EU-Japan Security Cooperation: Challenges and Opportunities

'Human Security' in EU-Japan Security Relations from a Japanese Perspective

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Abstract

Human security was adopted by Japan as a main goal of foreign and defence policy. Japan's efforts to put human security on the agenda, especially at the UN, led to discussion and adoption in the communiqués within EU-Japan summit meetings. The apex of the concept in Japanese policy may have passed, becoming a subject of development cooperation policy rather than a fundamental guiding principle of Japanese foreign policy.

Key words: Human Security, European Union, Japan, Development Cooperation, Foreign Policy, Security Policy

1. Human security in Japanese foreign policy

Human security is one of the few international norms that Japan has tried to promote on the world stage along with the role of the state in economic development (Wade 1996). In fact, looking back on the history of successive Japanese governments' efforts to mainstream the concept of human security, one cannot but see human security as an important pillar of Japanese foreign policy (Kurusu and Kersten 2011, Kaji 2015).

And yet at the same time it is far from clear how human security defines actual conduct of Japan's external relations. Apart from formal pronouncements in the Foreign Ministry's documents and speeches, it is difficult to ascertain what the real place of human security is in Japan's foreign policy. This may be due to the fact that Japan defines less explicitly the contours of diplomacy than do the

US or the EU (scrutiny by Congress in the case of the US and international treaty obligation in the case of the EU). But it is the above all the fluidity of the concept itself which is largely to blame for the lack of clarity in the effects that human security may have in Japanese foreign policy. One can even say that it is because of this fluidity that the concept was found useful by the Japanese government in the first place.

In fact, a principal advantage of the concept of human security is its dual face between security and development. In this sense, human security can be said to be three-dimensional (linking diplomacy, defence and development: "3D"). Human security thus serves to link the two distinct fields hitherto considered separate: development and security (Masujima 2017). In a sense, the fluidity of human security derives from this dual nature of the concept.

In the case of Japan, human security serves two useful political functions. On the one hand, it serves to 'domesticate' the concept of security on the world scene. As is well known, because of constitutional limits and peace-oriented domestic public opinion, Japan was not active in peace-keeping or conflict mediation efforts involving the use of military force in spite of being the second largest economy in the world until the 2000s Thus Overseas Development Assistance (ODA) has played a more prominent role in Japanese diplomacy than in other democracies with military projection capabilities. As an aspirant to become a permanent member of the Security Council, Japan is at a handicap as long as the world is filled with violent conflicts and security is viewed from predominantly military angles. The concept of human security thus has the potential to relieve Japan of this handicap. Viewed in this way, the Japanese government's efforts since 1997 to put human security on the world agenda can be understood as trying to modify the concept of security, away from military to civilian tones to fit better a country like Japan.

On the other hand, human security also serves a domestic political purpose. Human security traditionally served to 'securitize' development Japanese governments' efforts to modify the Japanese public's intransigent pacifism. Japan's post-war history is filled with governmental elites' efforts to allow Japan to play a more prominent role in world affairs despite stubbornly reluctant public opinion. A byproduct (if not the purpose) of human security's is the increasing acceptance of the link between civilian development and security in Japanese society. The translation of 'human' was important in this sense, in that it is related not to the rational and cold connotation as in 'human relations' but to more humane and warm 'human life'.

Human security therefore serves a dual function of domesticating both international society and the Japanese public. It does not therefore signify how much Japanese government actually 'does' than 'promote' the concept both domestically and internationally. It is no wonder then that some scholars see Japan's human security policy as nothing more than taking substance out of human security (Gilson and Purvis 2010).

2. Perception of threat and human security in Japanese foreign policy

Assessment of policy makers' perceived threat to national security is a delicate exercise for researchers approaching the question from outside principally for lack of first-hand information. However, it is possible to discern some general line of perception of threat based on discourse

analysis. The main question on this point is the following: Is human security perceived regionally or globally by Japanese government?

On this issue, we can refer to the first National Security Strategy of 2013 (Government of Japan 2013) where human security figures prominently. Human security is treated as one of the six items in the section on security environments that Japan is facing along with balance of power, proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, international terrorism, global environment, and global economic risks. As issues of human security, such issues as poverty, widening inequality, global health, climate change, food security, and humanitarian crisis by natural disaster or civil war, are listed. The Security Strategy then goes on to say that these challenges could have repercussions on the peace and stability of the international community; therefore Japan needs to promote measures based on the principle of human security. Recognition of threat in this sense is thus based on a new kind of security risk analysis about the international order itself. It is not limited to the security environment in Japan's surrounding areas. Besides, as mentioned earlier, human security serves a dual function of domesticating both international society and the Japanese public. Viewed this way, the strategy of human security itself does not tell much about how Japan analyzes objective risks and threats.

Does this mean that human security in Japanese foreign policy had principally only global ramifications? It should be noted that, especially at the initial period of the introduction of human security in Japan's foreign policy around 1997, perception of threat in the field of human security as seen in the internal political turmoil in many key Asian allied countries after the Asian Crisis for Japan was recognized seriously by Japanese policy makers at the time. Indeed the fact that the Japanese government at least initially chose, at the UN, to focus on initiating the Trust Fund for Human Security, in regional terms, shows where Japanese policy makers' concern lay (in the end, the Trust Fund was set up without any regional focus). It remains to be seen whether the perception of security at the regional level which was present around 1997 still holds today.

3. Human security as development cooperation

Human security was clearly a key priority of Japanese foreign policy under Prime Minister Obuchi and also under Prime Minister Yoshiro Mori. However, as mentioned by Edström 2011: 14), Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi's Diet speech on 31January 2003 that 'ODA will be implemented strategically in human security areas' foreshadowed the *de facto* downgrading of human security in Japanese foreign policy. According to Edström 2008), 'It made human security a matter of ODA policy and no longer a key concern for foreign policy'.

In fact, the downgrading of human security within Japan's foreign policy was conditioned by the terrorist attacks of 11 September 2001 (9/11). Although policy continuity was stressed by Koizumi (the wording encompassed security referent to the individual, core values such as survival, livelihood, and dignity as under the period of Obuchi and Mori), the perceived threat to human security was narrowed down to terrorism. Under these conditions, the fight again terrorism outpaced human security under Koizumi's government.

It was thus against the backdrop of the rise of terrorism as the main foreign policy priority that what we can call 'developmentalization' of human security concretized. It occurred on both policy and programme levels around 2003. On the policy level, human security figures as a principle of Japanese

ODA in the revised ODA Charter adopted in 2003. Based on this Charter, a mid-term programming of Japanese ODA defined the policy principle of human security. The ODA Charter was replaced in 2015 by the Development Cooperation Charter (MOFA 2015). In this document, human security is listed along with peace and security by non-military means and self-reliance and dialogue based on Japanese experience as basic policies underlining Japan's development cooperation. Human security thus covers the whole Japanese development policy as a basic policy (philosophy) and is not therefore a simple specific sub-field of development cooperation.

Ever since the Japanese government's initiative to put human security on the agenda of the international community, there have been two specific sources of ODA projects for explicitly human security purposes (MOFA 2009):

1. *The UN Trust Fund for Human Security* was created at the UN on the initiative of the Japanese government in 1999. From 1999 to August 2009, 346 million US dollars were contributed to the fund by Japan. 195 projects in 118 countries and one area were implemented by the Fund.
2. *Grant Assistance for Grassroots Human Security Projects,* formerly called Grass Roots Assistance and renamed to include human security. In 2006-08, 31 billion yen was spent on this type of project assistance.

4. Human security in Japan-EU relations

The Japanese government made strenuous efforts to mainstream human security on the world stage, especially at the UN. In order to achieve this goal, regular diplomatic meetings (including summits) were utilized to disseminate the concept (Kaji 2015). Thus it is no wonder that in regular summit meetings between Japan and the EU (as in Japan-US meetings) human security was taken up largely on the insistence of Japan.

Human security appeared first in the Action Plan agreed by Japan and the EU in 2001. Even before that date, a similar concept, 'human dignity', had appeared at the 2000 Japan-EU Summit. The Action Plan addresses four major objectives: (1) Promoting peace and security; 2) Strengthening the economic and trade partnership utilizing the dynamism of globalization for the benefit of all; (3) Coping with global and societal challenges, and (4) Bringing together people and cultures. Human security was mentioned in the first pillar on peace and security in the following terms:

> 'Sharing responsibility for promoting peace and prosperity in the world, we will enhance <u>human security</u> for the benefit of all, and encourage enhanced engagement in each other's region. In this context, Japan will continue various forms of support to the EU candidate countries and other countries in the region, with a view to contributing to regional stability and development. The EU will similarly continue its support in strengthening economic infrastructures and democratization of Asian countries.' (MOFA 2001. Underlined by this author.)

It should thus be noted that human security first appeared in Japan-EU official documents as an issue of peace and security.

If we analyze the yearly Japan-EU summits' official communiqués, a curious evolution can be noted. Between 2001 (the year the Action Plan was adopted) and 2003, there was no mention of human security in the official communiqués. It was only in 2004, at the 13th Summit held in Tokyo, that human security was mentioned. It appeared as a separate item, in relations with UN reform, International Criminal Court etc. After that, human security disappeared in the following year's summit meeting held in Luxembourg in May 2005.

It is since the 15th Summit meeting in 2006 held in Tokyo that human security figures regularly in the communiqués. Human security was taken up mostly as an item in the field of security between 2006 and 2010. Only once, at the 16th Summit held in 2007, human security appeared in relations to development (poverty reduction) in the heading under global issues. Since the 20th Summit meeting (in 2011) up to the most recent, i.e. the 23rd 2015), human security has been treated as a subject of development cooperation.

Thus it can be concluded through this examination of press communiqués of the Summit meetings between Japan and the EU that human security appeared first as an issue of peace and security in 2006, and since 2011 human security is treated as a development issue.

Here we can only speculate on the reasons why this evolution of the place of human security in Japan-EU relations took place. Taking into consideration the bureaucratic nature of decision-making on Japanese foreign policy (except for matters of grave domestic impact when politicians tend to have the upper hand), a bureaucratic explanation should hold. It can be presumed in fact that during the period between 2004 and 2010, human security was treated in the Foreign Policy Bureau (formerly United Nations Bureau). This Bureau includes directions of national security and thus human security appeared in the jurisdiction of this bureau. Since 2011 it can be assumed that human security has been in the hands of International Cooperation Bureau (especially of Global Issues Division).

This bureaucratic analysis is not only of interest to satisfy intellectual curiosity. It actually seems to show the changing place of the concept of human security within Japanese foreign policy in general.

It seems in fact that institutional reorganization of human security within the Japanese government (more specifically the Foreign Ministry) took place sometime before 2011. There are two reasons behind this change (although the Japanese government does not mention any change in its policy on human security).

The first reason concerns the successful decoupling of 'freedom from fear' and 'freedom from want' that the Japanese government was so eager to realize. In the UN document in 2012, a working definition of human security was adopted, leading the way for institutionalizing human security as a concrete substantive field. In paragraph 3 of the resolution, the General Assembly agreed by consensus that 'human security is an approach to assist Member States in identifying and addressing widespread and cross-cutting challenges to the survival, livelihood and dignity of their people' (United Nations 2012). Further, it was understood that (*ibid.*):

> a. The right of people to live in freedom and dignity, free from poverty and despair. All
> individuals, in particular vulnerable people, are entitled to freedom from fear and

freedom from want, with an equal opportunity to enjoy all their rights and fully develop their human potential;

b. Human security calls for people-centered, comprehensive, context-specific and prevention-oriented responses that strengthen the protection and empowerment of all people and all communities;

c. Human security recognizes the interlinkages between peace, development and human rights, and equally considers civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights.

And above all, and most important for the Japanese government, it was agreed that Responsibility to Protect (R2P) involving the use of force is different from human security. Decoupled from R2P, a way was opened to concentrate on operationalizing human security as a field of development cooperation.

The second reason is related to the Japanese government's efforts culminating in the adoption of post-2015 Milliennium Development Goals (MDGs, or Sustainable Development Goals, SDGs) in 2014. On this point Japan was only partially successful in its efforts to put human security on the agenda. The fact that thanks to Japanese government's strenuous efforts to include human security in the Peacebuilding and Statebuilding Goals (PSGs), the content if not the wording of human security was adopted would lead to further 'developmentalization' of human security (already started in 2003 as described above).

5. Japan-EU cooperation on human security

Since the Action Plan laid the foundation for Japan-EU cooperation in political and security fields(Masujima 2013), human security figures among the possible areas of cooperation. At the beginning, Japan-EU cooperation was active in the Balkans, Afghanistan, East Timor, Sri Lanka, and Aceh. In the aftermath of the 9/11 terrorist attacks in 2001, attention shifted to the hard traditional security field in the fight against international terrorism. However, in 2007 the implementation review of the Action Plan again mentioned human security in the context of peace and security. In 2009, the EU and Japan discussed when the Action Plan expires post 2011 but not much came out of the discussion.

As de Bruyn mentions, typical cooperation between the EU and Japan was reciprocal cooperation in Asia and Europe (de Bruyn 2015). Thus Japan contributed to post-conflict development in the Balkans (Bosnia, Kosovo) whereas the EU contributed to Cambodia's 'weapons for development' project. Japanese diplomats working on relations with the EU typically hold the view that Japan basically tries to relieve the burden of the EU in facing up to human security challenges (and vice versa), therefore Japan expects the EU to contribute to relieve Japan's burden in this field.

In the fields of development cooperation (SDGs) and humanitarian assistance (public health, disaster reduction etc.), cooperation between Japan and the EU has been much developed. Official dialogue between the EEAS' Humanitarian Aid and Civil Protection department (ECHO) on the EU side and the Foreign Ministry's International Cooperation Bureau on the Japanese side has been held regularly.

Further, the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) recently stepped up its Brussels representation to promote cooperation with the EU.

Although some EU officials expect cooperation with Japan in Afghanistan, Pakistan, and Myanmar (Reiterer 2013), it remains to be seen if concrete measures could be undertaken jointly. In fact, as Japan shifts its emphasis in the field of human security to specific fields of development cooperation and humanitarian assistance, cooperation in post-conflict peace building is increasingly treated outside human security domains. This difference of emphasis in human security on both sides needs to be addressed and adjusted in future discussion on cooperation in human security between Japan and the EU.

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