

Competing or converging claims on international order? The EU, China and Human Security: the EU Perspective

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Introduction

Over the past four decades, the European Union (formerly the EC) and the People's Republic of China have maintained an ever increasing set of bilateral relations of varying degrees of cooperation and conflict (Chen and Armstrong 2010). In the last two decades, as both partners emerged as serious global security providers, their respective policy agendas have begun to touch upon issues of human security. The concept of human security, hailed alike by pundits and policy-makers since the mid-1990s (Gaspers 2005; Fukuda-Parr and Messineo 2012), has thus informed national, bilateral and multilateral policy making both in the EU and China (Bedeski 2007; Solana 2014).

Human security challenges are rooted in two global interrelated processes: First, the crises arising from the steady erosion of modern statehood and responsible government in many parts of the world which in turn create a diverse set of dangers, risks, and threats to human well-being. Following the Cold War, these challenges have multiplied as transnational actors, such as terrorist groups, and transnational occurrences, such as infectious diseases, spread (unevenly) across the globe, probing political authority on all levels: local, national, regional and global (Bajpai 2003; Kaldor 2007).

Second, human security is a normative and dynamic concept which arises from the conferral of obligations by normative entrepreneurs on governments to provide (additional) protection and expanded freedoms (Burgess et al. 2007, Gaspers 2009). While Behringer has argued that Middle Powers were instrumental in pushing the concept (Behringer 2005) and others have highlighted the impact of various UN agencies (Newman 2014), an intense academic debate ensued as to how far the concept had been 'captured' by national governments to pursue their traditional security agenda, thereby sidelining several non-traditional security concerns, such as global health, gender equality or cultural security (Chandler 2008; Owen 2008, Krause 2014).

In the early twenty-first century, thus, considerable differences in content and emphasis of the three key pillars remain: freedom from want, freedom from fear and freedom to take action on one's own behalf (Commission on Human Security 2003). To cooperate, however, does not require a formal normative consensus or converging interests between the two. What is essential, as the example of the emerging norm of Responsibility to Protect attests,

is the compatibility of foreign policy roles by the EU, China, the US and a few others which allow for policy coordination in the UN and various other international fora. To secure the international order that has been so beneficial to the two powers and to extend the central pillars of human security to countries and regions that do not yet enjoy 'freedom from want, freedom from fear and freedom to take action on one's own behalf' requires a new intensified effort by both partners.

This paper proceeds in three steps. First, we review the concept of human security and why it is important for EU-China security cooperation proper as well as regional and global governance. This foundation is necessary for a more detailed investigation of the different practices and alleys for cooperation. Second, the EU perception of the risks and threats involved and how the Union responded to these new challenges is explored. Finally, the paper describes and explains how the EU has dealt with human security concerns in international fora and provides examples of coordination and cooperation in the issue areas already highlighted. The conclusion briefly outlines the main findings and provides some indications for further prospects on EU-China cooperation.

Human Security: The European Union's approach

As a concept, human security has been defined and used in many different ways. For our purpose here, human security is both an individual's safety from chronic threats, such as hunger, disease or repression, and the protection from sudden and hurtful disruptions in the patterns of daily life (UNDP 1994: 23). As a analytical concept or policy doctrine, it can be distinguished from traditional security concepts by its referent object, the individual, and its scope, which may include a broad range of non-traditional security concerns (among others natural disasters, diseases, environmental degradation) or more narrowly, to focus on threats or physical violence, particularly organized political violence (Tadjbakhsh and Chenoy 2007: 42-47). In addition, most human security concepts ascertain a broad understanding of agency, so that authority in human security policies can be wielded by governments, but also non-state actors, such as families and clans, corporations and international non-governmental organisations who may take action on their own behalf.

In the policy debate, so far, a host of governmental and international actors has proposed a broad conception of human security: the United Nations Development Program (UNDP), the Commission on Human Security, the governments of Japan and Canada as well as the European Council and so-called 'Barcelona Group' (Debiel and Werthes 2006; Newman 2014). Based on theories of human capabilities (Sen 2014) and human rights, this strand of the debate focusses on 'freedom from want' and 'freedom from fear' (*ibid.*) and draws from the work of the UN Development Program as well as the UN appointed Human Security Commission (UNDP 1994; CHS 2003). As of today, the debate on freedom to take action on one's own behalf is far less developed.

The UNDP's conception, in which threats may derive from nature, men or bad policy choices, encompasses seven policy dimensions: economic security; food security; health security, environmental security, personal security, community security and political security. In contrast, the Commission on Human Security defines a vital core of elementary rights and freedoms people should enjoy. Instead of enumerating specific policy domains,

the CHS gives just a few examples of important menaces, such as transnational terrorism, mass migration or infectious diseases (CHS 2003: 24).

Most governments and international organizations promoting the concept have used the latter approach and set priorities somewhat selectively: the Human Security network, a group of countries under Canada's and Norway's lead, has highlighted incidence of physical violence and repression and massive human rights abuses, subsequently pushing for international governmental cooperation through the International Criminal Court or multilateral control of small arms and light weapons (Krause 2008). The Japanese government, which champions a broad conception, has established the UN Trust Fund for Human Security (UNTFHS) and promoted development cooperation and post-conflict relief, although with a clear focus on Southeast Asia (Tan 2010).

On the opposing side, the narrow definition of human security refers to risk and threats of organized political violence as used in the Human Security Reports or propagated by leading academics in the field (MacFarlane and Khong 2006). Protagonists of this limited reading suggest that the term loses its policy leverage to inform and initiate concrete policy action, if used indiscriminately (Krause 2014). In the reading of MacFarlane and Khong, the term implies, first and foremost, the freedom from organized violence, which can be traced back to an identifiable perpetrator and which is not random but organized and potent in terms of lethality (MacFarlane and Khong 2006: 245).

The European Union approach

The European Union has never officially adopted human security as a foreign and security policy doctrine. Over the past decade, however, it has consistently developed its security policy apparatus, both institutionally and politically, to empower the EU as a global security actor and to enhance human security goals (Solana 2014: 251). In pursuit of that goal, the EU has attempted to position itself as a distinct (from the US) global power – sometimes referred to as 'Normative Power' or 'Civilian Power' – which has been met with a measure of success – and as a credible security exporter in its neighbourhood and beyond. This latter effort has been far more problematic largely because the EU's approach has not been accepted by others as legitimate.

Human security as an informal EU security doctrine emerged in 2003 out of a confluence of factors: first, terrorist attacks on the United States and elsewhere and subsequent shifts in security doctrines called for a collective response by the Union and its member states; second, the EU as a post-modern peace power had to rely on non-traditional security policy resources and instruments while only starting to develop autonomous military capacities; third, the institutional growth of European institutions had to be balanced with members' concerns about their core competences in the field of foreign, security and defence policy.

The European Security Strategy (Council of the EU 2003) does not yet mention 'human security'. And yet, it refers to central features of a broad conceptualization of the term. Specifically, the ESS ascertains that the best protection for EU security is a world of well-governed democratic states, which in turn requires the spread of good governance, support for social and political reform, addressing corruption and the abuse of power by establishing

the rule of law and protecting human rights (*ibid.*: 10). But the carefully crafted strategy reflects upon a changing security environment by recognizing a shift from a Cold War military conception of security to the adoption of non-traditional security risks and threats, such as climate change, competition for natural resources, poverty and diseases as well as the abuse of power, corruption and spill-over effects of regional conflicts (*ibid.*: 2-4). As a foreign policy doctrine, it proposes an 'effective multilateralism to uphold and develop international law as the basis for a peaceful international order' (Matlary 2008: 138).

Human security is explicitly referred to in a 2008 European Parliament report on the implementation of the ESS. In the report, by MEP Helmut Kuhne, the EP urges the Council:

... to examine options

1. for the setting-up of an integrated civil-military '*Human Security Response Force*' to carry out human security operations, composed of about 15 000 personnel, of whom at least one third would be civilian specialists (such as police officers, human rights monitors, development and humanitarian specialists and administrators);
2. considers that the Force, building on already existing ESDP structures, could be *drawn from dedicated troops and civilian capabilities already made available by Member States* (such as the capabilities made available under the military and civilian Headline Goals, the Battle Groups and the Civilian Response Teams) and
3. could also include a '*Humanitarian Security Volunteer Service*' that would combine a Civil Peace Corps as proposed by Parliament and the European Voluntary Humanitarian Aid Corps envisaged in the Lisbon Treaty (Kuhne 2008, Para 25).

While an amendment to the Kuhne Report, which called for a robust political mandate enabling it to act effectively in crisis, subsequently failed (Martin and Owen 2010: 218), the EU Commission, in addition to the High Representative himself (Solana 2014), turned out to be the key promoters of the concept among the EU institutions. In 2005, Commissioner for External Relations, Benita Ferrero-Waldner, staked out a broad understanding of the concept for the European Union which addressed both the 'freedom from want' and the 'freedom from fear' (Ferrero-Waldner 2005). Even more explicitly, Ferrero-Waldner exclaimed in May 2006: 'The philosophy underlying the EU's approach to security, as outlined in the Security Strategy, is that security can best be attained through development, and development through security. Neither is possible without an adequate level of the other. That's why we focus on the holistic concept of human security' (Ferrero-Waldner 2006: 3).

In contrast to the UN and national Human Security policies, e.g. Japan's, the EU Commission's reading focusses upon the physical protection and material security and less on the empowerment aspects. More specifically, it encompasses initiatives on small arms and light weapons, non-proliferation, anti-mine action and human trafficking as well as human rights more broadly (Martin and Owen 2010: 219). This tilt towards the 'freedom from fear' may have been induced by the EU's growing external military presence which necessitated the development of a consistent strategic narrative to legitimize the Union's expanding security policy agenda (*ibid.*). What is interesting, though, is that those EU member states that did explicitly engage in Human Security activities, such as the United Kingdom, Austria, Greece, the Netherlands and Slovenia, did so bilaterally or multilaterally

outside the EU framework – the UK supports the Africa Human Security Initiative while the latter are members of the Human Security Network (Hussein *et al.* 2005: 20).

The drivers for the EU's human security policy are somewhat difficult to identify: Javier Solana's own account mentions an intricate mix of both events and concepts (2014). But the evidence found suggests that the High Representative himself, by establishing an expert group under the helm of Mary Kaldor, was instrumental in pushing the human security agenda in the EU. The Study Group on Europe's Security Capabilities, composed of practitioners and academicians, produced a first report in 2004 entitled 'A Human Security Doctrine for Europe' (Barcelona Report of the Study Group 2004).

The Barcelona report sets out to develop a coherent doctrine for intervention abroad as based on policy, legal and humanitarian principles. It names three reasons to concentrate on human security: first, since human rights are becoming ever more prominent, military interventions have to be viewed through the lens of human rights and conducted accordingly; second, since the EU is legally bound to promote human rights globally, most prominently through its Charter on Human Rights in the Constitutional Treaty, the EU has to act consistently; third, a focus on human security resembles most closely a 'sustainable security policy', which in turn has to be in the EU's self-interest (Barcelona Report of the Study Group 2004: 9).

Conceptually, the Barcelona report reiterates the broad conception of the Commission of Human Rights, stating that human security shall 'protect the vital core of all human lives in ways that enhance human freedoms and human fulfilment' (Glasius and Kaldor 2005: 67). It suggests seven operational principles for the evolving European Security and Defence Policy (ESDP): 'the primacy of human rights, clear political authority, multilateralism, a bottom-up approach, regional focus, the use of legal instruments, and the appropriate use of force' (Barcelona Report 2005: Executive Summary). To implement the new policy, the report calls for a 'Human Security Response Force', to be composed of 15,000 men and women which shall combine both military (two thirds) and civilian (at least one third) crisis management capabilities (Reinhardt 2005).

In the second report, the Madrid Report, the study group addresses some of the criticism of its early report: on the one hand, it argues that human security, far from calling for a neo-colonial militarism, was about applying force to protect the individual in a multilateral and legalized framework; on the other hand, it held that human security, far from being 'fuzzy and warm', was about crisis management and conflict prevention, so that civilian and military approaches, short-term stability and long-term sustainability were integrated (Madrid Report 2009: 10). In addition, it reflects upon the lessons learned from the growing number of ESDP stabilization missions. As a consequence, the group comes up with a number of policy recommendations; among others, the adoption of human security ESDP mandates to provide strategic guidance for future missions and ' "Human Security" cards' to all mission personnel to ensure that human security methods and goals are understood (Madrid Report 2007: 25).

EU measures to implement a human security doctrine

EU authorities have employed various measures to implement human security goals as an 'informal doctrine', but rarely have they explicitly done so. During their EU presidencies, Finland and Sweden have pushed hard for a normative focus with ESDP, including implementation on human rights and gender (Martin and Owen 2010: 218). In a similar vein, the Spanish, Slovenian and Czech presidencies have all used the pulpit of the presidency to promote human security as a concept (Solana 2014: 255). Practically, the Finnish presidency organized human security training for civilian and military personnel on ESDP missions (Tamminen 2008). In addition, the EU Commission's Communication on the European Community's Support for Security Sector Reform refers to a broad security definition, encompassing the empowerment of citizen's vis-à-vis security and law enforcement agencies in precarious states (EU Commission 2006: 7).

More broadly, EU ESDP and CFSP missions have been evaluated against the human security framework by the Human Security Study Group (Martin and Kaldor 2010). For instance, Martin found that the EU mission to the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) in 2006 (EUFOR), which consisted of 2000 European troops to support an ongoing UN mission (MONUC) and stabilize the country during two rounds of presidential elections, succeeded in establishing what could be called a 'human security approach' (Martin 2010). Conducted in a similar manner, a human security assessment on the EU's engagement in Kosovo showed that human rights, especially social and economic rights were not a prime concern of the EU and the mission suffered from a lack of local ownership and joint decision making (Sabovic 2010). Given the informal nature of the human security commitment among EU institutions and member states, it stands to reason that these results stem from a deliberate effort in the EU to consistently implement human security principles in ESDP missions.

EU-China cooperation on human security and related non-traditional security concerns

The EU's Human Security Study group has held consultation with both Russian and US counterparts, resulting in the former case in a written report on future cooperation (Helsinki-Plus Report, Human Security Study Group 2009). With China, the EU has held a Human Rights dialogue since 1995, touching upon human rights concerns in China and the EU. Neither 'freedom from want' nor other non-traditional security concerns, such as natural disaster relief or infectious diseases have featured prominently at these meetings (Kinzelbach 2010). The EU's human rights engagement, as well as those of other international actors, has resulted in limited progress with the PRC committing to sign and ratify an increasing number of international human rights treatise. In addition, Beijing has used some tactical concession to fend off international critique (Kinzelbach 2013, Shen 2013).

Addressing the full spectrum of human security concerns in other bilateral fora has been difficult so far in EU-China relations. Despite more than ten years of strategic dialogue between the two partners, even some hard security issues, such as the Iranian nuclear program or the ongoing civil war in Syria, have not been discussed on a regular basis. Only in 2012, the two partners agreed upon a dialogue on security and defence as well as high-level

seminars on these topics (Council of the European Union 2013). Thus far, it follows that bi- or multilateral talks on issues of concern to both parties, e.g. the conflicting territorial claims in the South China Sea, have not been addressed squarely.

As a consequence, the PRC's military cooperation with the EU remains elusive and is limited to cautious exchanges within the UN framework: notably with the UK and France as both permanent members of the UN Security Council and the EU (Hirono and Neill 2012). On specific issues, though, such as the UN-led international Contact Group on Piracy of the coast of Somalia the EU has cooperated effectively in an international forum with the PRC. Also, while China has been cut off from direct transfers of military hardware since 1989, the EU and its member states appear to be driven by their economic interests in pushing for an expansion of bilateral trade and investment in these sensitive areas (Bräuner 2013).

When it comes to softer non-traditional security issues, EU-China cooperation has arguably started to grow substantially since 2012: in May of 2012, the EU-China Partnership on Sustainable Urbanisation was launched as well as the first High Level Meeting on Energy; in September 2012, an EU-China Cyber Taskforce met for the first time. In addition, both sides agreed during two summit meetings to cooperate more on energy security, nuclear safety, disaster management and relief, as well as food and water security (Council of the EU 2013: 60).

Whether or not China chooses to cooperate or at least to coordinate its actions with the EU on human security concerns, however, does not depend on the EU and/or its member states alone. Commensurate role taking by the PRC, e.g. by abstaining from vetoing the UN Security Council resolution on Sudan and Libya, more often than not hinges upon the expectations by other states or groups of states. In the case of Libya it was the Arab League which asked for China's help. The Chinese representative explained after the abstention that: 'China attaches great importance to the relevant position by the 22-member Arab League' (S/PV.6498, 17.03.2011). In an unrelated move, a number of EU member states provided logistical support for the Chinese evacuation operation from Libya in 2011.

Convergences and divergences in Chinese and EU approaches to human security

Human security approaches vary considerably within the European Union and between the Union and its partners: the People's Republic of China is no exception to this rule. These differences remain relatively stable over time because they relate to deeper lying concepts of the state and its role vis-à-vis society and international organizations. The stability of these conceptions within the EU hinge on both vested interests in the particular patterns of authority in national security administrations and the subsequent policies as well as varying ideas on the limits of governmental authority vis-à-vis citizens and individuals.

And yet, the patterns of authority are continually pressed by technological and societal change, e.g. by cross-country or cross-border transmission of environmental degradation or infectious diseases (e.g. Chu 2002, 2003; Lee 2007, Wu 2013). In these new areas, such as the cooperative protection of foreign nationals and employees in conflict zones or the establishment of an EU-China Clean Energy Center (EC2) in Urumqi, national approaches within the EU and between the EU and China are likely to converge in the future. These non-

traditional security concerns, as they are regularly called in the Chinese discourse, are increasingly addressed through international cooperation, the primary purpose being to rescue national governments from failing to live up to the challenges of globalization.

But if the European Union pursues a narrow interpretation of human security, focussing on 'freedom from oppression', the 'freedom to take action on one's own behalf' or corruption and if it attaches a clear transformational agenda to it in which the EU teaches the People's Republic of China how to develop its society and political system (EU Commission 2003: 6, European Parliament 2013, para. 14), then contestation will most probably ensue. Moreover, if the European Union's own foreign policy identity were to hinge on a unified approach to human security, then the prospects for progress diminish.

Conclusion

Under the tutelage of US protection, the EU has evolved and grown into a significant global security provider both in traditional and non-traditional security areas. With the expansion of its security perimeter far beyond its remit, the European Union may well be on the way to overstretching its political as well as its resource base. Subsequently, though unlikely, its member states may form a coalition to rise up against community institutions and reinstate intergovernmentalism as a 'European Rescue of the Nation-state'. More likely is that EU member states will interpret the 'human security doctrine' proposed by the High Representative pragmatically, thereby either adopting the term for their own purposes or cutting off its transformational edges. Pointing towards the relative negligence of the promotion of 'freedom to take on one's own behalf' vis-à-vis the other two freedoms already indicates how member states' preferences and capabilities have forced the Commission to reconsider more far-reaching policy strategies.

Likewise, although it faces the same non-traditional security concerns as the European nations, China's conception of the state's role in security policy, both vis-à-vis its own and other citizens as well as towards the outside world, remains distinct from those protagonists of human security inside the EU institutions. As the Chinese state expands its international role in terms of material or non-material control, it is less likely to accept international rules which undermine its rule domestically.

While the European Union and China agree on far more than is commonly acknowledged, including the substantial risk of dramatic climate change, the crucial question when it comes to cooperation in human security is: what is the proper role of government in protecting its citizens, or how threatening may an individual become when questioning the role of government.

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