

Engagement of Constructivism with the Human Security Theory

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ABSTRACT

Human Security has developed as an alternative approach to Traditional concept of Security. The traditional concept is dedicated to protecting the state from external invasion and it is focused on preserving the sovereignty and security of the state. The Human Security concept critically enriches the concept of Security by adding the economic, social, environmental, health and identity related issues. Human Security securitizes these issues, i.e., it raises the value of these issues to such an extent that they ought to be treated as Security concerns. It contends that great challenges are present to security in form of crisis in these important dimensions. Constructivism is an approach that contends that Reality is neither purely subjective nor purely objective, but is inter-subjective. Reality is constructed by the interaction of different players, actors and institutions. Constructivism helps us in understanding the concept of Human Security as the latter also constructs the concept of Security in a creative fashion. Human Security is not static as new dimensions of the ever-changing world can be included within its parameters as per the requirements. The paper is an effort to understand the relevance of Constructivism in understanding the dimensions, scope and limitations of Human Security. The approach of Human Security can also benefit the development of Constructivism as the structure of global politics may witness important change if the concept of Human Security finds a place in the perspective of major players and institutions in World Politics.

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INTRODUCTION

Human Security is very important approach to Security studies. Security was traditionally defined in terms of securing the national borders against the attack of external enemies. The area of concern was the sovereignty of the state and it must be clearly stated that there was lack of proper demarcation between the state and government in traditional security discourse. This is because of the fact that the origin of traditional theory lies in classics that concerned with rulers who were unelected and practically enjoyed unlimited powers. The concept of rights and duties had not been properly developed. The powers that were believed to cause threat to overall level of security were external states that had great territorial and material ambitions, besides the attraction of prestige that follows every military victory. The expanded concept of security had analysis of internal threats to security of state. The focus was on the internal fractures along ethnic lines, the ambition of regional warlord and other such groups that sought weakening of central power in order to attain higher power.

The concept of Human Security was made famous by famous Pakistani economist Mahbub ul Haq in context of 1994 UNDP Human Development Report. The concept has been developed and refined by thinkers like Barry Buzan, Ole Waever and Ken Booth. The concept of Human Security is very important in the sense that it is in line with major political development that has occurred either gradually or in waves over the course of past two centuries and so; i.e., democratization of political system in many countries in the world.

Democratization refers to the process in which the people are granted powers to elect their government for definite period of time. It has increased the participation of people to unexpected level as compared to the high degree of insulation of earlier political systems from public opinion. The development of democratic form of Government has led to political education of the masses and increase in level of knowledge and consciousness among the

people. This has led to their stakes in government and more than that, the government itself has lot of stake in the aspirations of people. There are free and fair elections at regular intervals of time in democratic government. The government has to satisfy the aspirations of the people, otherwise there is great possibility that it will be replaced with other government in the next elections. This is very important for security purposes as the security concerns are to be linked with the people. It has to be kept in mind that the public does not have great concern for theoretical development of Security. Their concern is directly affected by their perception of emerging threats to their well-being and happiness. This makes their thought very dynamic as new types of problems may develop and assume gigantic proportions.

IMPORTANCE OF CONCEPT OF HUMAN SECURITY

Human Security is relevant as it tries to descend to the common public for understanding emerging security concerns and does not remain confined to the ambitions and fears of political elites. It tries to cover many dimensions of threats to human life, property and well-being. The traditional approach of security was narrowly limited to the military aspect. (Booth:1991, p.318). These dimensions extend to economic, environmental, physical and identity threats besides other threats.

The concept of Human Security is extremely relevant as there is an effort to understand and analyze the different aspects of development of human civilization in terms of threat created by it. There may be different ways in which development of modern era can be critically studied, i.e. historical events in the past centuries; emerging trends in psychology; the scientific developments and associated technological changes; the working of modern economic system with emphasis on creation of large market along with its features; evolution of International Law in modern times; the continuities and alterations in human cultural traits in modern times with anthropological insight and many other paths. The effort of Human Security is to see the dangers inherent in the march of progress that cast their impact in present times. The dangers are not just confined to one field or so, but extend to different fields. Many dimensions have been included under the approach of Human Security like Drug Trafficking, Human Trafficking, Money Laundering and Cyber-Security (Collins:2016, p.9).

The adverse effect on environment with the great increase in consumerist propensities after the dawn of Industrial Era is feared to cause great calamities to human race. For instance, the rise in sea water due to melting of glaciers that is in turn caused by global warming resulting from tremendous release of greenhouse gases in the atmosphere, is feared to cause large scale floods in coastal regions. This will cause large number of deaths and destruction of property and compel the people to leave those regions, resulting in large scale migration problem. Human Security approach is focused on such emerging issues. The traditional security was somewhat confined to threats to core values that were caused by definite individual or group or state. The Traditional Approach was skewed towards the state. The Human Security approach includes referent objects other than the State. Referent Objects imply things that are viewed as 'existentially threatened' and have 'legitimate claim of survival'.(Buzan:1998, p.36). Mary Kaldor has developed the concept of New War that deals with the new paper of war that occurred due to disintegration of states in many regions. The demarcation between combatant and non-combatant force and legitimate violence and criminality is not clear under such circumstances (Kaldor: 2007) The Human Security concept has expanded the notion to include all great factors that have potential of causing damage to human life and property, whether they emerge from traditional means or they arise from new modern aspects. Human Security is thus a broad and comprehensive concept.

Human Security can be properly analyzed only after making proper estimate of the massive impact of rapid technological strides. Technology is changing at fast pace or rather in exponential terms. There is rough estimate related to occurrence of technological singularity in the year around 2040. Technological Singularity is the phenomenon where the Artificial Intelligence (the cognitive development of program-based machines) exceeds Natural intelligence in specific terms and it also implies the almost explosion like situation caused by exponential growth of technology, i.e. too much technology that it cannot be understood with human cognitive apparatus. This technological development may increase the comfort of human life, but may also cause large scale tragedy if it passes into the hands of irresponsible and destructive actors and institutions. The constructive knowledge related to technology assumes great significance at this spot. Technology is such a massive phenomenon that it cannot be left to be studied only by the scholars and researchers of scientific disciplines. Those scholars and researchers, no doubt, have first- hand knowledge regarding the

functioning of technology and the evolution possible in the technological field. But, they lack proper expertise so as to understand the impact of technology on human life. Many sub-disciplines have evolved that aim to do justice with the impact of technology like history of technology, culture and technology, technology of mass communication and many other similar topics. Constructivist discourse will help us to understand the different meanings, purposes and objectives that can be associated with technological development. There is pattern in the various types of meanings and values attached to the technological development. The pattern can be located through knowing and understanding the processes related to acquisition, distribution and maintenance of power in the society.

The knowledge of the pattern can be great help in understanding the scope, limitations, advantages and disadvantages of technological process. The technology has been considered as a tool and like every other tool, technology too is used as per the wishes of its master. The construct of tool is very paradoxical construct of great significance. This is because it makes technology very powerful and also reduces the importance of technology. Technology in use is the best instance when the technology will cast its impact upon the people resulting in enhancing the power of technology; while the technology in itself is powerless as the user has great discretion and autonomy to use it for positive and negative objectives. Human Security comes into picture exactly at the same time as the negative consequences of technology are spread over in different fields and the consequences exist in possibilities and probabilities that are lacking in clarity making them to be comprehended and analyzed.

The humble submission is that Human Security is related to the crystallization of such amorphous threats and dangers in a very conceptual and taxonomical manner. Any theoretical contribution in Human Security through creative engagement with technological changes can help us a great deal to understand about the changing threat perceptions to the entire human society in light of massive technological changes in a causal-explanation form. Human Security can help us to understand the relative focus that must be casted on the different aspects of threats depending upon their nature, immediacy and magnitude. If the threat is remote, it may dealt with later but if the threat is direct it must be addressed with best possible strategy as required. The threat that is immediate must be solved quickly and the necessary authority and men, material and other resources must be deployed for the

purpose. The threat that may happen in future must be solved by using the foresight of political experience and medium- and long-term plans may be made in order to overcome the threat.

MEANING OF CONSTRUCTIVISM

Constructivism is a very important approach that developed in International Relations in 1990s. It was first stated by Nicholas Onuf in his book, titled *World of Our Making*. The milestone in development of Constructivism is the book of Alexander Wendt, *Social Theory of International Politics* and his article *Anarchy is what the states make out of it*. Constructivism contends that reality is not objective as Realist and Liberals contend, but is inter-subjective, i.e. shaped by the interaction of different actors and institutions which are both inter-related and inter-dependent. The Realist notions do not give much space to the actors and institutions in the process of creation of reality, as they suggest that players are bound to act as per the existing external reality that exists externally of each player. The relationship between subjectivist and objectivist approach is under-determined in Realist Analysis. (Wendt: 1999, p. 234) Constructivism is opposed to notions of Postmodernism as the latter is highly subjective and fluid resulting in emergence of skepticism regarding the existence of reality. The equal validity of all values that is often the end result of postmodern analysis is feared to cause degeneration of all basic humanitarian norms. Under Constructivist approach, the influence of norms on International Relations acquire significance. (Zehfuss: 2002, p.4) The lack of common meaning in social sciences is bound to raise questions regarding the nature and extent of communication among the relevant players.

HUMAN SECURITY THROUGH THE PRISM OF CONSTRUCTIVISM

The close interaction of Constructivism and Human Security is in very nature of both the approaches and this is apparent in any comprehensive analysis of the subject. This is because Constructivism gives lot of importance to agency to shape and mould the reality as per its knowledge set, perceptions and understanding of individual gains and collective benefits. Constructivism implies that construction of an identity can happen in both positive and negative ways. If there is positive development related to enhanced cooperation among the people and there is active search regarding the common values and ideas that are important for all the players; there can also be enhanced conflict related tendencies among the states

that may lead to wars and other violent measures. The violence does not reduce the significance of Constructivism as the approach only contends that there is existence of common language in all major political discourses. The definition of threats and interests determined through definitions of identity have strong implications for National Security Policies. (Katzenstein :1996) Even in case of war and other types of conflicts, we can see the language of coercion that is accepted in the normal vocabulary of International Politics. Human Security also contends that there is inherent power among the political actors and institutions that shape the nature and degree of securitization in the political discourse.

Securitization has been developed by the theorists of the Copenhagen school. Securitization can be defined as a process by which a value becomes so important that its violation or endangering is regarded as threat to human security. The securitization of a given value or norm is dynamic phenomenon. Securitization does not happen in a vacuum. There is very important role of civil society which states the importance of a value to the extent that is considered to be core value. Securitization not only does justice to ever increasing range of threats to human society and thus rising dimensions of Security, but it also develops the correct perspective regarding the process that is related to conversion of value from non-security to security frame in the era of rapid technological change.

The Human Security is related to political threat to human life and property. The Second War has taught many great lessons and one lesson is the limitation to be imposed upon the sovereign powers of the states as the state may act violently against the innocent members of group on the basis of identity of the given group. This was due to great atrocities committed upon the Jewish race by the German state under Hitler and it is also a classic case of advanced technology being used as a tool for the purpose of the inhuman, immoral and old prejudices. The German officials and employees who committed these acts were tried in Nuremburg trials and they were declared guilty and sentenced to punishment by the tribunal as their acts were described as act against humanity. Nuremburg trial evolved the principle that there are basic human values and rights that have to be preserved at all costs and if state against such values and principles, then it is incumbent upon the employees of the State to go against such orders, instructions and laws. The defense of states agent cannot absolve the offender. This very principle led to further resolutions and conventions in the second half of the twentieth

century. There was establishment of International Criminal Court that was set up to try the offenders who are heads of state and have been involved in heinous crimes like ethnic cleansing of an identity or large-scale violence against the political opposition or such heinous crimes. The concept of Human Security and Sovereignty of state is indeed a very tough path to travel as both are crucial in the development of human society. There are practical problems related to the strict implementation of human rights norms. Firstly, there is violation of human rights in every state and there is thus a need to draw guidelines that may help in the evaluation of conditions that really mark the breach of human rights to the extent that there is need for humanitarian intervention. Secondly, there is ample scope of political blackmailing due to the provision of human security clause. This is because the powerful states like United States may selectively apply the provisions of International Law related to intervention in a manner that suits their geo-political and economic interests. This will compel the states to calibrate their policy as per the demands of global powers and this result in large scale erosion of authority. Thirdly, the principles of International Law are not applicable equally to all the states. Thus, there is a great need to strengthen common regard for norms in international society to such an extent that the norms are implemented even in the case of powerful and rich countries. This will reduce the magnitude of uncertainty in compliance that is associated with this process as all the states will be under compulsion to observe laws as much as possible. This helps us to understand the strong relationship between Constructivism and Human Security. Constructivism gives lot of scope to individual actors to shape the reality. One actor may call a given situation as tense but within control while other may advocate full scale intervention. There is thus scope of attaching different meaning to given phenomenon and the process of shaping the meaning is not an innocent process but is an interplay of economic, political and geo-strategic needs of a given state. Moreover, there is also need to know that the applicability of International Law is not a uniform case of implementation, but is complex interplay of forces where powerful states want to gain legitimacy by following many norms of International Law, but violating International Law where National Interests demand it to do so. Even in case of blatant breach of norms of International Law, the players tend to justify their acts. This is destined to send strong message to International Community about their relative in the international scheme of things and also establish their status as an otherwise responsible power.

The scope of construction of identity is very important part of contemporary politics and it can be well critiqued through the Constructivist lens. Constructivism can throw great light on the nature of identity; the amount of flux that exists to the actual functioning of the identity; the heterogeneity and fractures present in given identity and the scope of accommodation and confrontation with other identities in a given identity. The political security aspect of Human Security is very much related to the expression of given identity and the scope for other groups in such expression. Constructivist viewpoint is that anarchy is what states make of it and self-help and power politics are not essential features of Anarchy (Wendt:1992, p. 395).

Another important aspect of Human Security is related to the provision of basic essential goods and services to all the people. These include food, housing, clothes, minimum education and some health services for lot of people in the society. This aspect becomes very crucial as there are still large numbers of malnourished children in the world. Human Security is integrative and not defensive concept as per UNDP Report, 1994 (Human Development Report, p. 24). There has been reduction in number of infant and child mortality rates, but the provision of basic essential items has still not been possible for many poor people in the world in the twenty first century. The concept of Human security has expanded the security threats to include provision of basic necessities to all the people. It is strong critique of the traditional approach that viewed security from the perspective of already rich or influential section of society. The meaning of security has also to be understood from the viewpoint of deprived sections of society who have nothing much to lose, but to gain basic amenities of life. This is where there is need to focus on constructivist analysis of the word called security. The term security is normally taken for granted, but it needs to be problematized, i.e. its features should be questioned and enquired to make deep analysis about its meaning, implication and consequences.

The traditional concept of security assumes that there is something to be protected for which there is need to provide security. Security is not just about protection, but also about the expansion of required amenities among large section of population. The protective approach fails to link the needs and aspirations of poor and deprived sections of society. Security has thus to be framed in such a way that there is provision of happiness and increase in material

and ideational welfare for large number of poor people in the states. The ideational welfare is related to material welfare as only the fulfilment of basic needs gives the energy and confidence regarding development of cognitive and rational faculties of the given individual.

The Constructivist explanation is important in the analysis of referent objects that are regarded as threat to security in the context of international relations. Proper focus on the referent objects is an important part of the development of theory related to Security studies as it establishes relation of the entity like state that is seeking security and the specific entity from which it aims to protect its basic interests. The insecurity is defined in relation to some external actors or institutions that are considered as threat to security of given state. There is need of creative engagement with the dynamics of international relations and constructivism helps in locating the changing perception of a given factor as threat or not. If a given factor is indeed labeled as a threat by state actor, then there is need of formation and implementation of appropriate strategy and deployment of enough amounts of resources to provide protection against the threat perceived by the actor. In order to avoid wastage of resources, it is essential that a level of caution is maintained before labeling any aspect within the field of security issues of a given state.

Human Security also shares an important relation with Constructivism in the area of legal development concerning the promotion of aspects of Human Security through means of law. Constitution is supreme law of the land in states that are governed by Constitutional Government. Constitution does provide for basic rights that are to be enjoyed by all the citizens of the state. This part of Constitution acts as a guarantee for the enjoyment of all the rights and privileges by the people belonging to different identities at an equal level. It acts as a guard against the encroachment of basic rights of citizen by the state and provides for all the necessary remedies in case of violation of his or her rights. Constructivism comes into picture as law, particularly Constitutional Law helps us in evaluating the place of various identities in the state. This is because law is crystallized expression of basic norms and values that are given prominent place in a given society and the political system. If Constitutional Law provides for some special treatment to members of given identity without any rational basis or discriminates against the citizens of other identity, then it implies that the political system is suffering from the undue influence and control of one identity to the extent of

deprivation of other groups and identities. The case of theocratic states like Pakistan is an important instance in this regard. The commitment of the state for the religion of Islam tends to show all the other minorities their place in the system.

It is also true that the approach of Constructivism itself would also be greatly benefitted if the principles of Human Security find a place in the policy making of major states and institutions in the International Politics. This is because Human Security has the potential to greatly alter the viewpoint of states as far as relative importance of different dimensions of contemporary political economy is concerned. The changed perspective might usher in changes in inter-subjective reality that is shaped by shared meanings of different players and institutions. This has potential to cause important shift in the allocation of resources for various sectors of the society.

LIMITS OF HUMAN SECURITY APPROACH

There are limits of Human Security approach. One is related to the very comprehensive nature of field. There are great prospects for Security Studies as it is getting inputs from so many diverse fields. But this also complicates the matter as multiplication of dimensions lead to even greater increase in possible set of permutations and combinations, making it difficult to comprehend the chief characteristics of the theory of Human Security. Secondly, the theory of Human Security has the pitfall of delving deep into the strange new field for a scholar who is not well versed in the given dimensions. For instance, the issue related to food security can be better dealt by the scholar of the discipline of agriculture and a general scholar of Human Security has little specialized knowledge concerning the field. It may however be mentioned that this is a pitfall and an aware scholar can easily avoid such pitfalls by drawing a broad line within which he has to focus upon the field. Thirdly, the problem with Human Security is lack of prioritization of different fields that is present in many works, including the UN Report. This leads to vagueness regarding the manner in which the states ought to deploy their resources. Demarcation between National Security and Human Security can be challenging and problematic (Mcintosh et al.: 2010).

The question of optimum utilization of resources is very crucial one in the field of economics and the relevance of utilization only increases in the case of less developed countries with

Low Gross Domestic Product. The idea of utilization is based on appropriate prioritization of needs leading to the proper preference mapping which can help in adequate allocation of resources in the economy. There is risk of *crisis of prioritization* on the practical implications of Human Security as far as developing countries are concerned. This implies lack of special importance to key sectors as every dimension is included within the parameter of Human Security. The lack of prioritization acts as a roadblock in the formulation of proper policies on the basis of inputs provided by the Human Security theory.

CONCLUSION

The concept of Human Security is very important as it has opened new vistas in the field of Security Studies. It has allowed both vertical and horizontal expansion of the field of security. The concept of Constructivism is relevant as it advocates the role of various players and institutions in the construction of Reality that is stated to be inter-subjective in nature affected by the inter-related and inter-dependent activities of players and institutions. Constructivism helps us in the analysis of forces that accord values to different factors related to security interest of state. It helps in the search of the important factors that determine the securitization process. Constructivism has focused a lot on identity formation and the process by which identity is shaped and changed over a period of time. This helps in understanding the relationship between various different identities and the scope of cooperation and chances of conflict between them.

It also helps us in understanding the role of Great Powers that selectively use principles of Human Security to further their National Interests. The importance of Human Security has been located in the context of rapid technological development and Constructivism can assist a lot in knowing the trajectory of human reaction to the technological development as it can shed light on the formation of identities and interests in changed atmosphere. The Constructivist focus can help us in evaluating the new concept of security as provision and expansion of amenities as opposed to the defense and protection of already held values. Thus, it can be concluded that the very dynamic theory of Human Security has to work in close alliance with insights of Constructivism as Human Security has to considerable extent, applied the basic tenets of Constructivism in the field of Security Studies.

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