Title	Human security : some conceptual issues for policy research
Sub Title	
Author	梅垣, 理郎(Umegaki, Michio)
Publisher	慶應義塾大学大学院政策・メディア研究科
Publication year	2003
Jtitle	総合政策学ワーキングペーパーシリーズ (Policy and governance working paper series). No.2
JaLC DOI	
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Notes	The 21st century center of excellence program "Policy innovation initiative: human security research in Japan and Asia"
Genre	Technical Report
URL	https://koara.lib.keio.ac.jp/xoonips/modules/xoonips/detail.php?koara_id=BA76859882-00000002-0001

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Graduate School of Media and Governance
Keio University, Japan

Human Security: Some Conceptual Issues
for Policy Research

Michio Umegaki*

November 2003

* Graduate School of Media and Governance, Keio University, Japan (umegaki@sfc.keio.ac.jp)

Human Security: Some Conceptual Issues for Policy Research

Michio Umegaki

Abstract

The purpose of this paper is to clarify some of the key normative and conceptual issues involved in the emerging new field of policy studies, Human Security. The paper briefly overviews the development of the notion since 1994 by calling attention to some of its key turning points. The paper argues that there is nothing new in the specific issues which the human security proponents consider the key to any policy coordination. It, instead, highlights the hidden agenda in promoting human security which make the endeavor something of a new enterprise. Specifically, the paper argues that the agenda microscopic views on life, critical views toward the primacy of the state, and equally critical views toward globalization   offers an important starting point for the kind of research much needed to address and redress some of the problems that human security approach identifies.

Key words: Human security agenda, dethronement of economic growth, poverty, governability, globalization

INTRODUCTION

On September 14, 2003, the *New York Times* carried an article discussing the immense Federal budget deficit, which went from a $5.6 trillion surplus in January 2001 to a $2.3 trillion deficit in August 2003. Unbeknownst to the author, the article touched the core of those interrelated and contradicting policy choices best described as the human security dilemma.

The night of the previous Sunday, September 7, President Bush had asked Americans to pay an additional $87 billion to continue the US operation in Iraq next year. This was to be added to the already accumulated spending on the US action in Afghanistan and Iraq approaching $170 billion, an unprecedented drain on the US purse. Every dollar of this additional cost would be, as administration officials made clear, borrowed from future generations. Ironically, those who would actually be paying the bill" had already been put to bed by their parents" and did not witness the Presidential plea. The burden was to fall upon the current generation as well. The additional spending may support the presence of over 100,000 American troops, but, the *New York Times* observed, at the cost equivalent of the prescription drugs through Medicare for 40 million elderly Americans[1].

It was, and is, a national security concern that underlies President Bush's and his supporters' plea for spending on the Iraq and Afghanistan operations. The Americans, the beneficiaries of such a national security policy, are at the same time the beneficiaries of a social security policy such as Medicare which is now threatened with termination of its adequate function. The national security choice of today is also a threat to the generations of Americans tomorrow who are yet to reach the productive phase of their lives. The promotion of one type of" security" may well generate a threat to another type. The services intended for one generation may well be a paralyzing disservice to the next.

This short *New York Times* article stumbled into the quagmire drawing many Americans across generations into the kind of unmistakable sense of deepening " insecurity" which all policy is intended to alleviate. The notion of human security may be relatively new in the fields of policy studies. But it deals with many of the old issues such as the insecurity born out of the depleting financial basis for pensions, small-scale armed conflict, degradation of water quality, urban crimes and the like. As such, it helps both policy researchers and practitioners in search of a new and perhaps more effective framework for action.

The purpose of this paper is to clarify some of the underlying concerns of the human

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1 New York Times, September 14, 2003.

security. Taken together, these constitute what may be called the human security agenda dictating research on the specific policy issues. With this purpose in mind, this paper is not meant to be a survey of the literature on human security. The use of the existing literature is accordingly selective: to highlights the key conceptual" landmarks[2]."

1 Defining the Human Security: the Beginnings

As so true with many contested notions, ideas or concepts, human security too has many beginnings. As such, human security can be various in terms of what it purports to be and of the scope of actions it presupposes. A brief scan on the beginnings of human security may help highlight its variety.

1-1 UNDP and the *Human Development Report 1994* [3]

Mahbub Al-Haq's *Human Development Report 1994* offers the indisputable beginning of" human security," as we understand it. The voluminous document of some 100 pages begins with the all too obvious reflection that" the world can never be at peace unless people have security in their daily lives[4]." It is a reflection derived from the balance sheet of postwar achievements and their costs. The Report lists the achievements of the human efforts in the previous 50 years, and contrasts them to the accompanying drawbacks. Included in the list are the familiar ones: nuclear deterrence, the bottoming up of the world poverty line, some dramatic technological innovations, the decline of overall military spending, the widening of the rich-poor gap, the environmental deterioration, globalization of pandemics such as AIDS and the like. The drawbacks, and not human achievements, weigh more heavily in the Report, which sets itself up for the introduction of the new notion, human security.

> For too long, the concept of security has been shaped by the potential for conflict between states. For too long, security has been equated with the threats to a country's borders. For too long, nations have sought arms to protect their security.

> For most of people today, a feeling of insecurity arises more from worries about daily life than from the dread of a cataclysmic world event. Job security, income security,

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2 For one of the earlier inventories of the" human security" literature, see Harvard Program on Humanitarian Policy and Conflict Research, 2001, http://www.hsph.harvard.edu/hpcr/events/hsworkshop/bibliography.pdf.
3 United Nations Development Programme, 1994.
4 Lloyd Axworthy, 2001, 5.

health security, environmental security, security from crime   these are the emerging concerns of human security all over the world[5].

Human security is more readily understood, the Report argues," through its absence than its presence." Put it more explicitly, human security is" safety from such chronic threats as hunger, disease and repression" as well as" protection from sudden and hurtful disruptions in the patterns of daily life   whether in homes, in jobs, or in communities[6]."

Although this language suggests a fundamental shift from the past policy agenda, the Report is careful also to remind us that the shift is consistent with the original task of the United Nations as it was conceived back in 1945. The Report quotes the statement of the then U.S. Secretary of State, from which the" freedom from fear and freedom from want," the phrase now inseparable from the *Report*'s" human security," is derived.

The battle of peace has to be fought on two fronts. The first is the security front where victory spells freedom from fear. The second is the economic and social front where victory means freedom from want. Only victory on both fronts can assure the world of an enduring peace[7].

It seems evident enough that the Report is implying that one front is settled and that it is time to move on to the second front. This defense of the past record of action is prominent throughout the *Report*. Another such example is the repeated efforts at reconciling the plea for promoting people's" security in their daily lives" which is concerned with life as it is *presently* lived, and the need to protect resources for the future generations   " sustainability" in the manner of the Brundtland Commission. Still another is" economic growth," which has long been considered the engine to bring about peace and prosperity since the inception of the Bretton Woods system and the United Nations. Even though the *Report* mentions time and again the widening income gap among nations and within nations as one of the gravest debts of our past efforts, it still protects the postwar orthodoxy by simply registering this reservation. Economic growth should be considered, the *Report* argues," a means" if not" an end" in and of itself.

These and other examples of the careful language of the *Report* defining human security reflect the time at which it was written. The *Report* was meant to offer the " agenda" for the upcoming World Summit on Social Development in 1995,

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5   Lloyd Axworhy, 2001, 5., 3.
6   Lloyd Axworhy, 2001, 5., 23.
7   Lloyd Axworhy, 2001, 5., 3.

commemorating the 50th anniversary of the United Nations. It needed to illuminate the rightful place for all the achievements of past human efforts under the auspices of the UN or other international cooperative frameworks, and hence also needed to present the shift toward" human security" more as part of the continuing effort.

1-2　The Lysoen Declaration and the" Human Security Network"

By contrast, the beginning of one multilateral effort to promote human security may be attributed to a fortuitous meeting of two diplomats, Lloyd Axworthy of Canada and Knut Vollebaek of Norway in 1997. The meeting took place during the negotiation for the Ottawa Convention on Antipersonnel Landmines. The signing of the Convention produced one Nobel Prize winner, Jody Williams of the International Campaign to Ban Landmines. It also produced proof that" a new kind of global politics" 　a coalition of governments, civil society and non-governmental organizations 　could work in bringing about" such sweeping change in such short order[8]."

Encouraged by the success of this" winning formula[9]," the two began treading the path towards a far more open field for human security. Six months later, in the aftermath of the Asian financial crisis, the two met and prepared, on the small island of Lysoen near Bergen, a document called the" Lysoen Declaration: Norway-Canada Partnership for Action[10]." Another year was spent by the two campaigning in Europe, Africa and East Asia, and produced the now well-established ministerial consultative network of 12 countries　+ South Africa as an observer .

At the meeting in May of 1999, which brought together these 13 countries for the first time, Sadako Ogata, the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees gave a powerful speech reflecting her observations during her work at UNHCR, and echoing the *Report* by saying that human security is better grasped" through its absence than its presence."

> If to be secure means to be free from fear of being killed, persecuted or abused; free
> from the abject poverty that brings indignity and self-contempt; free to make choices
> then a majority of people in today' s world do <u>not</u> live in security[11].

8　Lloyd Axworthy, 2001, 5.
9　Michael Small, 2001, 230.
10　Lloyd Axworthy, 2001, 5., 232 for the entire text.
11　Sadako Ogata, 1999. There is a misplaced stigma, often attached to human security, that it deals mainly with some extraordinary threats to human lives. This may have come from the presence in the development of human security of the prominent figures such as Jody Williams and Sadako Ogata in the forefronts of human rescue such as the movements to remove the landmines, refugee relief, or HIV and other pandemics. This is also ungrounded stigma for these relief efforts do address the lives of tens of millions, the magnitude that can be matched only by a cataclysmic disruption like a nuclear war.

Thus the Human Security Network joins the *Report* in defining human security as "freedom from pervasive threats to people's rights, their safety or even their lives[12]." There is, however, an element of dissatisfaction with its excessively inclusive nature, as one of the founders reminds us that "[the Report's comprehensive formulation of human security] made it awkward as a policy framework[13]."

The characteristics of the Human Security Network may lie not so much in what it wishes to promote as in how to promote it. The Network has the "open-ended nature of both participation (governments and NGOs) and the agenda [which enables it to] respond to new ideas, engage outside experts, and take up timely initiatives[14]." It is the "winning formula," replicated for the broader demands of human security.

1-3 The Trust Fund for Human Security and Japan

The Japanese government's actions on human security stand out in keeping pace with the concrete policy requirements of the time and the region, the Asian financial crisis. Prime Minister Keizo Obuchi, in his wish to embark upon "an intellectual dialogue on building Asia's tomorrow" in December of 1998, sounded a now familiar call for attention to "the socially vulnerable segments of the population in the light of 'Human Security'" He was acutely aware of the "social strains," aggravated by the recent financial crisis, which "threaten[ed] the daily lives of many people[15]." In his understanding of human security, Amartya Sen figures prominently as Obuchi directs the promotion of human security toward the enhancement of people's "capabilities" and away from the expansion of the supply of goods and services[16].

Japan's action also stands out in its swiftness. Starting with Obuchi's initiative for a "dialogue" in the closing days of 1998, a series of action led to the establishment of the Trust Fund for Human Security in the United Nations in March of 2000, and of the Commission on Human Security a year later. The cumulative contributions to the Fund by the Japanese government totaled, as of February 2003, in the neighborhood of $170 million. The projects supported by the Fund reached Southeast Asia, Central Asia, former Eastern Europe, Africa, Latin America among others.

Compared with Japan's overall ODA expenditures, this may not be an eye-catching sum. But by its geographical scope, the Fund helped moderate the initial impression of

12 The Human Security Network, http://www.humansecuritynetwork.org/
13 Axworthy, 2001, 4.
14 Small, 2001, 234-5.
15 Keizo Obuchi,,1998.
16 Lloyd Axworthy, 2001, 5.

Japan's initiative as exclusively Asia-oriented. Furthermore, with the Fund put to use, human security ceased to be simply an abstract discourse.

What human security entails also has become a little more refined. The final report of the Commission, Human Security Now, puts it in perspective by making a clearer distinction between human security and more traditional" state security." Now human security can be endangered by the" menaces … that have not always been classified as threats to state security[17]." More importantly, the" people," whose lives have been deemed the" lens" by which to capture and recognize such threats, are given a far more positive role in the Commission's report. A new" freedom" is added to the Report's " freedom from fear and freedom from want"   " freedom to take action on one's own behalf." To give substance to this freedom, the Commission's report emphasizes the significance of" empowerment," a much overused and abused concept elsewhere. " Empowerment," here, is a collective term for" people's ability to act on their own behalf." More concretely:

> [It means] providing education and information so that [people] can scrutinize social arrangements and take collective action. It means building a public space that tolerates opposition, encourages local leadership and cultivates public discussion[18].

From the Report to the Commission, the deepening and widening scope of" human" security has maintained a surprising durability, perhaps due to the simple fact that a new and innovative perspective for international policy coordination may have been long overdue.

2   Human Security: the Old Issues and the New Agenda

What has transpired from these and other accompanying developments is a whole array of human security" definitions." For reference, one may consult the" Comparison of Human Security Definitions[19]" prepared in 2001 by the Harvard Program on Humanitarian Policy and Conflict Research. Sampling this variety of human security definitions may not do justice to the schematizations and conceptualizations by the individual efforts, but should provide a glimpse of the thrust as well as the scope of efforts to promote human security.

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17   The Commission of Human Security, 2003, 4.
18   Lloyd Axworthy, 2001, 5., 10-11
19   Harvard Program on Humanitarian Policy and Conflict Research, 2001.

2-1 The Old Issues

Of course, the Human Development Report 1994 sets the tone for all the issues. In promoting" freedom from fear and freedom from want," the *Report* defines human security in terms of the threats it confronts. The threats can be almost anything, and the inventory is inevitably all inclusive. Witness below:

a The Report's Human Security[20]

Human Security:	Identifiable Threats:
Economic	Unemployment, Insecure jobs, Income inequalities, Homelessness
Food	Inadequate access to food
Health	Poor public health environment, Gender inequalities in health care, Inadequate health care, Pandemics such as HIV
Environment	Degradation of local and global ecosystems (Water, air, land, forest and others), Natural and human disasters
Personal	Violent crimes, Violence against women & children, Industrial and traffic accidents,
Community	Communal oppression, Interethnic strife
Political	State repression, Human rights violation
Global	Unchecked population growth, Disparities in economic opportunities, Excessive international migration, Environmental degradation, Drug production and trafficking, International terrorism

Perhaps it was imperative for the Report to be all inclusive as it accords primacy to the United Nations, its special agencies and programs in a general" problem-solving" process.

Another sample may set itself apart from the others by emphasizing a clearer and consistent" theme" underlying what appears to be the endless list of threats to human security. Central to the International Federation of University Women (IFUW), a Geneva-based international NPO, is" the idea of equilibrium/balance between needs and resources, rights and duties, and order and tolerance," the breakdown of which threatens human security:

b International Federation of University Women[21]

1. unbalanced economic globalization leads to economic crisis and poverty
2. unbalanced use of natural resources results in destruction of the environment,

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20   United Nations DevelopmentProgramme, 1994, 25-37.
21   International Federation of University Women, 2001.

pollution and famine

3. unbalanced provision of basic health services results in the spread of pandemics

4. unbalanced security measures, coupled with declining civic responsibility, results in urban violence and, ultimately, terrorism

One more example calls the attention not so much to the variety of the threats to human security as to what intellectual efforts should be undertaken in order to address the threats to or the absence of human security. The primary concern of the "Research Center for Human Security" at Doshisha University in Kyoto, Japan, rests with the construction of a new, human security "science" with 6 sub-fields of inquiry, which in turn help address the human security issues:

c Doshisha University's Research Center for Human Security [22]

Sub-Fields:	Identifiable Traits of Security
Sense of Security	Empathy, Emotional stability, sense of relief
Personal Security	Relief from violence, sexual and other abuses, sadness, trauma, uncertainty accompanying aging and others
Community Security	Communal sharing (sympathy) of issues and identity
Societal Security	Society capable of observing human rights, of sustaining welfare safety net and others
Environmental Security	Harmonious and sustainable relationship between human beings and nature
Technological Security	Balance between scientific achievements and nature, between materialistic wealth and sense of security

This preoccupation with the "sense" of security, however, may present a cumbersome problem. When and if the presence or absence of "security" is reduced to its "sense," personal or communal, the inquiry into "human security" will be trapped in an infinite cycle of cause and effect, or the endless search for the beginning   is an insecure individual, for example, a result of or cause of human insecurity?

What seems so striking about these efforts at coming up with a tidy descriptive inventory of human security threats is their ironical effects. One is always left with the nagging suspicion that something has been overlooked from the inventory, or by the aggravating feeling that there is no end to what may constitute the threats to human

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22   Doshisha University Human Security Research Center, 2003.

security. It is these suspicions or aggravations that nurture reservations about giving the rightful place to " human security" that its proponents claim it deserves[23]. There is another effect of a different order. These inventories, listing the numerous road blocks toward an improved world, collectively " cast [the human security advocates] as offering the promise of a new, more cooperational, but perhaps unattainable and unrealistic international order[24]."

Equally striking is the simple fact that none of these inventories offers anything particularly new. Be it unstable jobs or a pandemic such as HIV, pollution or gender inequality, these problems are always with us. War, poverty and others have always been, it seems, the curse of every effort to improve human life.

It is not only these problems that have always been with us. The policies and moral commitment to address and solve these problems have never left us either. Poverty reduction, recognition and protection of human dignity and rights, improvement of quality of life, and self-determination are only a few among many goals that time and again all sorts of international and national, governmental and non-governmental organizations have professed to promote especially since early in the 20th century.

Taken together, these effects lead to a resignation among us: even though we have been trying hard, or we could only do so much. Somewhere in this resignation lies the seed for, to borrow Caroline Thomas's characterization, a " blissful ignorance" or indifference. The successful prevention of World War III for far, for example, may give us something to cheer for. Yet at the same time it blinds us to the fact that every two years, global poverty produces 30 million deaths, the equivalent of the casualties produced by the first two world wars[25].

One often wonders, then, if the appeal for human security is more than an appeal for a renewed awareness.

2-2 The New Agenda: Micro-Perpectives, " People," and Globalization

The attempts at clarifying or conceptualizing human security and insecurity, however, point toward a new agenda which may place the old policy issues in a different light.

First, there is an unmistakable emphasis on a microscopic perspective on human security or insecurity. In his 1998 speech, Prime Minister Obuchi speaks of " daily life" that needs to be protected from all sorts of menaces[26]. The *Report*, likewise, describes

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23 Given the status of the literature as a newcomer in International relations and other fields, nearly all discussion on human security begins with this reservation. See for example, Gary King and Christopher J.L. Murray, 2001-02, 591.

24 William T. Tow and Russell Trood, 2000, .14.

25 Caroline Thomas, 2000, 8-9.

human security as concerned with" how people live and breathe in a society, how freely they exercise their many choices, how much access they have market and social opportunities[27]."

These statements may seem little more than cosmetic in these pronouncements. However, this microscopic view underlies much of human security approach to some of the old issues. Take poverty for example. The microscopic view, by placing it in diverse and specific contexts of the" life *as lived*[28]," treats poverty as a composite of a number of factors such as aging, physical distance to obtain the daily supplies, household income, gender biases, availability of various services and the like.

What this tells us is, at least, two things. On the one hand, it tells us that the increase in income, although it does help, is not the solution to the problem of poverty. It alerts us to the need to address the factors which collectively weaken the individual's ability to sustain an acceptable life   what Sen calls" capability deprivation[29]." It follows that the resources at hand need not be invested exclusively into measures for economic growth. Walt Rostow's days   when securing a certain percentage of national income for savings meant everything   are long gone. Instead, this microscopic view encourages us to exercise a judicious evaluation of what the factors are which complement the low income, or offer the alternative resources[30].

At the same time, it also tells us that life is much too rich to leave the task of its protection or improvement only to the measures for increasing income.

Given this microscopic perspective, the Report's pronouncement is no longer an acceptance of the status quo. It is a plea, also, that should be heard not only in the developing societies but also in the" mature" postindustrial societies who appear to be, for reasons such as their rapidly aging populations, pressed to improve their economic performance, the old prescription.

> ... [I]ndividuals and societies make many choices that require no wealth at all. A society does not have to be rich to be able to afford democracy. A family does not have to be wealthy to respects the rights of each member. A nation does not have to be affluent to treat women and men equally. Valuable social and cultural traditions can be   and are   maintained at all levels of income. The richness of a culture can

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26   Obuchi, op.cit.
27   United Nations Development Programme, 1994, 23.
28   McRae, 2001, 15.
29   Amartya Sen, 1999, ch.4.
30   On this, see for example Robert Chambers, 1983.

be largely independent of the people's wealth. ... [H]uman choices extend far beyond economic well-being. Human beings may want to be wealthy. But they may also want to enjoy long and healthy lives, drink deep at the fountain of knowledge, participate freely in the life of their community, breathe fresh air and enjoy the simple pleasure of life in a clean physical environment and value the peace of mind that comes from security in their homes, in their jobs and in their society[31].

There is, also, the repeated stress upon "people" in nearly all human security documents. The *Report* reiterates time and again the need for protecting "the life opportunities of future as well as the present generation[32]." *Human Security Now*, likewise, emphasizes the need for guarding "people" from threats "largely beyond their control[33]." This in and of itself is no surprise. Since the Atlantic Charter of 1942 through the establishment of the United Nations, the primary goal of the policy has always been people's welfare. People have been deemed the beneficiaries of national as well as multilateral cooperative policy efforts.

However, in promoting human security, "people" cease to be mere beneficiaries. It is people who, through their lives "in their personal surroundings, their community, and in their environment[34]," capture and recognize what threatens their "freedom" and undermines their "dignity." It is people who "act on their behalf[35]" in addressing and reducing the threats. And it is people who have the obligation to themselves of liberating their "capabilities" and fulfilling their inherent "right" to live, as Sen puts it, "the kind of life [people have] reason to value[36]."

Finally, the human security documents and commentaries are littered with references to globalization, to the "flow of goods, services and people" beyond the national borders, and the improvements in communication technologies. Taken together, they may have prompted "the death of distance[37]" as one of the commentators puts it. These phenomena are nothing new, however. To a greater or lesser degree, forces or movements beyond national borders or the physical distances among communities of people have been in place for a long time.

To be sure, the "death of distance" itself may aggravate the threats to human

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31   United Nations Development Programme, 1994, 15.
32   Lloyd Axworthy, 2001, 5., 4.
33   The Commission of Human Security, 2003, 11.
34   MacLean,1.
35   The Commission of Human Security, op.cit., 4.
36   Amartya Sen, 1999, 87.
37   Rob MaRae, 2001,14.

security as in the case of environmental degradation or pandemics readily" spil[ling] beyond national frontiers[38])." But, what matters more for human security is the" disparities between countries" that, for example, push" millions of people to leave their homes" and travel beyond their national borders, or that even breed violence as those aggrieved may seek direct remedies[39] . In other words, globalization, despite some of its benefits, also increases the" distances" among people and among communities.

The higher levels of consumption and production and the accompanying technological innovations have been hailed as postwar achievements under the Bretton Woods and other free trade regimes. Yet they have, at the same time, left in their wake a distance of a different kind. This distance lies between the" centers" or the" cores" " the elite socioeconomic groups already transnationally integrated" and the " peripheries" both in developed and developing economies[40] . To the extent that the former needs the latter and vice versa for the purpose of sustaining the immensely asymmetrical benefits, the relationship between the two is both intimate and, to borrow Anthony Giddens's characterization," distanciated[41] ." Throughout human security documents, there are profound reservations about the gospel of globalization.

There is a certain consistency to the new agenda emerging from these three points. The microscopic perspective captures threats to human security in the concrete contexts of life, however diverse they may be." People" are actors, acting on his/her own behalf in improving the" capabilities" necessary for addressing the requirements of human security. And there is a guarded orientation toward the impact of globalization as it obliterates the borders of accustomed communities and exposes the life of people within them to forces beyond their control.

To the extent that the new agenda suggests a new approach to old issues, it challenges the more established approaches and, to an extent, some of the most basic premises of modern society and international relations. As such, the new agenda raises questions of a normative as well as conceptual nature that we need to address.

3   Some Conceptual Issues for Policy Research

3-1   The State under Fire
To examine the role of the state vis-a-vis human security, we may begin with the

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38   United Nations Development Programme, 1994, 34.
39   Lloyd Axworthy, 2001, 5.
40   See Jorge Nef, 1999, chapter 1. For the pre-human security origin of a similar argument, see Johann Galtung, 1971, 81-117.
41   Anthony Giddens, 1990, 19.

emphasis upon the" people," which reflects profound misgivings about the role of the state in protecting and promoting the welfare of the people within its territory.

There is no shortage of evidence that the state fails to fulfill, or neglect, its human security obligations to its citizens. A high level of violent urban crime, high infant mortality due to insufficient public health considerations, depleting revenue for pensions, pandemics such as AIDS defying the developed and developing fault lines among the societies are only a fraction of the evidence. Nothing may be as appalling as the statistic, that 45% of the world's 6 billion" people" are living under chronic poverty, given the fact that there is virtually no individual among the 6 billion who is not a citizen of one state or another. " Life *as lived*" a rural Chiang Mai widow living on a meager 50c a day, who has lost her son, daughter-in-law, a grandson and her husband in less than 2 years serves as one powerful magnifier of the neglect which betrays the macro-economic statistics attesting the successful transformation of Thai economy performed by the state.

Not only has the state come under close scrutiny for its domestic policy performance. It has also been exposed to threats to its" citizens" that render its unilateral action virtually ineffective. The problems of global warming and of other environmental degradation are a case in point, as CO_2 emission, deforestation and other kinds of degradations have no borders.

The global warming issue also gives a unique twist to the primacy of the state. Even if a number of states can come to agreement with measures to alleviate the threat, a refusal by one can easily undermine their collective efforts. The faltering Kyoto Protocol, a measure once hailed as a rare achievement through multilateral efforts, is a testimony to this ironic quandary for the state. The proponents found it in their national interest to overcome their differences and support the Protocol. The opponents found it also in their national interest, as exemplified by the United States, to oppose the Protocol to protect their own interests. The net result is that the citizens of all states remain threatened by global warming, calling the legitimacy of the state's primacy into question.

Another example is the life of" migrant workers." Migrant workers seeking employment opportunities abroad are a testimony of the state's inablilty to secure the basis for their livelihood at home for its citizens. As witnessed in the 80s, some states admitted this that much by encouraging citizens to seek employment abroad. The receiving country, on the other hand, justifies closing its borders in the name of protecting its citizens against" lost" employment opportunities or" worsenning" public order. The migrant workers are thus caught between two states attempting to protect their citizens. The ironic result is the insecurity of the migrant workers, deprived of job security at home

and deemed threat to job security abroad.

As revealed through this micro perspective on "people's" life, all these examples raise the questions of both a conceptual as well as a normative nature. Are we, then, challenging the state sovereignty or the governability of the state?

The distinction needs to be carefully maintained. The challenge easily opens up a series of questions, each of which has profound implications for human security. When deemed incapable of promoting the welfare of its citizens, how vulnerable will that state become to the likelihood of external intervention? Or, what are the legitimate bases for one state to interfere in the domestic affairs of another incapable of promoting the welfare of its citizens? There are many cases where this question remains unaddressed, such as with certain types of economic aid, support for governing or opposition groups from without, and even economic and other relief efforts by international organizations. Military intervention is an obvious case where this question can be raised. After all, the military intervention is likely to make the citizens of both sides the victims of the very actions taken for their own sake.

If an external intervention can occur so readily, then, why not intervention from within? In other words, can we tolerate internal attempts to redress the failure of the state, and if so, under what conditions?

International relations, especially since the end of World War II, are littered with conflicts whose origins can be traced to these external and internal attempts at making the state accountable for the people's lives. But ironically, as these examples show, such conflicts have had one unmistakable effect: making the guarding of the state sovereignty the "national" security emptied of its legitimate bases[42].

Yet, the question remains: what form would human security take if a community typically a nation-state, but any sub-national community, for that matter has no legitimate claim for addressing and redressing its own problems?

3-2 Dethronement of Economic Growth

What parallels the state under fire, in terms of the implications for policy, is the guarded defense economic growth. The Report exclaims that "individuals and societies make many choices that require no wealth at all." Human Security Now also sounds the familiar tune, insisting that "when people's livelihoods are deeply compromised, ... human security contracts." It is also quick to emphasize the importance of what it calls a "social minimum" access to health, education, shelter, clean air among other things [43],

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42   See a succinct summary of the declining state primacy, William Tow and Russell Trood, 2000, 18-24.
43   The Commission of Human Security, 2003, 3.

downplaying the importance of improving income.

Economic growth has long been the policy orthodoxy of the postwar era. It was to be the locomotive leading society not only to affluence but also to political moderation. Largely based on the prewar modernization experiences of the west, economic growth has been defended for its ability to create a new kind of members of society, sharing efficient production processes, who, over time, even overcome the once unbridgeable fault lines of religious, linguistic and ethnic differences[44] . These experiences underlay much of the postwar unilateral as well as multilateral efforts by the west to place the rest of the world on a similar track.

The case can be made, however, against this postwar policy orthodoxy, also based on the historical experiences of non-western societies. Not until the late 1960s, did we see the signs of economic growth outside the North Atlantic region, with the exception of Japan whose economic performance had put it already among the ranks of the developed economies before World War II. This growth was still limited in part of the Western hemisphere and part of East Asia. The 70s and 80s witnessed the increasing number of national economies in the regions joining this rank of what we now call Newly Industrialized Economies. Mexico, Brazil, Hong Kong, Taiwan, and the Republic of Korea led the way, and Singapore, Thailand, Malaysia and others followed closely in their footsteps.

However, the rise of these NIEs did little by way of even remotely alleviating the global income gap. (See below)

Changing Income Ratios[45]

Year	Income Ratio of 20% global population in Richest Countries to 20% in poorest
1960	30:1
1990	60:1
1997	74:1

In addition, even these examples of the successful transformation into vibrant national economies may not be so readily replicated elsewhere. Take for example East Asian NIEs. The conditions of their economic growth are easily identifiable, from work ethics to astute leadership, from fortuitous regional circumstances such as the Vietnam War

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44   The best, if optimistic, recount of this historical experience may be Stein Rokkan and Martin Seymour Lipset, 1969. For the more cautious treatment, see Leonard Binder et. al.,1973.
45   Caroline Thomas, 2000, 24.

special procurement to Japan's high level of economic performance throughout the 60s. Yet a closer look at the rise of East Asian NIEs may reveal that this experience may have been of limited relevance.

Toshio Watanabe, Japan's leading developmental economist, identifies the unique pattern of a chain reaction at work in the region, where a leading economy leaves behind economic opportunities to be exploited by the follower economies. Japan led the way, when its shift toward a capital-intensive and technology intensive economy left the market open for labour-intensive products Hong Kong, Republic of Korea or Taiwan to exploit. The latter, then, follow the footsteps of Japan, leaving behind the similar opportunities to be exploited by, say, Malaysia and Thailand. Altogether, the chain generates an immense pressure: who ever leads the chain needs constantly to upgrade its industrial basis, while whoever follows it closely cannot afford missing the opportunities left[46]. The factors, however, appear to be much too fortuitous for this chain reaction to be activated elsewhere. There is no other Japan. There is no other Vietnam War. And perhaps, there is no leadership as shown throughout East Asia in the 70s, 80s and 90s.

The fact that the successful examples of economic growth have had little impact on arresting the widening income gap among the countries and that the successful cases are so limited should offer an additional argument for liberating the resources at hand from their exclusive use for economic growth. From this perspective, even Dudley Seers' reservation about economic growth as measured by the increase in national income may be misplaced:

> The questions to be asked about a country's development are ... : What has been happening to poverty? What has been happening to unemployment? What has been happening to inequality? If one or two of these central problems has been growing worse, especially if all three have, it would be strange to call the result "development" even if per capita income has doubled[47].

The point is not the question of allocating the spoils of economic growth, but that economic growth is virtually unreachable for the majority of the world population.

However, the dethronement of economic growth faces perhaps the strongest resistance from the ruling political and economic elite in many of the developing societies. For them, economic growth is more than an increase in national income.

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46   Toshio Watanabe, 1989, chs.2, and 3.
47   Presidential address at the 11th World Congress of the Society for International Development, New Delhi, 1969, quoted in H.W.Arndt, 1987, 91.

First of all, in a manner much like various states' independence movements or attempts at fending off external interference in the early years of independence, economic growth with the promise of improved life is the goal by which they hope to transcend the internal fault lines along ethnic, religious and other differences among the people. If independence was expected to turn these peoples separated by these fault lines into a " nation" in form, then the economic growth is expected to turn them into a" nation" in substance. These transitions would have to be maintained for the new society to remain glued together, and for the ruling elite to stay in power. The promises that still await realization are still preferred to the alternative of them. For the latter spells the abandoning also of the transition.

In another vein, the guarding of the economic growth as the unquestioned policy goal is a political, as much as economic, weapon. For the majority of new societies, the widening income gap between them and the developed countries is nothing but a testimony to the inherent biases against them within the international system of trade, investment and development. Even long before the whole issue of globalization exploiting the weaker economies, these arguments abounded. For example, technological innovations work in favor of the developed economies which have completed their industrialization. Free trade rules deprive the weaker economies of the means to protect whatever is left of exportable commodities. Many of the weaker economies have very little to offer in the first place, in bargaining in the international market for price-setting in their favor.

Many of these disadvantages are also the reminder, or even the continuation, of the colonial era when the asymmetrical interdependence between them and the developed economies of the time left little for the former. Their demands on the developed economies for compromise have thus been reiterated since UNCTAD I in 1964. These included protection of domestic markets, more aid, and less expensive technology transfer, among others. They justify their demands as corrective measures for the past deprivation, and at the same time, argue that meeting these demands will provide the much needed push for economic growth. In other words, the insistence on economic growth is the reminder of the past and present injustice" built in" the international system of trade, investment and development. Its retrieval, therefore, could well mean passive assent to the status quo now as in the past.

Given these quandaries that the dethronement of economic growth presents for the leaders of new societies, there is resistance of another, if indirect, kind. It is against what is *implied* rather than what is said in the human security documents. That economic growth is" a means and not a goal" still leaves the question of how to make use of, or allocate,

the resources for economic growth. When combined with the suggestion for dispersing the resources at hand, then, the problem of interference readily crosses the minds of many. In the related context of the emerging demands for the attention to Basic Human Needs to be attached to economic aid, Soedjatmoko, who later became the Rector of the United Nations University, observed:

> Are the donor nations prepared to accept the political consequences of such a deep intrusion on their part in the life of another people? History shows that only through foreign occupation after military defeat, or through the colonial relationship, could a foreign bureaucracy hope effectively to bring about, in such a short time, social changeswhich suite their own perceptions and values[48].

The issue is no longer simply a matter of economic growth; it touches upon the legitimacy of the government's claim for determining the policy agenda and monopolizing the resources for policy accordingly. What is feared here is the de facto dethronement of the governing power itself.

This takes us back to the emphasis upon the "people" in the human security agenda. What is expected of people confronted by the lack of or insufficient governability by their own government? What is the recourse of people when the government refuses to divest its monopoly in determining the policy agenda? What is the basis for the people to remain a coherent group, instead of a mere collection of isolated individuals?

In the abstract, the category of people can help us recognize the human security "threats" as magnified through their lives in specific contexts. People are the ones who help themselves, through empowerment, in capturing their opportunities and in exercising many choices. And among them, little friction seems to be assumed. In short, people are their own agents: acting on their own behalf and on behalf of others. A corollary to this conception of people is to disaggregate them along their attributes by birth as well as acquired attributes, the infinitely diverse social, cultural, and other contexts in which they live, or even their ages or physical conditions. Disaggregating "people" in this manner is perfectly consistent with the human security agenda which takes the "life as lived" as the basis for promoting human security *regardless* of whom, where and when.

The problem is, then, how to make people their own agents even while they are deprived of the basis for collective strength. Of course the movements to promote human security at the "official" level, as in the UNDP or the Commission or the Network,

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48　Soedjatmoko, "National Policy Implications of the Basic Needs Model," quoted in Arndt, 1987, 110.

presume a policy coordination across the boundaries of governmental and non-governmental organizations. Yet, implicit here are the general misgivings among the proponents of human security about actions based on any collectivities demanding allegiance of their constituents. The basis of these misgivings is the fear of the collectivities claiming their own sovereignty to the exclusion of others — another potential threat to human security.

We are left, then, with a set of examples on what may grow out of these disparate exercises in human security. One example may be traced back to the preamble of the United Nations, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and other" covenants," an exercise in instilling a new norm for, in the absence of an adequate term, the" world citizenry." However improbable the" world citizenry" itself may be, the cumulative effect of these covenants have reached, however limited, the individuals, various collectivities of individuals, and even the state. To quite an extent, the move toward" human" security and away from exclusively" national" security is one telling proof of the extent to which these covenants have reached.

The second example is far more diverse in its forms and in contexts, and illuminates more concrete paths. The Ottawa Convention on Anti-personnel Landmines or the International Criminal Court may help instill new norms consistent with the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. Further, these do represent examples of successful exercise in compromising state sovereignty with the requirements of human security. In a similar manner, regional policy coordination has been effected, though with a great deal of difficulty, by, say the Association of South East Asian Nations on issues ranging from human rights to the preservation of river water quality. Though these efforts are not meant to be a frontal attack on state sovereignty, their effect is pressure upon the member states to suspend demands made on purely on the bases of their idiosyncracies.

A third example is be practices by the individuals of a collectivity of a different kind: a community that transcends the physical boundaries and is bound, instead, by the sense that they share the same problems, the same" threats." Aging, pandemics, or degradation of water quality are only a few examples of the" threats" that do not discriminate as to place. In a manner much like Benedict Anderson' s" imagined communities[49]," recognizing and sharing the same threats should bind the individuals in a manner the more conventional communities cannot. Fishing villagers at the mouth of a river and forestry workers up stream can share what it means when deforestation advances. The elderly in a society where the" atomization" of families have advanced share the threats to their daily life

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49 Benedict Anderson, 1983.

with the elderly left in the village in a society where rapid economic development absorbs the youths into cities. The examples are many, and waiting to be unearthed.

We continue to witness the cumulative effects of the first set of examples gradually defining the parameters of action for individuals, the communities of individuals, and even the state. We have witnessed, also, increasing cases of the second type, though, here, resistance by the state remains as tenacious as before.

It may be the third set of examples, perhaps, closest to the gist of the human security agenda, that we should further explore.

In Lieu of a Conclusion

That human security is a relative new comer to the field of policy studies is misleading. As mentioned above, there is nothing new about the issues taken up by human security documents. If anything, however, it is the human security agenda   the subtext defining what needs to be done   that makes research on human security something of a new enterprise.

First, there is need for a historical inquiry into the recent past examples from which the new norms or even values, replacing those predicated upon the state-centered world, have emerged. The inquiry can be made at various levels where such norms and values are beginning to show conformity among officials of the government and non-government, national and international organizations. There are many mini-Declarations of Human Rights, just as there are many regional Lome Conventions. This contemporary historical inquiry is a way of determining the cumulative effects in generating a general predisposition to accept the human security needs. This inquiry will help define the parametric boundary for the practical promotion of human security.

An inquiry into governmental actions is the next. Virtually all countries are part of regional or international arrangements meant to address or solve specific policy issues. Each member participates in these policy coordination arrangements for the sake of promoting the welfare of its own" citizens." Their participation is, at the same time, testimonial to the broadening realization that collective, rather than unilateral, efforts are the more effective means of promoting the citizens' welfare. The realization, in turn, suggests that the state monopoly of the policy agenda and of the resources for policy implementation is coming to end. The inquiry thus needs to be made into the extent to which such a realization penetrates to the policy practitioners, and in order to determine if such a realization is there to stay or merely a compromise under multilateral pressures. The

point may be strengthened by a similar inquiry within domestic contexts where the individuals or non-governmental organizations have successfully extracted policy concessions from the government.

Finally, there is a third type of inquiry. This is the inquiry into the actions by a community of" shared problems or threats." It helps determine if, or how widely in fact, the efforts are being made at the people's level to address and redress the threats to their human security.

Here, unlike the first two types of inquiry, we may not have the luxury of having the official archives and statistics clearly *defining* the issues at hand. For we are dealing with the practice of life which people live with no obvious intention of keeping its record. As such, the inquiry of this type may rely more on memories than records or their fragments to determine what the threats are as perceived through" life as lived." The inquiry of this type does encounter a difficulty of its own: how to make a distinction between the usual efforts to lead life and those specifically designed to reduce the" threats" to their human security. Without such a distinction, the inquiry may lead to an idiosyncratic or arbitrary determination of the threats by the inquirer.

However, this type of inquiry has a luxury of different kind: freedom from the " official" representation of the" threats." Take for example Lynn Thiesmeyer's efforts to trace the route of the HIV infection in Northern Thailand. Undeterred by the official statistics indicating only broadly the regional concentration of HIV infections in the north, Thiesmeyer made inquiries into the HIV threat at the community, the household, and finally the individual (the patients, their family members, and the surviving family members of the AIDS victims) levels. What the findings revealed is, among other things, the HIV infections taking place within the relatively small reach of the victims' residence where public construction and other jobs generated temporary but better paying employment opportunities for the villagers. While such a finding may prompt a government policy for the relief to be finely tuned in locally, the research along the way also uncovered the emerging community of the people   the victims as well as their family members   bound by the common task of relieving the various burdens incurred by HIV, and across the boundaries of villages as the administrative units[50]. Similar cases wait to be unearthed, and collectively, they can show where the resources are, who can actually act on their own behalf, where similar cases can be replicated and under what conditions.

Peter M. Haas speaks of the significance for policy coordination of a group of " professionals" with differing expertise, who overcame their idiosyncratic differences for

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50 Lynn Thiesmeyer, 2001.

the good of the whole　the" epistemic community[51]." What we are looking for is the epistemic community of the ordinary people where human security is concerned.

51　See for example, Peter M. Haas, 1992.

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