

HUMAN SECURITY IN FOCUS

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INTRODUCTION

In the last few decades the concept of security has grown, both to satisfy new demands for securitization and also to address the new challenges created by globalization. With the expansion of security there has been a parallel process of norm transition with respectable normative consequences for the security agendas of the actors in the international political arena. In order to investigate the concept of human security one needs to look at three issues: firstly, what is individual/human security - is it problem-based or category-based? The other issues to be considered are emancipation and individual security, and the state as a threat to individual security and humanitarianism. To do this, one must examine the referent object, securitizing actor and the source of threat to the concept of individual/human security.

The theory of 'securitization' involves the search for a referent object, or according to Buzan's argument, 'Securitization can thus be seen as a more extreme version of politicization' (Buzan *et al.* 1998, 23). Securitization is particularly concerned with three questions: 'security of whom' (or referent object); 'security of what' (what are the values at risk) and 'security from whom or what' (what are the sources of threat) (Møller 2000, 43). Prior to the end of the Cold War security was measured in rather narrow, militaristic terms, focused on 'national security' and the survival of the state. The post-Cold War environment can be considered as a renaissance of security studies by taking a new, more humanistic approach. Expressed in theoretical terms, the focus of security has shifted, providing a new concept of 'human security'. Human or individual security treats the following parameters: the referent object is the individual and humanity as a whole; values at risk vary from mere survival of the individual to quality of life and human rights; possible source of threat can be the state but also the impact of globalization (Møller 2000, 43). If the source of threat used to be solely external (conflict between states), now the source of threat can also be internal (inter-state conflict). Another imposing issue while analysing human security is the epistemological issue – what is its level of analysis; is it examining the individual while maintaining system level analysis? The nature of knowledge should be acquired by analyzing the individual, however in a wider, even global perspective.

The difference between previous notions of security, including 'societal security' and the concept of human security, is the fact that human security takes a step further, treating human development as a need for security as well, 'Job security, income security, health security, environmental security, security from crime, these are the emerging concerns of human security all over the world' (Møller 2000, 41). Amnesty International, one of the pioneering organizations regarding human security, states that the 'real source of insecurity is corruption, repression, discrimination, extreme poverty and preventable diseases (Dunne and Wheeler 2004, 12). Paris also identifies seven elements of human security: economic, food, health, environmental, personal, community and political security

(Paris 2001, 90). In terms of the survival of the individual, death could come as equally from hunger, AIDS, human trafficking, etc. as it could come from a soldier's weapon. In terms of human development, low quality of life, extreme poverty and human misery can be even worse than the incarceration of an individual. In that respect human security issues are mostly present in underdeveloped and developing countries where there is lack of a state institutional framework to legislate appropriate policies. The degree of human vulnerability is much higher in 'weak states', where there are increased levels of national and societal security problems (Buzan 1991, 113). Human security issues are changing the agenda of state and non-state actors in that they are creating a link between security and sustainability. Another interesting characteristic of human security is that its agenda is led primarily by non-state actors, such as non-governmental organizations and supra-state actors, such as the United Nations, European Union, etc (Sens 2004, 141).

PROBLEM BASED OR CATEGORY BASED?

The concept of human security and human rights in particular is often flawed and mistaken with that of minority rights, producing a number of difficulties in differentiating between these two terms and creating confusion. This leads to the question: is the concept of human rights problem-based or category-based? Often, there is the case of overlap between the two. For example, the Roma or Romani communities are regarded as a disadvantaged and excluded group throughout Central and Southeast Europe, which makes their need for human security a category-based problem. On the other hand, if one argues that racism is a human security issue and that all people from African origin are disadvantaged, it would be a false statement. Regarding the previous question of minority rights and/or human rights, often there is the danger of interpretation and confusing societal security and human security. Cockell argues that 'protracted social conflicts are most often characterized by the contested pursuit of basic human needs by disadvantaged social groups. Such human needs often include group security, recognition of identity and culture, access to the political process, and effective participation in the local economy' (Cockell 2001,17). Furthermore, Cockell argues that 'Human security components that are important for conflict analysis are: societal and communal security; human rights and personal security' (Cockell 2001, 17). Indeed, human security components are present in the issue of minority rights; however, human security and minority rights are based on two different levels of analysis. The problem/category-based analysis of human security leads to the second issue of human security which is the link between emancipation and security: is it a 'zero-sum game', who decides the degree of emancipation, when is emancipation ultimately achieved.

EMANCIPATION AS SECURITY

The idea of 'emancipation as security' has been described by Neufeld as a critical and liberating strategy, 'which focuses on the more "empirical" question of how security issues are framed in political discourse' (Neufeld 2004, 109). However, there are a number of difficulties with this concept beginning with the mere definition of 'emancipation', the practical problem of achieving desirable levels of emancipation as well as distribution, division, hierarchy and relationship of equality. Using

Axworthy's argument Neufeld describes the aim of emancipation in achieving human security as the following:

It includes security against economic privation, an acceptable quality of life, and a guarantee of fundamental human rights. At a minimum, human security requires that basic needs are met, but it also acknowledges that sustained economic development, human rights and fundamental freedoms. It recognizes the links between environmental degradation, population growth, ethnic conflicts, and migration. (Neufeld 2004, 114/5)

According to the Commission on Human Security, emancipation can also be understood as the protection and *empowerment* of people: 'Protection shields people from dangers. It requires concerted effort to develop norms, processes and institutions that systematically address insecurities. Empowerment enables people to develop their potential and become full participants in decision-making' (Commission on Human Security 2003). Those two components are mutually reinforcing and can be regarded as part of the 'emancipatory package'. Economic underdevelopment and lack of emancipation can even lead to larger-scale armed conflict and can shake the societal security of a state (Gough 2002, 146). As part of human rights and emancipation, Henry Shue distinguishes two sets of 'basic rights': 'subsistence' which includes social and economic rights, and 'security from violence' which includes civil and political rights (Dunne and Wheeler 2004, 18). However, a problem occurs when NGOs and donors often subscribe to agendas based on 'empowerment' and 'sustainability' without connecting them to the real needs of local communities. This leads to a confusion of priorities for the people in need; one can argue that for example drinking water and food, which fall into the category of economic and social rights, are far more urgent needs than empowerment and civil and political rights issues. However, the counter-argument would be that political and civil rights are equally important and necessary as the daily bread, since without them the individual cannot fully exercise his/her freedom.

As an illustration of emancipation needs, one can take the example of the Roma communities in Central and Eastern Europe. The members of those communities are experiencing poverty, socio-economic marginalization with additional increasing aversion and violence from the side of the majority (Trehan). The marginalization also includes exclusion from labour markets, exclusion from the education system, extreme forms of spatial segregation; in a word exclusion from the right to exercise active citizenship. The Romani people are also experiencing serious security issues such as: police brutality, racism, intolerance and discrimination (Trehan). Activities within the third sector successfully support the Romani movement for emancipation; however, the question is how much are the Romani communities in reality benefiting from those projects. On a European level there is an agenda for Roma emancipation and a number of other supranational organizations have their own Roma programs, such as the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), the Open Society Institute, etc (Trehan). One can argue that EU integration can help the emancipation of marginalized groups in terms of raising the issue at a supranational instead of national level. Another way of treating the Romani issue is to look at it as a minority rights issue. This approach is a rather slippery slope, including the danger of giving up the possibility of greater civic participation for the community. Also, this approach can lead to creating a further division and possible conflict between the minority and majority groups.

Granting minority rights as part of the emancipation package leads to the ‘societal security dilemma’ which is seen as a situation where ‘one group’s security spells insecurity for the others’ (Møller 2000, 48). The question which arises is: can emancipation represent a zero-sum game where each player can only gain at the expense of others? This often occurs when there is prior conflict between the minority and majority groups (or between two groups in general) and when there is a case of contested identity, ‘The constitution of identities is often a reciprocal process. As each subject seeks to perform its identity, it threatens others, whose identities are consolidated in response.’ (Weldes et al 1999, 15). Even when there is not a prior conflict between two groups, affirmative action policies as part of emancipation can be perceived as a zero-sum game by individual members of the other community.

Finally, there is the issue of state’s role in emancipation and the role of consolidated democracy and civil society as a framework for emancipation. There are rather opposing views of the state’s role and *ability* to emancipate. According to the social-democratic view, ‘Democracy produces a more responsive state that can appropriately chaperone its people through the development process, as opposed to relying on outside aid’ (Gough 2002, 147). However, when it comes to the question of the state’s ability as an emancipator and protector than there is a different argument, stating: ‘In the brave neoliberal world order, however, we are now instructed that domestic progress towards the good life is a luxury we can no longer afford. The purview of the discourse of progress and the good life has been restricted to the international realm’ (Neufeld 2004, 121). This leads to the third issue of human security which is the problem of the state as a threat to individual security and the cases of humanitarian intervention.

THE STATE AS A THREAT TO INDIVIDUAL SECURITY AND HUMANITARIAN INTERVENTION

There have been numerous cases when the sovereign state as such cannot provide the basic economic and social rights of the individuals and it also acts as an oppressor, putting the physical survival of the individual into question. Usually this occurs when there is a transition from one socio-political system to another in cases of post-colonial, post-communist countries, etc., when the basic institutions of the state do not exist or they have been eroded. Campbell goes as far as finding the state ‘to be a source of authorized articulations of danger’ (Campbell 1998, 199). With the individual as the referent object and the state as a source of threat, the following dilemma occurs: who is left to protect the individual? This is the moment when non-state and supra-state actors come into play, such as human rights NGOs and the United Nations. Also, it is within this aspect of human security that norm transitions are taking place and new international norms are being created.

In terms of the human security debate, norms have a very important and powerful role to ‘influence states’ behaviours towards individuals’ (Betts and Eagleton-Pierce 6). Norms do not only have the power to influence state behaviour, but can also set the agenda for, what is called, ‘global governance’. What used to be in the realm of national sovereignty and state power is now replaced by global governance due to globalization (Betts and Eagleton-Pierce 6). Also, in the past few decades there has been a displacement of the adopted norm of ‘non-intervention’ with the concept of ‘human security’ and ‘humanitarian intervention’ (Sens 2004, 144). Overall, there has been support for

a new customary rule in international law, however only to the degree of *custom* and not of *treaty* (Welsh 2004, 181). This burdens the consensus behind the concept of ‘humanitarian intervention’, especially when actions are needed.

There are two contested opinions when it comes to the need of humanitarian intervention. The sceptics argue that human security and consequently humanitarianism is only a ‘leitmotif in foreign policy’ by which state actors pursue their hidden political agendas through international organizations (Suhrke 1999, 265). Some would go as far as to describe human intervention as ‘Old-fashioned power politics dressed up as humanitarianism’ (Møller 2000, 46). The interventionist argument would be that when it comes to saving human lives and alleviating human suffering every possible mean should be applied; or using Foucault’s argument “wars are no longer waged in the name of a sovereign who must be defended; they are waged on behalf of the existence of everyone” (Campbell 1998, 201). Whether it is a case of power politics or a noble cause, one can argue that the concept of ‘humanitarian intervention’ has great normative implications:

‘The terrain on which the conceptual and policy contest over “humanitarian intervention” has been fought is essentially normative. It takes the form of norm displacement, shifting from the established norm of non-intervention to a claimed emerging new norm of “humanitarian intervention”. (Thakur 2004, 193)

Consensus over ‘humanitarian intervention’ also imposes the question of legitimacy of actions. Welsh argues that ‘one of the major functions of the UN in international society is its role as a “collective legitimiser” which places the burden of legitimizing humanitarian interventions at UN institutions (Welsh 2004, 177). The issue of legitimacy is closely connected to the issue of overriding state sovereignty. The norms of non-intervention as well as some other norms, such as ‘territorial recognition’ are based on the principle of state sovereignty over domestic affairs (Axworthy 2004, 247). One can perhaps argue that in a world of sovereign states governed by the rule of law and democratic principles providing freedom for its citizens there would be no need to alter the norm of non-intervention; however, the current circumstances in the world prove that interventionist norms are needed.

CONCLUSION

The concept of ‘human security’ has been radically expanded the existing concept of security (Møller 2000,43). By examining the three issues regarding individual/human security: is it problem-based or category-based; emancipation and individual security; and the state as a source of threat to individual security and humanitarianism? One can also observe the normative consequences of the concept of human security. When it comes to human security, norms are being challenged ‘Normative contestation reflects the reality that the international normative architecture is polymorphic, not isomorphic’ (Thakur 2004, 201). International normative architecture may be such, however in the overall discourse and search for meaning of what ‘human security’ represents, one should not forget

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