohn points out, 'what was entailed in the construction of census operations was the creation of social categories by which India was ordered for administrative purposes.'[82] The Census objectified religious, social and cultural difference. The categories of caste and religion were seen as homogenous and mutually exclusive- it was deemed as irrational for someone to claim to be both from the *Kshatriya* and *Vaishya* caste as to profess Sikhism *and* Hinduism as one's

religious affiliation despite the 'fuzziness' of caste and religious boundaries in the colonial Punjab. Furthermore, the colonial state facilitated the enumeration of these communities through the inauguration of a process of statistical counting and spatial mapping. Enumeration facilitated the transformation of *local* caste or ethno-religious into *national* political communities. As local communities were mapped by the Census, the terms 'Hindu' and 'Muslim' became markers of distinct, homogenous and potentially conflictual political identities at an all-India level through the formation of the Muslim League and the Hindu *Mahasabha*.

Colonialism, in short, contributed to the *thinning* out of 'religious' identities by encouraging identification on the basis of loosely defined yet mutually exclusive categories but did not 'invent' the cosmological traditions on which they were based. For Kaviraj, religion is *thick* in the sense that its internal contents are a vast archive of ordered beliefs, some of which may appear trivial but are in fact crucial to the practice of a particular faith.[83] Crucially, these beliefs do not necessarily intrude on the political sphere but are more concerned with determining social conduct and ethical problems. These problems, however, may themselves become politicized if the state takes it upon itself to regulate the 'inner domain' [84] of spiritual life without reference to traditional 'religiosity'. The religious community, though, is narrowly defined and limited to members of the immediate locality who satisfy the stringent criteria for membership, frequently segmented on caste and regional lines.

'Thin' religion on the other hand appeals to the lowest common denominator among members of the same religious community. Religion is *thin* in the sense that the criteria for membership of the religious community are loosely defined and, thus, open to adherents of wildly divergent religious philosophies. *All* Hindus (or Sikhs or Muslims) can be included in a *nationally* defined and structured religious community irrespective of individual belief and faith. Indeed, 'thin' religion is disinterested in the everyday practice of worship and regards regional and sectarian variations as impediments to the consolidation of the religious community. Finally, 'thin' religion is intensely political in the sense that it seeks to mobilize the religious community for political ends and even to capture state power. As Kaviraj points out, the primary purpose of the *inclusion* of members of different religious communities (in a 'thick' sense) in a loosely defined, nationally organized community is ironically to *exclude* other (loosely defined) religious communities from participating in the construction of a religiously plural common national culture. In short, this *modern* form of religious identity is fundamentally opposed to notions of traditional 'religiosity': it is thin, not thick; political, not

ethical; intolerant, not accommodating; and interested in the political kingdom not in the life to come.[85] In the following section, we will focus on the 'thinning out' of Sikh identity following the encounter with colonial modernity. The processes associated with colonial governmentality simultaneously *de-territorialized* and *re-territorialized* a pre-existing Sikh identity by forcing it into the narratives of 'nation' and 'world religion.'

Sikhi(sm) and Ontological Security

Sikhi is a monotheistic (or strictly speaking *panentheistic*) cosmological tradition which originated in the Punjab area of North India, open to all those who are prepared to accept its doctrines and practices. Central to Sikhi is the concept of *Vahiguru*, the omnipotent and omnipresent transcendent creator and sovereign of the universe who lies beyond human understanding, time and space, and does not take human form. Although the tradition dates back to Guru Nanak (1469-1539) and the ten successive Gurus, Harjot Oberoi has persuasively argued that a cohesive Sikh religious identity arose in the late nineteenth century as a result of the activities of the *Singh Sabha* movement and their elucidation of a *Tat Khalsa* discourse which became hegemonic in the early years of the twentieth century. A 'growing body of Sikhs took part in a systematic campaign to purge their faith of religious diversity…The result was a fundamental change in the nature of the Sikh tradition. From an amorphous entity it rapidly turned into a homogenous community.'[86] This appears to substantiate the view that colonial modernity contributed to a *thinning* out of pre-existing religio-political identities centred on the concept of *Sikhi* as embodied in the *Khalsa*.

However, the institution of the *Khalsa Panth* by the tenth and last Guru, Gobind Singh (1666-1708) in 1699 gave Sikhs a cohesive Sikh religio-political identity *before* the onset of colonial rule and has remained an important source of ontological security ever since, providing Sikhs with a 'protective cocoon'[87] which allows them to negotiate the challenges of life as a religious and national minority in both a South Asian and diaspora setting. Sikh identity as institutionalized in the *Khalsa* is, therefore, *thick* in Kaviraj's sense; its internal contents are a vast archive of ordered beliefs which crucially, are *embodied*.

The term *Khalsa*, derived from the Arabic *khalis*, literally means 'pure' but implies spiritual purity and appears first in the Adi Granth (AG: 655). Guru Nanak (1469–1539) had earlier developed a religious and social philosophy which drew upon but was distinct from both Hinduism and Islam. For Nanak, there was 'only one Lord, and only one tradition.' He conceived of the concept of God, *Vahiguru* ('Wonderful Lord'), as an omnipotent and

omnipresent transcendent creator and the only 'true sovereign' (*Sacha Patishah*) of the world. Sikhism, thus, developed both a spiritual and temporal conception of 'sovereignty' which was institutionalized through the construction of the *Akal Takht*, the 'throne of the immortal Lord', facing *Harimandir Sahib* in Amritsar. Both 'spiritual' and 'temporal' sovereignty was invested in the personage of the Guru and symbolized by the two swords which were first worn by the sixth Guru, Hargobind; *piri*, signifying spiritual authority and *miri*, temporal authority.

Guru Gobind Singh, however, bestowed the spiritual dimensions (*piri*) of the Guru's authority on the Adi Granth (now the Guru Granth Sahib) which was housed in the Harimandir while, under the doctrine of Guru-Panth, investing all temporal authority (*miri)* in the *Khalsa Panth*, through the *khande ki pahul*. He sought to spiritually cleanse his community by giving his five volunteers *amrit* (sweetened water) stirred with the double-edged sword, the *khanda*, thus conferring the spiritual and temporal authority of the Guru onto the *Khalsa*. For Gurbhagat Singh, the *khande ki pahul* was performed to 'psychologically transform the common folk, make them *Singhs* (lions) and commit them to the new narrative that aimed at countering the symbolic violence of the two hegemonizing grand narratives' of Hinduism and Islam.[88] By instituting the *Khalsa*, and then undergoing the initiation rite himself, Guru Gobind Singh acknowledged the (temporal) sovereignty of the *Khalsa Panth* and submitted himself to its collective will. Thereafter, the *Khalsa* was to be the site of all sovereignty for orthodox Sikhs by providing them with ontological security through the five external symbols of the Sikh 'faith'. Collectively known as the Five Ks, these are: *kes*, unshorn hair which is usually tied in a turban; a *kanga*, which performs the function of constraining the hair; a steel bangle (*kara*) worn over the right wrist; *kacha*, a pair of shorts; and finally a sword (*kirpan*), the symbol of the temporal sovereignty of the *Khalsa*.

It is the very *embodiment* of *Khalsa* identity through the Five Ks that constitutes the political community of the Sikh 'nation'. In Jasbir Singh Ahluwalia's words, the institutionalization of the Khalsa was a '*nationic* transformation ushering in a 'new socio-political order . . . characterized by the values of equality, liberty and justice, without any discrimination on the grounds of creed, caste, country, race, sex and social position.'[89] Wearing the Five Ks signified membership of the Sikh *qaum* or 'nation,' thus transforming what Giorgio Agamben terms as 'bare life'[90] into one endowed with dignity and meaning. It is the very *embodiment* of sovereignty in the *Khalsa* which poses 'a challenge to the putative "incontestable" reality of the Indian nation-state's sovereignty and territoriality.'[91]

However, Sikh nationalist narratives *territorialize* the claims to sovereignty of the *Khalsa Panth* within the borders of the Punjab in the 'imagined homeland' of *Khalistan* and therefore constitute a *thinning down* of the religio-political traditions associated with the *Khalsa*. The 'territorialized' challenge to the 'incontestable' reality of the Indian nation-state posed by the movement for *Khalistan* disembodies the *Khalsa Panth* of the sovereignty invested in it by Guru Gobind. By internalizing Western narratives of the nation-state, the movement for *Khalistan* legitimizes the partition of the sub-continent along ethno-religious lines and the very territorialization of identity which underpins the Westphalian international order founded on the principle – first established at the Diet of Augsburg in 1555- of '*cuius regio, eius religio*.' Indeed, it is the very intertwining of the spiritual and temporal dimensions of Sikh sovereignty that posed such a challenge to the sovereignty of the Indian nation-state in 1984.[92] In seeking to keep the domains of the 'religious' and 'political' separate, the primary institution of colonial modernity, the secular state, sought to exclude the 'religious' from the public sphere. However, both spiritual and temporal dimensions of sovereignty were embodied in the *Khalsa* and *territorialized* in the Golden Temple complex in Amritsar which houses both *Harmandir Sahib* and the *Akal Takht*. This made the Golden Temple complex a 'legitimate' target from the perspective of the Indian security forces and their British neo-colonial backers[93] since it *transrupted* the project of colonial modernity upon which the legitimacy of the Indian state as successor to the *Raj* was founded. The *Akal Takht* in particular, as the site of Sikh temporal sovereignty, was considered a 'security threat' which could only be dealt with through the state's assertion of its monopoly of violence. The damage to the structure was intended and not a mere by-product of the security forces desire to 'flush the militants out' of the complex as claimed at the time. However, the same security forces were less successful in extending the sovereignty of the nation-state *biopolitically* over the *Khalsa* since Sikh sovereignty is embodied and therefore not subject to the state's monopoly of force which is territorially defined.

Sikh nationalism, therefore, can provide only a 'thin' understanding of *ontological security*, one based on a politics of identity which reproduces the 'friend-enemy' dichotomy in contrast with a 'thicker' *embodied* conception of ontological security as represented by the *Khalsa* which attempts to transcend the 'self-other' dichotomy through the concept of *Vahiguru*. In so doing, it may be considered a Sikh concept of *human* security.

Conclusion: From Ontological Security to Cosmological Securities?

In contrast with some attempts to apply the concept of ontological security to IR by 'scaling up' the level of analysis from the individual to that of the state[94], this article has sought to confine the discussion on ontological security to the level of the individual, thus allowing a contrast to be made with conventional understandings of Human Security. It was argued that the concept of Human Security has been unable to distance itself from hegemonic understandings of security as articulated through the 'national security' paradigm since it continues to place emphasis upon the *physical* security of the individual which can only be guaranteed by an effectively functioning state in a world of territorialized nation-states. The individual is to be secured from 'fear and want' and empowered to make decisions on her/his own behalf by the state and an 'enlightened' international community. Consequently, parallels can be drawn with the 'civilizing mission' of nineteenth century colonialism.

Crucially, the *ontological* dimensions of security are occluded in conventional accounts of Human Security. The individual, 'stripped' of the social bonds of language, culture and religion which bind individuals to each other is reduced to 'bare life'[95]. However, *post-secular* conceptions of Human Security, by acknowledging the role which culture and religion in a *thick* sense, can play in providing answers to existential questions concerning the 'basic parameters of human life' - namely, existence and being, finitude and human life, the experience of others and the continuity of self-identity[96]– are better able to 'protect' the ontological security of the individual. A post-secular conception of human security, therefore, can act as a form of ontological security without recourse to the 'friend-enemy'[97] dichotomy of other quests for ontological security as represented by nationalism and much of IR theory.

However, the colonial legacy continues to cast a shadow on the search for ontological security in the postcolonial world, as was briefly discussed with reference to South Asia and Sikhism in particular. It was argued that Sikh nationalism represented a *thinning out* of Sikh identity and that discourses of Sikhism as a 'world religion' effectively *de-politicized* Sikh identity and claims to sovereignty as *embodied* in the *Khalsa*. As a *thick* form of religiosity and cultural identity, the *Khalsa* can provide Sikhs in South Asia and the Diaspora with a sense of ontological and *human* security in a rapidly and unevenly globalizing world characterized by great disparities not only in wealth and power but also 'security'. In conclusion, although this article has not succeeded in liberating 'the cultures/histories' of post-colonial peoples such as the Sikhs from the shadow of' "alterity," from the consolations of "difference," from the language of "otherness,"' [98] it has at least attempted to 'provincialize'[99] secular understandings of security- both human and ontological- and open up the possibility of speaking of *cosmological securities* in the plural.

Notes

[1] I would like to thank John Cash and Catarina Kinvall for their kind invitation to contribute to this special issue. Earlier versions were presented at Aberyswyth University; City University of Hong Kong; Goldsmiths College, University of London; Kings College London; and the London School of Economics and Political Science. The author wishes to thank the following for their helpful comments: Claudia Aradau, Martin Bayly, Richard Beardsworth, Sarah Bertrand, Jenny Edkins, Mark Hoffmann, Jun-Hyeok Kwak, Andrew Linklater, David Martin, Mustapha Kamal Pasha, Sanjay Seth, Hidemi Suganami and Peter Wilson. In addition, I would like to thank two anonymous reviewers for their critical engagement with the article which helped me to clarify the main argument.

[2] For an earlier confirmation of the demise of globalization, see Justin Rosenberg, 'Globalization Theory: A Post-Mortem,' *International Politics*, 42 (2), pp. 2-74.

[3] The term 'market civilisation' was introduced by Stephen Gill to distinguish the newly emerging neo-liberal order from prior epochs of welfare nationalism and state capitalism. He understood it as a 'contradictory movement or as a set of transformative practices' entailing, on the one hand, an ideological belief in the 'myth of capitalist progress' and, on the other, 'exclusionary and hierarchical patters of social relations.' See Stephen Gill, 'Globalisation, Market Civilisation and Disciplinary Neo-liberalism,' *Millennium: Journal of International Studies*, 24(3), pp. 399-423.

[4] Expressing fundamental aspects of what Anthony Giddens termed 'time-space distanciation' globalization is conventionally understood as a set of processes which embody a transformation in the spatial organization of social relations and transactions, generating transnational *flows* and *networks*, and impact upon the exercise of power. See the work of David Held and Anthony McGrew for extensive analysis of globalization, in particular the following: David Held and Anthony McGrew, 'The Great Globalization Debate,' in David Held and Anthony McGrew (eds), *The Global Transformations Reader*, Cambridge: Polity Press, pp 1-30; and David Held, Anthony McGrew, David Goldblatt and Jonathan Peratton (eds) *The Global Transformations Reader*, Cambridge: Polity Press, 1999. For a concise and accessible overview of the literature, see Jan-Aart Scholte, *Globalization: A Critical Introduction,* Second edition, Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005.

[5] Anthony Giddens, *Runaway World: How Globalization is Re-shaping Our Lives*, Revised Edition, New York, Routledge, 2003.

[6] Anthony Giddens, *Modernity and Self-Identity: Self and Society in the Late Modern Age*, Cambridge: Polity Press, 1991, p 38-9.

[7] R.B.J. Walker, *Inside/Outside: International Relations as Political Theory,* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993.

[8] Max Weber famously defined the state as a human community that (successfully) claims the monopoly of the legitimate use of physical force within a given territory in *Politics as a Vocation* (1918). See Max Weber 'Politics as a Vocation' (1918), *From Max Weber: Essays in Sociology*, H.H. Gerth and C. Wright Mills (trans and eds), New York: Oxford University Press, 1946, pp 77-128. Despite his factually inaccurate but widely influential thesis on the Protestant ethic and the spirit of capitalism, Weber never questioned the 'secular' foundations of the modern state, leaving it to his compatriot, Carl Schmitt, to point out the theological underpinnings of the state in his *Political Theology* (1922). See Carl Schmitt (1922), *Political Theology: Four Chapters on the Concept of Sovereignty*, George Schwab (trans), Cambridge, MA.: MIT Press,1985.

[9] For Mary Kaldor, 'the coming together of humanitarian and human rights law, the establishment of an international criminal court, the expansion of international peace-keeping' pointed to 'an emerging framework of global governance' which was akin to 'what Immanuel Kant described as universal civil society, in the sense of a cosmopolitan rule of law, guaranteed by a combination of treaties and institutions. Mary Kaldor, *Global Civil Society: An Answer to War*. Cambridge: Polity, 2003 p. 7.

[10] European Commission, *Free Movement--European Nationals*. Retrieved from Employment, Social Affairs & Inclusion http://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?catId=457&langId=en, June 23 2016.

[11] Clifford Geertz, 'The Integrative Revolution: Primordial Sentiments and Civil Politics in New States,' in Clifford Geertz (ed), *Old Societies and New States: The Quest for Modernity in Asia and Africa,* New York: Free Press, pp 105-119.

[12] See Samuel P. Huntington, *The Clash of Civilisations and the Remaking of the World Order*, New York: Simon and Shuster, 1996. Huntington's infamous 'clash of civilizations' thesis underpins much of the populist anti-migration rhetoric on both sides of the Atlantic, from US President Donald Trump's blanket ban on citizens of seven Muslim majority states

from entering the US through to headscarf and 'burkini' bans in republican France and Brexit.

[13] Examples include the *Front National* in France, the Alternative for Germany (AfD) and Austrian Freedom Parties, the Northern League in Italy and Golden Dawn in Greece.

[14] Human Security' in upper case here refers to conventional, secular approaches to human security as articulated by international organizations such as the United Nations Trust Fund for Human Security; United Nations appointed commissions such as the Commission on Human Security; International Commission on Intervention and State Sovereignty; regional organizations such as the European Union and North Atlantic Treaty Organization; and individual states such as Canada, Japan and Thailand.

[15] See Carl Schmitt, *The Concept of the Political*, George Schwab (trans), Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1996.

[16] For an introduction to postcolonialism, see Sanjay Seth, Leela Gandhi and Michael Dutton, 'Postcolonial studies: A beginning…,' *Postcolonial Studies*, 1:1, 1998, pp. 7-11. The postcolonial approach taken in this article may differ slightly from that taken by the Journal editorial board but, in their introduction, they acknowledge that postcolonialism is an 'undeniably and necessarily vague' term pointing 'not towards a new knowledge, but rather towards an examination and critique of knowledges'(p.8).

[17] Gerrit W. Gong, *The Standard of 'Civilization' in International Society*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1984.

[18] Eric Hobsbawm, *The Age of Empire*, London: Weidenfeld and Nicholson, 1987.

[19] Giddens, *Modernity and Self-Identity.*

[20] Commission on Human Security, *Human Security Now,* New York: Oxford University Press, 2003.

[21] See Giorgio Shani, *Religion, Identity and Human Security,* London and New York: Routledge, 2014.

[22] See Giorgio Shani, *Sikh Nationalism and Identity in a Global Age*, London and New York: Routledge, 2008.

[23] See the work of Verne A. Dusenbery, *Sikhs at Large: Religion, Culture and Politics in Global Perspective*, New Delhi: Oxford University Press and Arvind-pal Singh Mandair, *Religion and the Spectre of the West: Sikhism, India, Postcoloniality and the Politics of Translation,* New York: Columbia University Press, 2010 for genealogies of the framing of Sikhism as a 'world religion'.

[24] Catarina Kinvall, 'Globalization and Religious Nationalism: Self, Identity and the Search for Ontological Security,' *Political Psychology*, 25(5), 2004, pp 741-768.

[25] See Partha Chatterjee, *Nationalist Thought and the Colonial World: A Derivative Discourse*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1986.

[26] For a discussion of the fractured self under colonialism see Frantz Fanon (1952), *Black Skin, White Masks*, London: Pluto, 1991; and Ashis Nandy, *The Intimate Enemy: Loss and Recovery of the Self under Colonialism*, New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1983. Both Fanon, a trained psychiatrist, and Nandy, a clinical psychologist, came to regard colonialism as a pathological condition which gave rise to the splitting of the self.

[27] *Ik Ōankār* is the opening phrase of the *mul mantar*, or foundation statement, of the *Japji*, the Sikh morning prayer. It consists of the numeral 1 (one), which stands for the Absolute, followed by *Ōan,* the unfolding and emergence of the Word. It signifies that the Absolute is One and One is Absolute. In order to actualize this Oneness in one's everyday existence, it is necessary to let our sense of 'self,' mediated through the structure of the ego, go. See Arvind-pal Singh Mandair, 'Sikh Philosophy,' in Pashaura Singh and Louis E. Fenech (eds) *The Oxford Handbook of Sikh Studies*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014, p. 302.

[28] See Shani, *Sikh Nationalism and Identity in a Global Age*.

[29] See R.B.J. Walker, *Inside/Outside: International Relations as Political Theory*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993.

[30] Human security in lower case opens up the possibility of conceptualizing 'security' from multiple culturally informed perspectives of which the cosmopolitan liberal tradition is merely one.

[31] United Nations Development Program (UNDP), *Human Development Report: New Dimensions of Human Security*, New York: Oxford University Press, p23

[32] United Nations General Assembly, 'Follow-up to paragraph 143 on human security of the 2005 World Summit Outcome,' September 10 2012, available at: http://www.un.org/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol= A/RES/66/290, retrieved September 17, 2012.

[33] For an analysis of the rise and demise of the 'liberal peace,' see Oliver Richmond, *A Post-Liberal Peace*, London and New York: Routledge, 2011. I will be engaging with Richmond's attempts to articulate a 'post-colonial' understanding of Human Security later in the article.

[34] Neil S. MacFarlane and Yune Foong Khong, *Human Security and the UN: A Critical History*, Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 2006, p 2.

[35] Sir Isiah Berlin, *Four Essays on Liberty*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1969.

[36] United Nations General Assembly, 'Follow-up to paragraph 143 on human security.'

[37] Commission on Human Security, *Human Security Now,* p 4.

[38] Ken Booth, 'Security and Emancipation,' *Review of International Studies,* 17, 1991, pp 313-326.

[39] Edward Newman, 'Critical Human Security Studies,' *Review of International Studies, 36*(1), 2010, pp 77-94.

[40] Ken Booth, 'Beyond critical security studies,' in Ken Booth (ed) *Critical Security Studies and World Politics*, Boulder, Colorado: Lynne Reinner, 2005, pp 259-79, p 268.

[41] See for example, John Rawl's use of a 'veil of ignorance' in his *Theory of Justice.* John Rawls, *A Theory of Justice,* Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1971.

[42] Jürgen Habermas, 'On the Relations between the Secular Liberal State and Religion,' in Hent de Vries and Lawrence E. Sullivan (eds.) *Political Theologies: Public Religions in a Post-Secular World*. New York: Fordham University Press, 2006, pp. 251-61.

[43] Walter D. Mignolo, *The Darker Side of the Renaissance: Literacy, Territoriality and* Colonization, 2nd edition, Ann Arbour: University of Michigan Press, 2010, 432.

[44] A cosmology seeks to explain the origins of the cosmos in which we find ourselves and shares many similarities with ontology which, at its most basic, is a set of metaphysical assumptions about being. Cosmological is here used instead of 'religious' since many cosmological traditions are neither considered, nor consider themselves, to be explicitly religious. Indeed, the religious/secular divide has its origins in a particular cosmological tradition as will be discussed later.

[45] John Hobson, *The Eurocentric Conception of World Politics: Western International Theory 1760-2010,* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012, p 27 – emphasis in the original.

[46] See Gayatari Chakravorty Spivak, 'Can the Subaltern Speak?,' in C. Nelson and L. Grossberg (eds) *Marxism and the Interpretation of Culture,* Basingstoke: Macmillan, pp 271-313.

[47] Oliver P. Richmond, 'Post-colonial Hybridity and the Return of Human Security,' in David Chandler and Nik Hynek (eds), *Critical Perspectives on Human Security:Discourses of Emancipation and Regimes of Power*, Abingdon, Oxon.: Routledge, 2011, pp 43-56, p 49.

[48] Richmond, 'Post-colonial Hybridity,' p 50.

[49] Richmond, 'Post-colonial Hybridity,' p 53-4.

[50] Richmond, 'Post-colonial Hybridity,' p 44.

[51] Jürgen Habermas, *Between Naturalism and Religion*, Cambridge: Polity Press, 2008, p.134.

[52] Furthermore, Asad asserts that there can be no 'universal definition of religion, not because its constituent elements and relationships are historically specific, but that definition itself is the product of discursive processes.' Talal Asad, *Genealogies of Religion: Discipline and Reason of Power in Christianity and Islam*, Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1993, p. 29.

[53] Talal Asad, *Formations of the Secular: Christianity, Islam, Modernity*, Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2003.

[54] See José Casanova, 'The Secular, Secularizations, Secularism', in Craig Calhoun, Mark Jurgensmeyer and Jonathan VanAntwerpen (eds.) *Rethinking Secularism*, New York: Oxford University Press, 2011, pp. 54-75.

[55] Asad, *Formations of the Secular*, p.192.

[56] See Shani, *Religion, Identity and Human* Security.

[57] It can be argued that traditions are unable to provide ontological security since they are 'invented' modern constructs. See the various contributions to Eric Hobsbawm and Terence Ranger (eds) *The Invention of Tradition*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983. The definition of tradition used in this article draws on the work of Alisdair MacIntyre. For MacIntyre, a tradition can be understood as an 'argument extended through time in which certain fundamental agreements are defined and redefined.' Alisdair MacIntyre, *Whose Justice? Which Rationality?* Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 1988, p. 12.

[58] In the *Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Napoleon*, Marx famously wrote that 'men make their own history, but they do not make it as they please; they do not make it under self-selected circumstances, but under circumstances existing already, given and transmitted from the past.' Karl Marx, 'The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte,' in David McLennan (ed) *Karl Marx: Selected Writings by Karl Marx*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1977, p.300.

[59] The concept of the 'immanent frame,' introduced by Charles Taylor to describe our 'secular age', refers to a constellation of interlocking impersonal orders which collectively constitute the 'modern': the social, cosmic and moral. It is characterized by an order in which the 'buffered identity of the disciplined individual moves in a constructed social space, where instrumental rationality is a key value and time is pervasively secular.' See Charles Taylor, *A Secular Age*, Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2007, p. 542. This 'immanent frame' is naturalized as the human condition and any appeal to a transcendent order is misleading since it is considered a human invention.

[60] Jennifer Mitzen, ' Ontological Security in World Politics: State Identity and the Security Dilemma,' *European Journal of International Relations,* 12(3), 2006, p.341.

[61] R. D. Laing, *The Divided Self: A Study of Sanity and Madness*, London: Tavistock, 1960, p.39.

[62] Laing, *The Divided* Self, p. 37.

[63] Laing, *The Divided* Self, p. 39.

[64] Laing, *The Divided* Self, p. 46.

[65] Laing, *The Divided* Self, p. 47.

[66] Laing, *The Divided* Self, p. 48.

[67] Laing, *The Divided* Self, p. 49-50.

[68] Giddens, *Modernity and Self-Identity*, p. 54.

[69] Trine Flockhart, 'The problem of change in constructivist theory: Ontological security seeking and agent motivation', *Review of International Studies*, July 2016, pp 1 – 22.

[70] Giddens, *Modernity and Self-Identity*, p 40.

[71] Giddens, *Modernity and Self-Identity*, p 41.

[72] Giddens, *Modernity and Self-Identity*, p 47.

[73] Giddens, *Modernity and Self-Identity*, p 55.

[74] Giddens, *Modernity and Self-Identity*, p 48.

[75] Jacques Lacan, *Écrits: A Selection,* Alan Sheridan (trans), London: Tavistock/Routledge, 1977.

[76] Frantz Fanon (1952), *Black Skin, White Masks*, London: Pluto, 1991, p.18.

[77] Homi K. Bhabba, *The Location of Culture,* London and New York: Routledge, 1994, p.85.

[78] As Ayşe Zarakol points out, 'for one to feel inferiority before another, one must have first accepted and internalized the normative standards that the other is using for evaluation.' Ayşe Zarakol, *After Defeat: How the East Learned to Live with the West*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011. My point is that many colonized peoples *never* felt inferiority as the standard of civilization used by the West for evaluation was not internalized.

[79] See Michel Foucault, *Security, Territory, Population: Lectures at the College de France, 1977-78,* Graham Burchell (trans). Houndsmills, Basingstoke, Hants.: Palgrave, 2007, pp 108-9.

[80] Partha Chatterjee, *The Nation and it Fragments: Colonial and Postcolonial Histories.* Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1993.

[81] Sudipta Kaviraj, *The Imaginary Institution of India: Politics and Ideas*. New York:

Columbia University Press, 2010.

[82] Bernard .S Cohn, *Colonialism and Its Forms of Knowledge*, Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1996, p.8.

[83] Sudipta Kaviraj, 'On Thick and Thin Religion: Some Reflections on Religion and Modernity in India,' in Ira Katznelson and Gareth Steadman Jones (eds), *Religion and the Political Imagination*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011, pp 336-356.

[84] Chatterjee, *The Nation and it Fragments*,

[85] Kaviraj, 'On Thick and Thin Religion'

[86] Harjot Oberoi, *The Construction of Religious Boundaries: Culture, Identity and Diversity in the Sikh Tradition*, New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1994, pp 420-21.

[87] Giddens, *Modernity and Self-Identity*, p 40.

[88] Gurbhagat Singh, 'Vaisakhi of 1699: Rupture of the Indian Grand Narratives,' *International Journal of Punjab Studies* 6/2 *(July–Dec.)*, 6 (2), 1999, pp 187–94, 189-90.

[89] Jasbir Singh Ahluwalia, *The Sovereignty of the Sikh Doctrine*, New Delhi: Bahri Publications, 1983, p 91.

[90] Agamben, *Homo Sacer*.

[91] Brian Keith Axel, *The Nation's Tortured Body: Violence, Representation and the Formation of a Sikh 'Diaspora,'* Durham, NC and London: Duke University Press, 2001, pp 132-3.

[92] In June 1984, the Indian security forces, acting under Prime Minister Indira Gandhi's orders, launched a military offensive, codenamed Operation Bluestar, which was designed to 'flush out' Sikh armed militants housed in the Golden Temple complex. As a result of the offensive which claimed the lives of militants and thousands of pilgrimes, the *Akal Takht* (the Sikh 'Parliament') was destroyed and *Harimandir* (the 'Golden Temple') sustained permanent damage. This served the pretext for the assassination of Indira Gandhi on October 31 1984 by her Sikh bodyguard and, following violent organized pogroms on Sikhs in New Delhi, a violent campaign for national self-determination by armed Sikh militants in the Punjab which was eventually crushed in 1992. See XXXX.

[93] Recent declassified documents reveal that the UK provided logistical and moral support for the Operation Bluestar and the 'pacification campaign' in the Punjab during the 1980s.

[94] See Jennifer Mitzen, ' Ontological Security in World Politics: State Identity and the Security Dilemma,' *European Journal of International Relations,* 12(3), 2006, pp 341–370; and Brent J. Steele, *Ontological Security in International Relations: Self Identity and the IR*

State, London and New York: Routledge, 2008, for paradigmatic examples of 'scaling up' from individual to state level as in much of (contructivist) IR theory. Mitzen explains how states may prefer to continue conflict over reconciliation because doing so reinforces 'the self.' Routinised practices allow for ontological security by constructing a stable cognitive environment. Brent Steele similarly suggests that states want to maintain a consistent self, but that this coherence could be undermined after a critical event if the actions undertaken contradicted the values and norms on which the state's identity was based. For a concise and comprehensive introduction to ontological security in International Relations, see Catarina Kinvall and Jennifer Mitzen, 'An Introduction to the Special Issue: Ontological Securities in World Politics,' *Cooperation and Conflict*, 52(1), 2017, pp. 3–11. For a critique of the use of ontological security in IR, see Richard Ned Lebow, *National Identities and International Relations*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2016, chapter 2 (pp.21-44).

[95] Agamben *Homo Sacer*.

[96] Giddens, *Modernity and Self-Identity*.

[97] Schmitt, *The Concept of the Political.*

[98] Seth, Gandhi and Dutton, *Postcolonial Studies*, p.9.

[99] Dipesh Chakrabarty, *Provincializing Europe: Postcolonial Thought and Historical Difference*, Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2000.