



HUMAN SECURITY VERSUS HUMAN DEVELOPMENT - BEHAVIORISTIC APPROACH

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Abstract:

Recent terrorist attacks in Brussels, Paris and Istanbul, are shaking a world bewildered of daily fear of violence, while the contemporary consumer has to deal with the “new wars” emerging in the context of the current socio-economic and political context. The issue is especially thorny since, most of the times, the “enemy” the citizens must face is unknown, not only when it comes to terrorist attacks, but also when dealing with the question of the “enemy” in foods purchased for consumption (food security) or the security of personal data when accessing and using the Internet (cyber security). Consequently, this paper attempts to highlight the way in which the safety and security needs of the contemporary consumer have diversified over time, often becoming determinants of social behavior in general, and of the buying and consumption behavior, in particular.

Key words: human security, human development, perceived risk

1. Introduction

Starting the approach with a prioritization of the needs according to Maslow's pyramid, it can be seen that, after the physiological needs (food, water, shelter etc.), safety and security needs are placed on the second level of the pyramid. These needs focus not only on the actual physical safety, but also include the need for order, stability and control over everyone's life and over the environment. Consumers also feel the need for security when it comes to the availability of health or educational services, as well as in the case of bank deposits or insurance policies. (Schiffman & Kanuk, 2007).

Thus, consumers are constantly trying that their purchasing decisions satisfy at the highest level that needs they have at a certain time. But even during this decision-making process that individuals are aware of to a greater or lesser extent, they face numerous risks associated with the purchase decision. Therefore, during the research phase, consumers are subject to numerous risks arising from the process of information search. as follows (Solomon, 2004):

- The financial risk - refers to income and prosperity; relatively low income consumers are most vulnerable. Higher value products entail this type of risk.
- The operational risk - refers to the ways in which functional performance of the product meet consumers' needs; consumers with a highly developed practical sense are most at risk.
- The physical risk – concerns the health, physical force and vitality. Elderly consumers and those with fragile health are the most vulnerable. Electrical goods, cars, medicines, medical treatment, food and beverages involve this kind of risk.
- The social risk - refers to confidence and self-esteem. Consumers who are insecure are exposed to this type of risk in the case of products such as clothing, jewelry, houses, cars.
- The psychological risk - the desire to join a group and obtain a certain status. The consumers most exposed to this risk are those unrelated to a group, especially when buying products or services of luxury.

It is obvious that each of us, as individual consumer, has some experience that can help to successfully overcome these risks.

In what concerns a macro-level approach of the concept of human security in parallel to that of human development, these concepts come to explain consumers' need for safety, highlighting threats to which they are exposed, and trying at the same time to identify ways to anticipate and avoid these risks.

2. “Human security” vs. “Human development”

In specialized literature, a very interesting approach is the concept of “human security” in parallel to the concept of “human development”. Thus, the concept of human security was first introduced in 1994 in the Human Development Report prepared by the United Nations General Assembly (<http://hdr.undp.org/en/reports/global/hdr1994>). The above-mentioned report highlights two major components of the concept of human security, namely: freedom from fear freedom from want. Specifically, in the UNDP (United Nations Development Program) guidelines, Gomez & Gasper (2013) point out that we can talk of not less than seven dimensions of the human security concept, also otherwise mentioned in the 1994 HDR, namely:

- Economic security,
- Food security,
- Health security,
- Environmental security,
- Personal security,
- Community security,
- Political security.

Another very interesting point of view on the concept of human security is that of Amartya Sen, who approaches human security from a perspective that involves the pursuit of four aspects, namely (Martin & Owen, 2013):

- Focusing on what happens at the individual level, rather than at the economic, military or of any other type of level, by pursuing what the individual may or may not get economically, socially, culturally etc. wise,
- Analyzing the system of interconnections that determine the capabilities, and respectively the vulnerabilities of the individual, by determining threats and risks affecting different groups, and implicitly the individual response,
- A third aspect attempts to incorporate in the analysis individual priorities related to the life, health and dignity,
- The fourth issue is basically a result of the previously mentioned aspects, which aims at determining the individual stability or instability by satisfying basic needs.

In what regards the concept of human development, it can be observed that, although it is strongly interconnected with the concept of human security, the two concepts are not, however, identical. Thus, if the human security concept is oriented towards identifying threats and risks, the human development concept involves understanding the threats in order to find and implement preventive methods. (Gomez & Gasper, 2013).

Very relevant in this context is the definition of the two concepts as they are found in the Human Development Report for the year 2014: "While human development is a broader concept of expanding people's choice, human security focuses on whether people can exercise these choices safely and freely-including being confident that opportunities they have today will not be totally lost tomorrow." (<http://hdr.undp.org>)

Thus, the Human Development Report 2015, "Work for Human Development", provides highly relevant information about the year 2014, regarding the classification of the 188 countries analyzed worldwide according to the Human Development Index and its components in four categories, namely: countries with very high, high, medium and low levels.

The elements taken into account in determining the above-mentioned indicator were:

- Longevity (Life expectancy at birth),
- Education (Expected years of schooling and Mean years of schooling),
- Income (Gross national income per capita),
- GNI per capita rank minus HDI rank.

According to the analysis made in the mentioned report, Romania ranked 52 out of the total 188 analyzed countries in 2014, with a HDI of 0.793, being included in the category of countries with high human development, outranked by Belarus (HDI 0.798), the Russian Federation (HDI 0.798) and Oman (HDI 0.793) – Fig. 1 (1990-2014 Romanian Human Development Index trends)

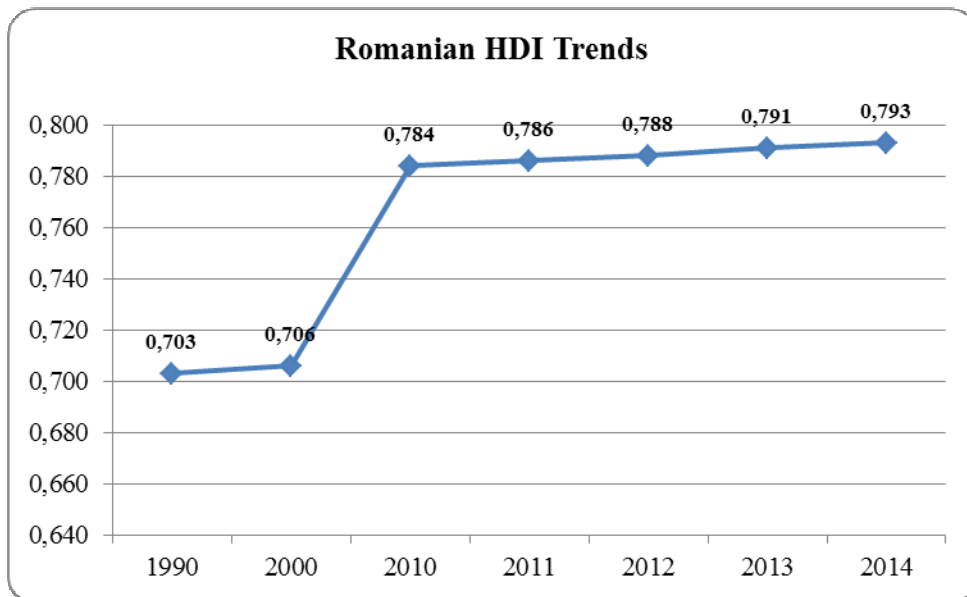


Fig. 1: 1990-2014 Romanian Human Development Index trends

Source: Human Development Report 2015, <http://hdr.undp.org>

The human development index (HDI) resulted in the following 4-category classification of the 188 analyzed countries worldwide, i.e. 49 countries with a very high HDI (countries with a HDI $\geq 0,800$ were included), 56 countries with a high HDI (HDI in the range of 0.700- 0.799), while the category of medium level HDI countries (HDI between 0.550 and 0.699) included 38 states, and 45 states were classified in the category of countries with a low HDI (<0.550). The first positions in the category of the countries with a very high level of human development in 2014 were occupied by Norway (HDI 0.944), Australia (HDI 0.935) and Switzerland (HDI 0.930) - Fig.2 Top Ten Very High Human Development Countries

As previously outlined, it can be observed that the issue of individual security must not and cannot be reduced to a single element, that of physical security and safety, but extends on the many decisions that the consumers should take about the place of residence, work, food consumed, selected banking and financial institutions etc.

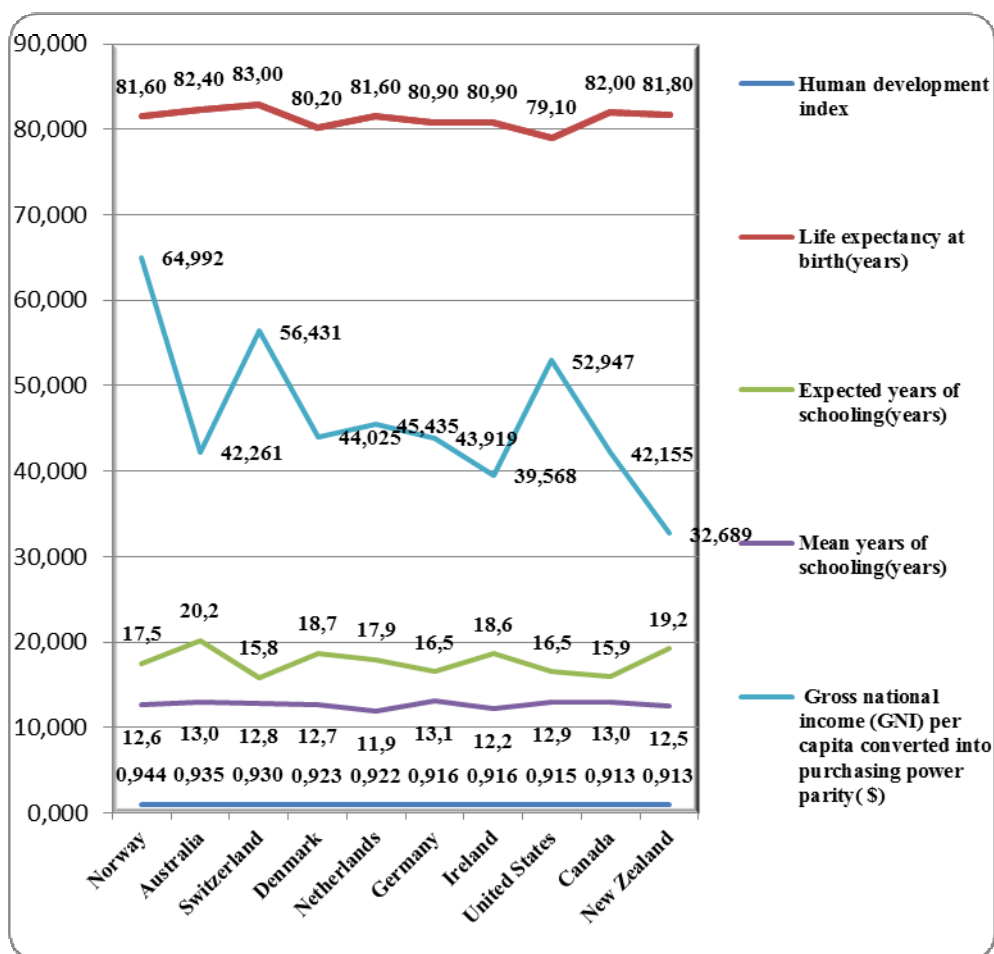


Fig.2 Top Ten Very High Human Development Countries

Source: Human Development Report 2015, <http://hdr.undp.org>

3. European consumers' perception of safety and security - analysis of secondary data sources

Given that the issue of individual security has become a real concern for the contemporary generation, the present paper aimed to analyze the manner in which European consumers perceive the issue of individual security, both in terms of respecting the fundamental rights and the individual freedom, and by analyzing the financial situation of their own household or national economy, especially through the analysis of unemployment, with a major impact on individual security. Regarding other aspects which determine the individual's security as a consumer, i.e. food security, this issue was detailed in the context of the articles previously published by the author, focusing on the changes in the consumers' demand for organic products, given the implications of the consumption of such products on the health and safety of the

people and the environment. In what concerns the security of personal data, particularly when shopping online, aspects thereof will be analyzed in detail in a future article, and therefore will not be the subject of this paper.

In this context, the paper aimed to analyze secondary data information, highly relevant being the results published by the European Commission in April 2015, as part of the Flasheurobarometer study no. 432, report targeting the identification of the perception of the Europeans on security and public safety.

The main objectives of the mentioned study were:

- To research the perception of the European citizens of the 28 EU Member States on the local, regional, national and international security level.
- To identify the main factors that influence people's perceptions of security.
- To study the perception of the population on the role that the authorities should have in the fight against threats to the public security.

Thus, the analysis of the data existing in 2015, it can be seen that at the level of the EU28, 90% of the respondents believe that "their immediate neighborhood" is a safe place to live, while only 9% of them perceive a certain risk in the immediate vicinity. Also, a high percentage, namely 89% of Europeans, consider their city or town of residence to be a safe place; 82% agree that the country where they live is a safe place, while 79% of European citizens have indicated EU as a safe place to live – Fig.3 EU28 citizens' perception of public safety - March 2015

The analysis of the data existing in Romania, we can observe a high degree of confidence in the assertions made in the research, meaning that 86% of the fellow citizens felt their immediate vicinity is a safe place, 84% said that their place of residence is safe place to live, while a relatively smaller percentage, 70% , considered Romania as a safe country; 77% of the Romanian respondents said the EU is a safe space.

Regarding the perception on personal security, about 45% of the EU respondents indicated that the economic situation and the level of unemployment have a negative impact on the analyzed variable. In Romania, the recorded frequencies are relatively higher than those recorded in Europe, with 40% of respondents indicating that the financial situation of their own households has a negative impact on personal security, while 49% considered the economic situation recorded nationally to be a negative impact factor; 58% of the Romanian respondents indicated unemployment as having a negative influence on personal security. - Fig.4. Perception of personal security

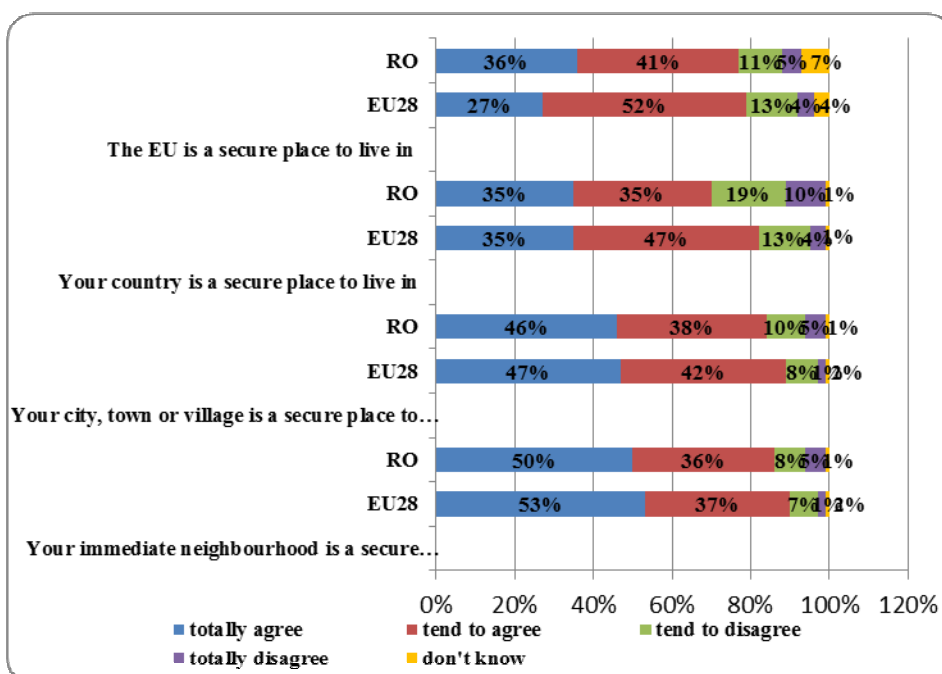


Fig.3. EU28 citizens' perception of public safety - March 2015

Source: European Commission, FlashEurobarometer no.432, March 2015, p.6

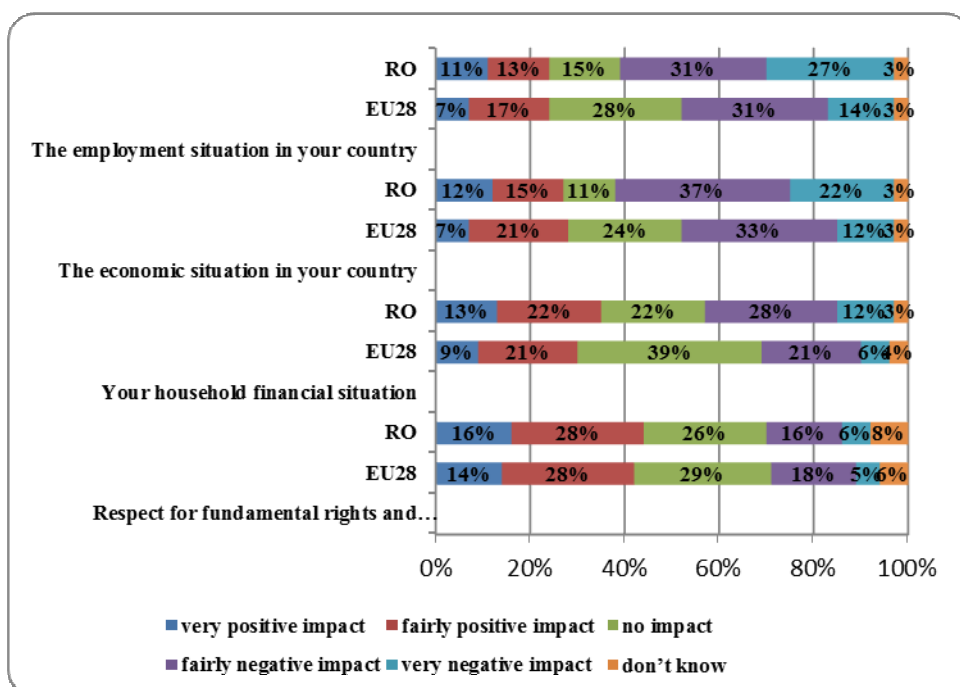


Fig.4. Perception of personal security

Source: European Commission, FlashEurobarometer no.432, March 2015, p.16

Also extremely interesting are the respondents' answers regarding the looming threats to internal security in the EU. Thus, 85% of the European respondents and respectively 74% of Romanian ones indicated extremist ideologies as representing a real threat to European security, while 86% of Europeans and 85% of the Romanian respondents concluded that war and political instability outside EU borders can represent a threat to European security. The other following frequencies on the threats perceived by the respondents were social exclusion, poverty and discrimination (84%) and climate change and pollution (69%). – Fig. 5. Possible threats to safety and security in the EU

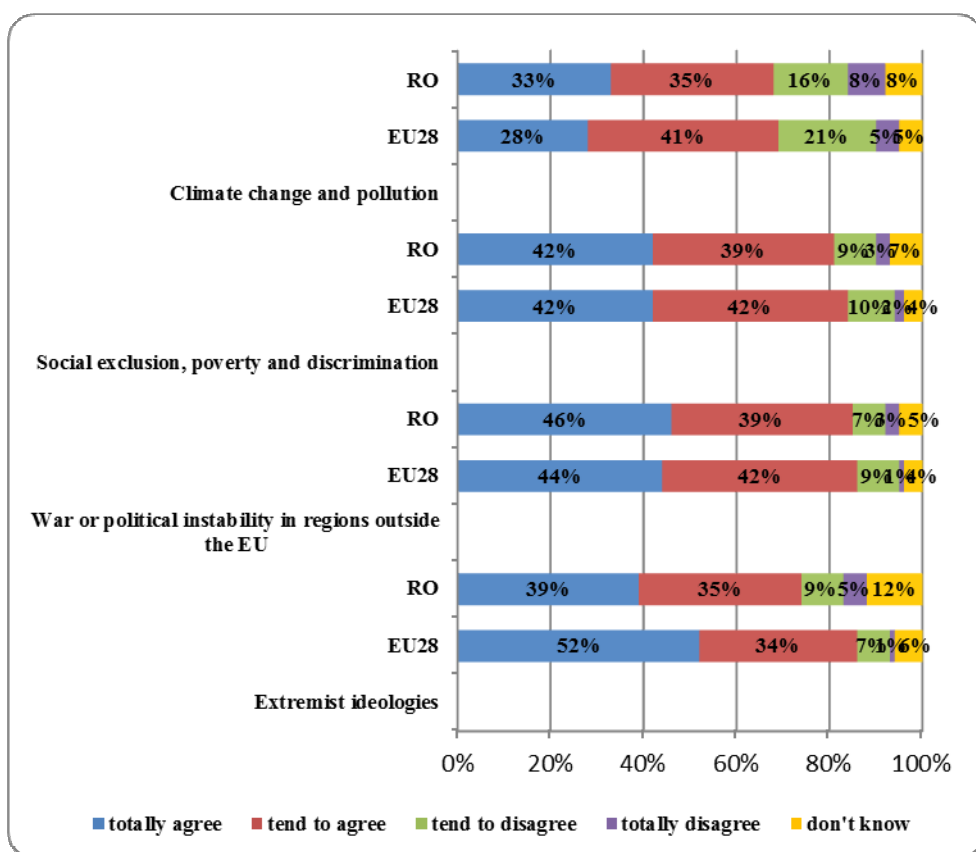


Fig. 5. Possible threats to safety and security in the EU

Source: European Commission, FlashEurobarometer no.432, March 2015, p.27

The projections of the Europeans are not optimistic about the short-term developments of the threat to the security of the EU, terrorism recording the highest frequency of the responses, in what concerns the escalation of the phenomenon (68%), followed by the cybercrime (63%) and organized crime (55%). - Fig. 6 Expected evolution of the threats to internal security in the EU

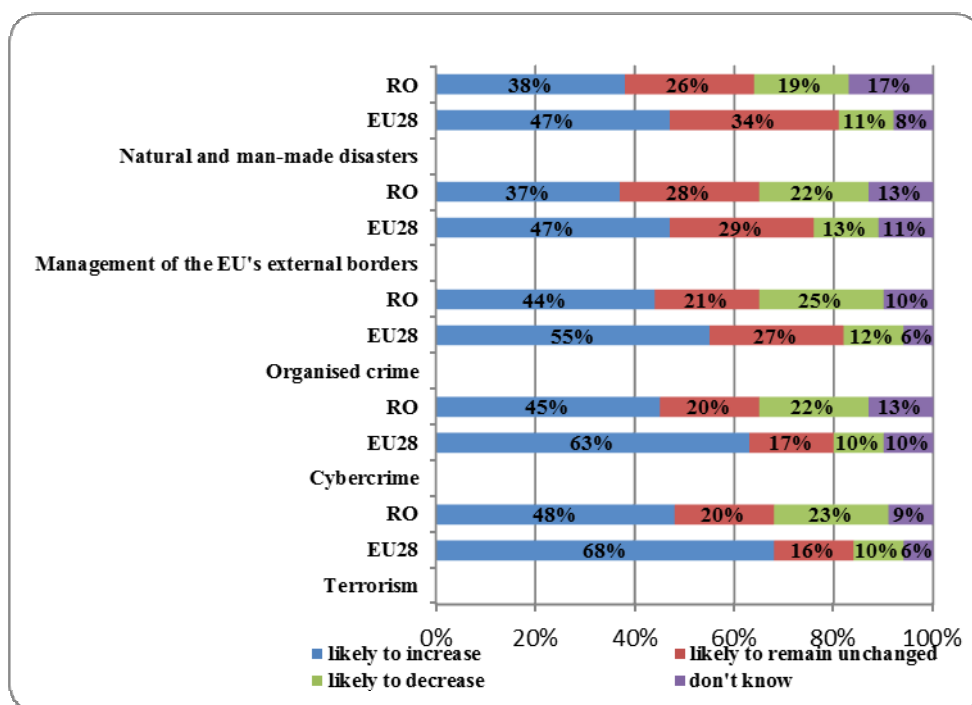


Fig. 6 Expected evolution of the threats to internal security in the EU

Source: European Commission, FlashEurobarometer no.432, March 2015, p.32

4. Conclusions

Tragically, the forecasts of the Europeans, made in the spring of 2015, seem more real than ever, as the terrorist attacks intensify dramatically. Only last week Europe was terrified by two attacks in Nice and Munich. In this extremely turbulent context, people's perceptions on safety and security has taken on a whole other dimension, becoming a top priority at the individual, regional, national and international level. The decision-making process records visible changes, in terms of social behavior in general and purchase, in particular, an illustrative example being that of the consumer of tourist services who practically had to shift their demand to other touristic destinations, eliminating the so-called set of alternative destinations, such as France or Turkey.

Romania remains a safe destination for the moment, but the threats involving food security and cyber security, plus those related to the state of the environment tend to become real risks that consumers should consider in taking the purchase decision. Therefore, understanding and widely implementing the concept of human development comes to highlight the synergistic effect created by "work", the individual thus securing the resources necessary to the knowledge and development of human capital, opening new opportunities and choices, which ultimately leads to a risk anticipation and implicitly to finding ways to mitigate them.

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