RECONSIDERING THE NORMATIVE POWER OF EUROPEAN HUMAN SECURITY AGENDA

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ABSTRACT:

Previously operationalized under the "soft" or "civilian", "normative" has become one of the most commonly used titles of the European Union actorness in the world. Optimistic arguments have celebrated the uniqueness of the EU normative power, while critical approaches, on the contrary, questioned the effectiveness and consistency of such an agenda. In the context of the changing global security landscape, this paper seeks to explore the EU-led value-added discourse on human security and its significance. First, it analyzes the concept of human security within the abundance of diverse interpretations. Second, it examines how and why human security agenda was incorporated into the European Security Strategy (ESS). Finally, it explores whether human security agenda plays an important role in the formation of the ESS or it is merely a good-sounding label for political rhetoric.

KEYWORDS: normative power, European Human Security Agenda, global security, European Security Strategy, on-going conflicts, human rights protection, Barcelona Human Security Doctrine.

INTRODUCTION

Contrary to Fukuyama's cheerful projections (1992), the end of the Cold War era has not diminished the threats to world peace and security, but has rather transformed them into new and more complex dangers. After the collapse of the communist regime, the international community has experienced violence and suffering in a stunning frequency and

variety. The on-going conflicts in the former Yugoslavia republics, Africa, and elsewhere are clear examples of the changing nature of aggression in today's world. Due to the emergence of a different kind of conflict, the conceptual variety of security has been extended beyond the strict focus on national security to the security of individuals, communities, and the humanity. Indeed, the conception of security has been shifted from traditionally military issues (horizontal extension), epitomized by nuclear security during the Cold War, to encompass issues of economic well-being, cultural identity, human rights, and environmental concerns. Moreover, within the contemporary interpretation of security the reference object of security has been expanded (vertical extension) from protecting the state (macro level) towards protecting the people, minorities, ethnic groups, individuals (micro level). This transformation in understanding security has had important theoretical and practical implications for the development of the European Security Strategy (ESS).

Since the adoption of the Barcelona Human Security Doctrine in 2004, EU policymakers have customarily placed overriding emphasis on international law, democracy, human rights, international institutions and multilateralism in its foreign policy. These priorities clearly indicate that the EU human security agenda is not just a policy. It is a manifestation of the normative power of the EU. In fact, the EU has been explicit, and formally announced these normative goals for its foreign policymaking in the A Secure Europe in a Better World (2003).

Regarding the contribution of this essay, I intend to complete three goals. First, I analyze the concept of human security within its historical background and recent interpretations, as well as explaining how this concept came to be dominant for most of modern states security agendas. Second, I examine how and why human security agenda is transformed into the ESS against the background of changing transnational norms surrounding aggression, conflict, peace and security in conjunction with expanding ethical mandates of the ESS. Third, the essay poses the question whether human security plays an important role in the execution of the ESS, or whether it is simply a good-sounding label for political rhetoric. This finally takes the reader to the hypothesis that the European Human Security Doctrine is a normative (or ethical) security policy and is, in such a formulation, hard, or even impossible, to be practically maintained in the nearest future.

Methodologically, this essay is a critical inquiry. The essay is not designed to provide the reader with statistical data on the different aspects of the ESS. What is going to be done is a systematic analysis of major policy documentation and theoretical literature related to human security and CFSP. Such analytical endeavor is expected to scrutinize the phenomenon of human security within the broad context of the EU foreign policy, where the

ultimate objective is to elucidate the limitations of the EU human security agenda, as well as suggest how the low effectiveness of this EU policy could be recovered.

HUMAN SECURITY: HISTORICAL BACKGROUND AND RECENT INTERPRETATION

The concept of human security has been extensively circulating among policymakers, researchers, NGO advocates, and the media, making this agenda an increasingly influential tool in "narrating the changing patterns of world order and prescribing action within them" (Larrinaga 2007, p. 2). The human security approach challenged the premises of traditional security, as well as the 'core scheme' of what was understood as security (Mesjasz 2004, p. 7).

The key concepts of security studies were extended in various directions by different combinations of the following attributes:

1. ***Reference object*** – state, region, alliance, society, various social groups, nations, minorities, ethnic groups, individuals, global system.
2. ***Threats*** – a wide range of existential disturbances are emerging – political, military, economic, ecological, and societal.
3. ***Discourse*** – methods of identification of threats and reference objects resulted from the discourse in policy making structures (norm-formation and norm-socialization).

Indeed, the discourse on human security coincided with the broader redefinition of traditional notions of national security that had begun in the 1970s and then intensified with the end of the Cold War. If the concept of security is ontologically deconstructed, the evolution of the different interpretations of what constitutes security can be conceived in the following categories indicated in Table.1. This schematic depiction of the ontological shifts in the perceptions of security indicates horizontal and vertical extensions from the 1970s up to the 1990s. It points out the transformation of the referent object from the state level to the level of an individual (horizontal extension: macro → micro deepening); and from the issues of military security to the issues of famine, disease, and economic crises, civil war, genocide, etc. (vertical extension: broadening).

Vertical extension (macro-micro direction: level deepening)	**Tradition and origin**	**Form of security**	**Specific emphases**			Horizontal extension (issue broadening)
			Focus: ***referent object***	What is at risk: ***threat***	Threats to security: ***securitization***	
	TRADITIONAL MEANING - security as an attribute of state, absence of military conflict	National	State	Sovereignty, territorial integrity	Other states	
	NON-TRADITIONAL SECURITY AS A PUBLIC GOOD	Social	Societal groups, class and economic focus, political action committees	National unity, quality of life, wealth distribution	States, nations, migrants, alien culture	
	NON-TRADITIONAL SECURITY IN A UNIVERSAL SENSE – HUMAN SECURITY	Human	Individuals, mankind, human rights, rule of law	Survival, human development, identity, and governance	State itself, globalizations, natural catastrophe and change	

Table.1. Shifting Perceptions of Security

Most classical definitions of security are based on state-centered perspective that highlights the priority of territorial integrity, political sovereignty, and the competence of a state to protect its citizens. These security theories are largely based on the realist assumption of security, according to which the referent object of security is the state. This traditional security approach is based on the anarchic balance of power, a military build-up of the US vs. the Soviet Union, and on the unconditional sovereignty of nation-states (Owen 2004). States are considered as rational entities with clearly defined national interests and policies driven by the aspiration of gaining absolute power. Therefore, the security of nation states is mainly

seen as national defense focused on protecting from an external threat, while internal attack is largely ignored. Bajpai specifies that these interpretations had reached the peak by 1980s in the bipolar international system, in which international stability relied on the premise that the maintenance of the security of the state would inevitably lead to the security of its citizens, soon lost its relevance as the USSR collapsed (Bajpai 2000). Therefore, as the military and ideological confrontation between the US and the USSR officially ended, crucial theoretical reallocation of emphases took place. Failing to explain the fiasco of the USSR, leading theorists in IR, political sciences, and security studies rushed to "rethink some of the basic categories of though concerning world politics and to delineate the contours of this new era" (Wyn 1999, p. 93).

Further shifts in security strategy stimulated by the rise of the economic and environmental agendas in international relations during the 1970s and 1980s brought in the issues of societal security. Within the societal approach to security, it is interpreted as a public good that "provides benefits to all members of a community as soon as it is made available to any one person. Such a good is collectively consumed by everyone in a community, and it's impossible to charge for its use" (Mesjasz 2004, p. 5). This approach also argues that the more economic ties between states there are, the more secure they will be.

When in the 1990s the so-called Copenhagen School was founded (Buzan et al 1998; 2003), their security theory suggested a radical reallocation of traditional standpoints by emphasizing non-military issues that could be considered as crucial threats of security even if they are not threatening nation-states. The terrorist attack on September 11th 2001, the unsuccessful interventions in Bosnia, Kosovo, East Timor and Afghanistan, or even Iraq only reinforced the non-traditional approach to security, having necessitated a vast amount of policymaking. Human dimensions of security, mainly human development and human rights protection, came to be put high on the international agenda.

Taking on the definition of human security, it should be said that this term has been given a variety of diverse definitions and characterizations. Therefore, there is a long way to go before there is any agreement on a precise definition. Most specialists in the field of human security attribute the launch of human security agenda to the United Nations Human Development Report (HDR) issued in 1994. This Report prioritizes human security as an essential policy that would protect people rather than states and territories, and prioritize human development rather than military power. Within such a developmental and people-centered position "the report seeks to deal with these concerns through a new paradigm of sustainable human development, capturing the potential peace dividend, a new form of development co-operation and a restructured system of global institutions" (Human

Development Report 1994, p. 2). Unfortunately, the Report fails to give a comprehensive definition of human security, referring to this concept as a general theme, an abstract idea identified by the following intrinsic features:

- "Human security is a universal concern. It is relevant to people everywhere, in rich nations and poor";
- Since contemporary risks endanger all nations, "the components of human security are interdependent";
- "Human security is easier to ensure through early prevention than later intervention. It is less costly to meet these threats upstream than downstream";
- Human security is people-centered. "It is concerned with how people live and breathe in a society, how freely they exercise their many choices, how much access they have to market and social opportunities – and whether they live in conflict or in peace" (Human Development Report 1994, pp. 22-23).

Altogether, HDR is significant as it was the first official documentation that refocused the traditional interpretation of security to four essential pillars: (a) universality; (b) interdependence, (c) prevention, and (d) people-centeredness.

In the *Millennium Report to the United Nations* (Annan, 2000), We the Peoples, Kofi Annan argues that "once synonymous with the defense of territory from external attack, the requirements of security today have come to embrace the protection of communities and individuals from internal violence. The need for a more human-centered approach to security is reinforced by the continuing dangers that weapons of mass destruction, most notably nuclear weapons, pose to humanity: their very name reveals their scope and their intended objective, if they were ever used" (Annan 2000a, pp. 43-44). In his opinion, only an extended understanding of security is likely to embrace peace above a mere absence of violence; prioritize human rights, good governance, access to education and health care; as well as ensure that each individual has an opportunity and a choice to fulfill his or her potential.

Academic definitions of human security vary to a larger extent. There is no common agreement on what are the constituent elements of this phenomenon. An overall analysis of academic publications on human security allows differentiating several mainstream approaches:

(a) ***Developmentalists***: human security as a guarantee of the maintenance of basic human needs as they are pointed out by the UNDP (economic, food, health, personal, environment, political security, etc.). Within this approach, human security is interpreted as the main provider of sustainable development essential for long-term prosperity.

(b) ***Interventionists:*** human security as a policy that protects citizens from intrastate aggression, "… contravenes principles of state sovereignty, advocates individual sovereignty, and creates criminal tribunals to establish connections between human rights and the maintenance of international peace and security" (Liotta 2002, p. 483).

(c) ***Transnationalists:*** human security as the most effective means to address 'non-traditional' threats. These are largely the phenomena that transcend the borders of nation-states, such as transnational organized crime, terrorism, anti-personnel landmines, and cyber crime.

CHANGING SECURITY ARCHITECTURE IN THE EU: THE BARCELONA REPORT (2004)

In the European context, the human security agenda was proposed by a group of experts from LSE who presented *The Human Security Doctrine* to Javier Solana in September 2004 at the Barcelona Forum. The project was adopted and very integrated with the ESS. The reasons which underpin Solana's adoption of this security strategy are twofold. Tadjbakhsh acknowledges that, on the one hand, human security is an "outward-looking strategy [that]…could reinforce the image of the EU as a successful example of peaceful development based on cooperation, and on core values: respect for diversity, the rule of law, human rights, democracy, and citizen participation" (Tadjbakhsh 2005, p. 16). On the other hand, human security is a defense strategy that contributes to global human security – "the most realistic security policy for Europe, given that where people lived in poverty, where violence and lawlessness reigned under dogmatic ideologies, there was fertile ground for human rights violations, for criminal networks and for terrorism with as consequence the importation of hard drugs and weapons into the European Union" (Tadjbakhsh 2005, p.16).

The Barcelona doctrine puts forward a set of clear principles, all of which stem from the human security approach:

1) **Human rights priority –** "The primacy of human rights is what distinguishes the human security approach from traditional state-based approaches. Although the principle seems obvious, there are deeply held and entrenched institutional and cultural obstacles that have to be overcome if this principle is to be realized in practice" (Barcelona Report 2004, p. 10).
2) **Clear political authority** – "The central goal of a human security strategy has to be the establishment of legitimate political authority capable of upholding human security. The alternatives to authoritarianism are international, national and local governance based on consent, or state failure….The capacity to deploy civilian personnel is a crucial addition to these instruments. They represent the EU's commitment to help build and

sustain legitimate political authority in crisis situations" (Barcelona Report 2004, p. 11).

3) **Multilateralism** – "means a commitment to work with international institutions, and through the procedures of international institutions. (…) First and foremost, working within the United Nations framework, but it also entails working with or sharing out tasks among other regional organizations. (…) Secondly, multilateralism entails a commitment to common ways of working including agreed rules and norms: creating common rules and norms, solving problems through rules and co-operation, and enforcing the rules. (…) Thirdly, multilateralism also has to include coordination, rather than duplication or rivalry" (Barcelona Report 2004, p. 12).
4) **Bottom-up approach** – "the decision about the kind of policies to be adopted, whether or not to intervene and how, must take account of the most basic needs identified by the people who are affected by violence and insecurity. This is not just a moral issue; it is also a matter of effectiveness. It is people on the ground who know best what is needed and how best to do it" (Barcelona Report 2004, p. 13).
5) **Regional focus** – "a regional focus is not only an issue for intelligence-gatherers or diplomats, it also has operational implications. The UN involvement in the Great Lakes region has been characterized by piecemeal interventions confined to one state, whilst refugees and combatants crossed borders back and forth" (Barcelona Report 2004: 15).
6) **Use of legal instruments** – "The use of law, and particularly international law, as an instrument does not just pertain to diplomatic for a and decisions concerning whether to intervene, they are at the core of how we envisage operations should be conducted" (Barcelona Report 2004, p. 15);
7) **Appropriate use of force** – "Our approach does not suggest that the use of force is to be avoided under all circumstances. Nothing should undermine the inherent right of self-defense. If someone is threatening violence a soldier can respond appropriately, regardless of whether force has been authorized under Chapter VI or Chapter VII of the United Nations Charter" (Barcelona Report 2004, p. 16).

What should also be pointed out is that the Barcelona Report provides an elaborated list of reasons for choosing the human security agenda for the ESS. The first priority is given to the moral and ethical aspects of human security. The Barcelona Report suggests that "human beings have a right to live with dignity and security, and a concomitant obligation to help each other when that security is threatened. All human life is of equal worth, and it is not acceptable that human lives become cheap in desperate situations. There is nothing distinctively European about such moral norms. On the contrary, they are by their nature universal" (Barcelona Report 2004, p. 5). Legal (human rights protection) aspects are only given secondary importance. From the legal perspective, "the European Union does,

therefore, recognize that it has obligations concerning the human security of people outside its borders" (Barcelona Report 2004, p. 5). Moreover, although mentioned very superficially, the Barcelona Report talks about 'enlightened self-interest' that should explain why human security is important. It implies that in the age of ever increasing interdependency between states, "European cannot be secure while others in the world live in severe insecurity. In 'failing states' and conflict areas, the criminal economy expands and gets exported: the drug trade, human trafficking and the easy availability of small arms, and even the brutalization of society are not contained within the 'conflict zone' but felt beyond it, including in Europe" (Barcelona Report 2004, p. 5).

NORMATIVE DIMENSION OF EU HUMAN SECURITY DOCTRINE

From the analysis of the Barcelona report, it is obvious that the EU has sought to add a cognitively normative dimension to its security strategy. There is an apparent tendency in the ESS to develop the norms and values that would support human security policies, thereby cultivating a distinctive place and position in the contemporary international security architecture.

Sprung from the global interplay of such ethical concepts as *responsibility to protect, effective multilateralism*, and *human development*, human security indeed takes a meaningful part of the normative discourse in the European foreign policy. In 2003, Solana recommends that the EU should adopt a human security agenda to realize its ambitions to become a normative power reflecting its distinctive character as a multilateral polity committed to foundational ideas of peace, democracy and human rights rather than the classic nation-state defense of territory. In 2006, the study group under the aegis of the Finnish presidency further elaborates the human security approach by claiming that "human security is not simply a 'leitmotif' for EU security policies or an analytical label which categorizes the EU's international role in the way that concepts such as normative power or civilian power have done (Werthes et al 2006, p. 7). Enthusiastically promoting the Barcelona Human Security Doctrine, policymakers indeed projects the image of the EU associated with peace, stability, the absence of violence, or even more broadly, the absence of threat.

The incorporation of the human security agenda into the ESS brings about the conclusion that the ESS is at present a normative, ethical, and ideological issue. Moreover, although representing a qualitatively positive shift in understanding contemporary threats, the way how the ESS interprets human security makes this security strategy a fragile aspect of European foreign policy. Therefore, the ESS is widely criticized for *(1) presenting vague*

concepts; (b) failing to present concrete information about the agency that would implement the policy; (c) as well as for making the international intervention dilemma more complex.

a) Lacking conceptual clarity

To begin with, although the EU integrates the human security agenda into the ESS, this policy does not present an agreed definition of what this phenomenon implies. Human security has become an abstract wish list, on which everything that is politically good and acceptable is desirable. Such a conceptual defect "may be a handicap given that definitions do count when consensus is sought for cooperation. (…) Terminology consensus will be necessary if a comprehensive human security program is to be decided on and implemented" (Tadjbakhsh 2005, p. 24). The emerging European human security discourse obscures rather than clarifies the nature of European foreign policy. The European Security Strategy should not be a normative stand that exists as an abstract policy area.

b) Clash between morality and effectiveness

There is a clash between the effectiveness discourse and the normative agenda of the ESS. Shifting the policy emphasis to normative aspects of security, an area of decision-making driven by ethical principles makes it doubtful whether the EU as an international actor could be effective in the implementation of its human security agenda. "These two discourses can be better reconciled, or indeed any overlap between them exploited. If civilian power no longer quite fits, and normative power is indeed a paradox, if not a contradiction in terms, how can the EU resolve it? (…) The crucial consideration here is not the analytical problems surrounding the nature of the EU's external identity, but the operational implications of a lack of clarity and the disjuncture between different accounts of its personality" (Martin 2007, p. 7). There should be made a clear distinction between calling something 'human security' and actually doing 'human security', that is, between concepts and practicability.

c) Institutional dilemma

Regardless of the fact that human security strategy has been pronounced as a doctrine of the EU it seems to downplay the importance of state-centered security concerns. For quite clear pragmatic reasons, it is the state that has adopted human security as a foreign policy tool. Discussions around human security put very little emphasis on the empowerment aspects. Particularly, it is unclear what would be the responsible body that would ensure the maintenance of the human security agenda. "Human security as public good constitutes a responsibility for the state" (Tadjbakhsh 2005, p. 2).

d) Intervention dilemma

The intervention and peacekeeping dilemma is one of the most intricate aspects of the ESS. It creates "a kind of 'moral emergency' in which the *'...normal restraints of international law, political procedure and organizations...'* become unacceptable impediments" (McCormack 2005, p. 9). A foreign policy based on normative and ethical sentiments, removes such issues as international intervention, which very much should be debated, from the political realm. Such policymaking is, accordingly, likely to legitimize the actions of some states and delegitimize the actions of other states. "It legitimizes the actions of the states acting on behalf of the 'international community' or the EU that intervene against transgressor states. In practical reality however there is no international community, and the decision as to which states require external intervention is made by the world's most powerful states acting through the EU" (McCormack 2005, pp. 12-13). In this respect, the human security framework seems to be taking the international community back to unaccountable and hegemonic intervention on behalf of great powers.

CONCLUSION

This essay has sought to address the issue of human security in the context of the changing security architecture on the global level with making a particular emphasis on the development of the European human security agenda.

First of all, the implications of the transformation of the Cold War security architecture have been tremendous. What has been witnessed is a shift from national security, in which military forces may continue to play a preeminent role, to human security, where non-traditional security issues are prioritized. In the end of the 1990s, the conceptual transformation was more than just obvious as the issues of failing states, epidemiology (e.g. AIDS, HIV), environmental stress, resource scarcity and depletion, drugs, terrorism, inhumane weapons, cyber-war, and drug and human trafficking were highlighted by the UNDP. These non-traditional threats, be they closely associated with national security or not, will sooner or later exercise considerable influence on the development of strategic relationships and decision-making. The future will require policymakers in both the developing and the developed world to focus on the broad understandings security.

In the context of the European Security Strategy, this essay provides a few arguments proving that the EU foreign policy, particularly in its security aspects, has become fundamentally normative. First, instead of focusing on what constitutes politically sound and strategically meaningful policies, policymakers have engaged in a value-oriented debate about the actors and issues to be added on the lists of threats. Agreement on the definition of human security is a prerequisite, however, before this concept can be usefully employed in understanding the

phenomenon it is intended to capture. Without a clear idea what constitutes a human security and who should be protected from what threat and with which means, no policy could be effective and, more importantly, necessary. Altogether, the EU has developed the human security doctrine as a normative and value-added agenda that offers only partial insights into the nature of changing security architecture, and still requires further research. Moreover, the EU foreign policy discourse is currently fragmented in the political rhetoric due to the multiple policy labels it is attached.

Above all, this essay heavily criticizes the existing ESS that lacks a certain degree of precision to be successful not just in the world of norms and ethical sentiments, but also in the tricky realm of humanitarian intervention, peace operations, human development and poverty eradication. Furthermore, the normatively biased security considerations of the ESS lack indispensable implementation elements as well as the assessment standards to substantiate and evaluate the fulfilment of the human security goals. If the aspects of the EU human security agenda criticized in this essay are not reconsidered, the human security agenda might have negative effects externally and internally. Domestically, pre-emptive intervention in unstable states could possibly lead to greater instability as it would increase the dependence of the local elite on external assistance. Internationally, when sovereignty of weaker states could be 'legitimately' violated in the name of ethics and morality, i.e. human security, ironically might lead to international insecurity and fear.

Although by no means comprehensive in its conclusions, the essay highlights a number of key points that should be spelled out by the EU if it wishes to be a frontrunner of human security in the world. The essay also acknowledges the difficulties in defining human security as a workable policy framework, as well as specifies the limits of the implementation of such a policy.

Yet, human security is becoming an interesting element of the contemporary security, in which the participants are not limited to state actors, but also include individuals. Although human security is not a perfect policy, as any other policy focused on creating a stable global environment it should be researched in further academic endeavors.

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