HUMAN SECURITY ISSUES IN THE CONTEXT OF THE CURRENT SOCIAL MOVEMENTS IN THE ARAB WORLD

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Human Security: a set of basic definitions

Human Security term is among those broad ones which appeared with the policy-making disputes over need to create explanation, or universal basis for treating people and issues of human nature and with human participation in the context of respecting human rights and human dignity. Among the number of modern terms concerning security (a part of which is more political and populist than scientific) Human Security term tends to have the both meanings – scientific one having in mind numerous of modern publications devoted to its explanation and analysis since the early 1990s, and political meaning of being used in terms of political motivation, and/or justification to help people, to protect human rights, to stop violence, poverty, etc.

But, as it appears to be today, the content of the term could not be unbiased while having links to the more policy-directed and appropriately more biased brands of military conflict and war, intervention, terrorism, trafficking, etc.

Academic expertise of Human Security term starts from very early philosophical dilemma between the general, and the individual being. The problem basically is in need of limiting of individual rights and securities in sake of the general (societal and state) security, while concentration on human rights and freedoms brings to certain limitations of the state (or community in wider sense) power over the individual freedoms, the right which was initially delegated to a state by free individuals (Thomas Hobbes).

The UN practice to protect human rights by its missions enhanced the place of human rights and dignities if not equally to a state security, but far upon state power over human freedoms. The modern trend to broaden the concept of human rights protection as global security issue was especially supported by the UN Secretary Generals in the modern times: “In 1991, J.P. de Cuellar stated that “the rule of not interfering in states’ internal jurisdiction cannot be a protection barrier behind which human rights could be violated on a massive or systematic scale of impunity”. Boutros-Ghali, de Cuellar’s successor, stressed that states’ sovereignty and their territorial integrity is still the basis of international relations but at the same time added, “The time of absolute and exclusive sovereignty has passed”1. And the most essential step toward widening protection of human rights and its major mechanism – humanitarian intervention, by making state sovereignty less principle in cases of mass violations of humanity, was made by Kofi Annan who is known as

one of the most liberal political leader and author of the broader concept of humanitarian intervention, calling for preference of human rights protection compared to unchangeable sense of state sovereignty. As he said in his speech to the UN General Assembly, September 20, 1999, “State sovereignty, in its most basic sense, is being redefined by forces of globalization and international cooperation.

The State is now widely understood to be the servant of its people, and not vice versa. At the same time, individual sovereignty – and by this I mean the human rights and fundamental freedoms of each and every individual as enshrined in our Charter – has been enhanced by a renewed consciousness of the right of every individual to control his or her own destiny. …It has cast in stark relief the dilemma of what has been called humanitarian intervention: on one side, the question of the legitimacy of an action taken by a regional organization without a United Nations mandate; on the other, the universally recognized imperative of effectively halting gross and systematic violations of human rights with grave humanitarian consequences.”

It is interesting to note that Kofi Annan takes human rights as “absolute”, “universal” value (and his understanding of human rights is actually based on universality of human rights as broader concept). According to Kofi Annan, “If the new commitment to intervention in the face of extreme suffering is to retain the support of the world’s people, it must be – and must be seen to be – fairly and consistently applied, irrespective of region or nation. Humanity, after all, is indivisible.”

Again, it is unfortunately impossible to synchronise the both Human and State Security considerations as far as historically there have been numerous of political regimes massively violating rights of people in narrowly formulated political interests, so that civil control over government remains the only mechanism to be protected not only by state, but also from state. Human Security vs. State Security remains the major political formula based on above mentioned philosophical dichotomy of individual vs. collective form of being.

The next step in enhancing Human Security vs. State Security was again made in frames of UN projects. The mostly known document launched by the UN Development program to sum up the coming trends in Human Security protection is the 1994 Human Development Report, which is noted by almost all publications on Human Security discourse. The Report includes 7 elements of human security understanding: economic security (assured basic income), food security (physical and economic access to food), health security (relative freedom from disease and infection), environmental security (access to sanitary water supply, clean air and non-degraded land system), personal security (security from physical violence and

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3 “…the partisans of universality claim that international human rights like rights to equal protection, physical security, fair trials, free speech, freedom of religion and free association, are and must be the same everywhere” - International Human Rights in Context: Law, Politics, Morals (Steiner, H., Alston, Ph., Goodman, R., eds., 2008). Oxford: Oxford University Press, p. 517).
4 Ibid., p. 6.
threats), community security (security of cultural identity), and political security (political protection of basic rights and freedoms)\(^6\).

The later discussions on the broader and narrower definitions of Human Security include the broader one represented by the mentioned UNDP report and shared by some, and the narrower definitions made by governments of particular countries stressing certain elements of human rights to be made a point of special concern in the Human Security contexts (including human rights protection in conditions of military conflicts and war operations); for example, it was proposed to divide Human Security and Human Development criteria, so that elements like quality of food, good environment etc. should be considered as human development issues: “Human Security is freedom from fear, and human development is freedom from want. They are mutually reinforcing but distinct concepts”\(^7\).

On the contrary, the wider definition of Human Security may sound as “the security of individuals and communities, expressed as both “freedom from fear” and “freedom from want”. Intolerable threats to Human Security range from genocide and slavery through natural disasters, such as hurricanes or floods, to massive violations of the rights of food, health and housing”\(^8\).

The dispute between supporters of the wider and narrower definitions of Human Security should not be considered as mutually eliminating, and actually demonstrates the strong link between evolution of the Human Security term and the evolution of security itself, being transformed from the initial and vital perception of security as risk to be killed in war or die from mass diseases, to the more recent and more luxury perception of security as secured and healthy food, good ecology, clean air, quality of medical care, public services, predictable policy, etc. having in mind that the initial perception of life protection is already and basically met. And, as A. Acharya stressed it, “While it does not ignore the rights of societies and non-political rights, human security does place a premium on human dignity. No serious advocate of human security would condone the pursuit of economic and communitarian approaches at the expense of the safety and dignity of individuals and peoples. The tolerance of human rights violations for the sake of economic development or social stability has no place in the human security paradigm”\(^9\).

\(^9\) Acharya, A., ibid., p. 450.
And indeed, ‘freedom from want’ as protection from threats like diseases, poverty, hunger, ecological disasters, etc., ultimately determine freedom from fear, so that modern definition of security which tends to be maximally inclusive, should be a complex one including objective conditions and subjective perceptions, so that in certain conditions human development issues may appear on the first lines of the policy agenda as security issues to be addressed in a way to prevent human security threats in the narrower, violent representation. In other words, if the human conditions of life and dignity are being stably violated by domestic and foreign powers, it is more probable that the life deprivation will appear as the next step.

**Human Security in action: the Arab Spring case**

As far as security (as well as Human Security) is an objective-subjective phenomenon and securitization means subjective perception of an objective situation in terms of reality perceived as threat (challenge)\(^\text{10}\), Human Security (being human and especially subjectively determined) shell be addressed as combination of objective determinants and subjective perceptions. Accordingly, Human Security consists of two levels:

1. Life conditions (objective determinants),
2. Life expectations (subjective determinants).

**1. Life conditions in general are:**

1.1. Secured by state (official policies, political decision-making structures, legislation, government, other state institutions, using international support and suspending external negative impact),
1.2. By private sector (alternative non-state institutions – NGOs, private schools, universities, private clinics, etc.), using state support and manipulating with private liberties,
1.3. By society itself (culture of coexistence and public morale),
1.4. Personally by individuals, using various types of accessible capital (in terms of economic and social ones).

As a result, the above mentioned security policies met by state, society, community and individual, aim to secure the both freedom from want and freedom from fear.

**2. Life expectations depend on:**

2.1. Objective life conditions (also including measures to secure the above mentioned freedoms),
2.2. Political propaganda and Mass Media effects. Domestic political propaganda may develop the both modest expectations, as well as patient reaction towards objective life conditions and political decision-making. On the other hand, global Mass Media and fashion on luxury life style provoke consumerism as lifestyle and life quality, which directly develops higher demands than the actual objective possibilities and resources are.

So it is possible that objective life conditions do not coincide with subjective expectations, being lower or higher. Based on the proportion of objective insecurity

level and subjective perception of threat. Human Security representation in certain societies may vary from narrower one (as freedom from fear issue) to the wider one (as overlapping freedom from fear and freedom from want).

We may propose 6 options of Human Security situation resulted from combinations of possible perceptions and actual conditions (Table 1):

**Table 1**

**Options of Human Security situation**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Objective life conditions are bad (declining)</th>
<th>Life expectations are modest (low)</th>
<th>Life expectations are high (consumerism)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Passive instability</td>
<td>2. Active Instability</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Objective life conditions are stably unchangeable</td>
<td>3. Manageable Stability</td>
<td>4. Manageable Instability</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Objective life conditions are good (improving)</td>
<td>5. Active Development</td>
<td>6. Stability – Passive development</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

The sharpest situation is while bad life quality coincides with high life expectations. This situation characterises poorest societies in the era of global Mass Media, while lack of economic development and absence of human rights coincide with relatively easy access to global Mass Media demonstrating luxury life style and much higher level of life.

This condition may lead to civil war, mass protests, and revolutions.

In the times “before television” (and of course before Internet) countries with objectively bad situation and low life quality were less suffering from the risk of mass protests and revolutions against their leaders, because low life quality and slow (and even no) human development in today’s terms was coincided with mostly low expectations. Local communities were living according to domestic traditions and tolerating their authorities the way Max Weber called “traditional legitimacy”, in other words, not because the policy was effective, but because the previous generations were tolerating the ruling elites and the existing order. The similar effect was reached in the totalitarian (closed) societies with absence of freedoms, including freedom of speech. Similarly, in the Soviet Union of 1930-1960th or in Arab countries until recent civil protests and regime changes (whose leaders ruled non-stop about 30-40 years), people were satisfied by low life quality being sure that either it is everywhere the same, or it is even worse outside.

The option 1 - passive instability in conditions of coinciding low life quality and modest expectations means unchangeable situation when society lives the way it has been living thousands of years before, and is going to live the similar way in the future.

Global Mass Media changed the reality, bringing from screens new culture of global consumerism. Propaganda of consumerist lifestyle surrounded by goods and services made people feel deprived by their traditional philosophy of life, and by their local leadership. Global values came to local communities not with high ideas, values and qualities, but with trade, variety of goods and services, the way conquistadors were approaching local citizens of the both Americas bringing “goods of
civilization” – shiny mirrors, bijou from cheap glass, and exchanging all that with gold and slaves. The feeling of being deprived and unsecured comes not only with real threats, but with information about better life outside of community. And, in the era of Mass Media and mobile technologies, communication is the basic (if not only) measurement of Human Security condition in comparative perspective (the way we change TV channels, we compare Human Security conditions “here” and somewhere “there”). The advertising of (and teasing by) luxury life style is often considered as main topic of the modern Mass Media and as basic reason for its critics\(^1\).

In societies with high life quality it determines perception of the stably improving reality as norm (“nothing special”, “it should be the way it is”, “we pay taxes to the state to have them work for improvement”, etc.), while in societies with low life quality any change towards improvement is perceived as an essential development.

So, the most dangerous situation may occur in conditions of bad life quality and high level of awareness about “the better life outside”, which may cause mass protests upon revolution and regime change, combined with high rate of emigration (Table 2, the option 2):

### Table 2

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>The phenomenon of Arab spring</th>
<th>Life expectations are high (consumerism)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Objective life conditions are bad (declining)</td>
<td>2. Active Instability (The Arab Spring cases), and the countries under risk – Kirgizstan, Belorussia, Azerbaijan, Uzbekistan, Turkmenistan, Tajikistan</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The Arab Spring phenomenon being represented by the wave of mass protests against ruling elites upon regime changes in the leading Arab World countries as Tunisia, Egypt, Sudan, Bahrain, Libya, Syria, and other neighbouring countries\(^12\), starting in December 2010 and escalating during the spring months of 2011, demonstrates the combination of bad (declining) life conditions (in comparative perspective), and growing life expectations among population of the Arab countries in-

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volved. Being traditionally ruled by lasting regimes, protested societies of the Arab countries have been involved in international communication flows, becoming more or less informed from the TV channels and Internet (even in the poorest villages there are satellite channels on the roofs) about possibilities and benefits they could have the way “Western societies” have. The coincidence of bad (and even declining) life conditions with growing life expectations brought to a conflict between past and present, which brought millions of people requiring regime change to the streets.

The role of Internet Social Networks and mobile phones\textsuperscript{13} in accumulating social protest and sharing views among society members on “what we have and what we could have instead” determined the transformation of Human Security issues from “freedom from fear” to “freedom from want”; protesters realised that the more they fear, the more they are getting deprived of freedom from want. Again, as securitization process makes it happen, every security issue including human security threat is being constructed in a discourse about what we have and what we may lose, what we could have and what we are deprived of having because of certain reasons, what we get and what we really want, etc. The Internet Social Networks such as Facebook, Twitter, and most of the biggest regional ones, as well as mobile phones, during the Arab revolutions (and before that – in so-called “Orange revolutions” on the post-Soviet space) served as an excellent technical support to construct and accumulate human security discourse in wider sense.

Besides that, the Arab Spring demonstrates the evolution process of the Human Security concept itself from the narrower definition in terms of physical violence (with which the Arab World societies have been living hundreds of years) toward the wider perception of life conditions of worsening, while being informed from the International Mass Media and Internet about better life possibilities and better options. In other words, people in the Arab World revolutionary movements want not just to live and be more or less protected from fear, but live better, have human development perspectives and protected freedom from want.

\textit{Manageable instability and the Human Security transformation in the countries under risk}

The less stressful and sharp, but at least growing tendency toward accumulation of mass protests is represented by combination of unchangeable, but stable objective situation with not worsening life conditions, and not improving as well, while the level of life expectations is high, social demand on “freedom from want” is continually growing up, supported by population’s involvement in International communications and Mass Media flows. Traditional authorities tend to keep the status-quo, including legitimacy of possessing power, using mechanisms of community control, social capital, and corruption. Majority of population still does the

\textsuperscript{13} The issue of the role of Internet Social Networks and mobile communication in the modern revolutions is widely discussed and disputable question, see, for example: Clay Shirky, \textit{The Political Power of Social Media. Technology, the Public Sphere, and Political Change}. Foreign Affairs, Jan.-Feb. 2011, pp. 28-41.
same sharing traditions and customs of corruption and political behaviour with the ruling elites, while minority demonstrates alternative approaches to modernisation and liberalisation. As a result, the both conservative majority and liberal minority mostly face the same reality as combination of the old approaches, lack of dynamics and progress, and lost opportunities. Moreover, being affected by alternative and easily accessible International communications, the both groups almost equally understand that reforms and changes are necessary; otherwise there will be stagnation in all fields of life. Conservative majority perceives this truth mostly silently, while liberal minority does it loudly (as young protesters did in Azerbaijan in March 2011, using Facebook communication and being arrested\textsuperscript{14}, or as people in Belorussia do protesting president Lukashenko regime and extreme inflation, using verbal and symbolic forms, again being arrested and executed\textsuperscript{15}).

In general, such situation may be characterised as Manageable instability (Table 3):

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>The countries under risk</th>
<th>Life expectations are high (consumerism)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Objective life conditions are stably unchangeable</td>
<td>4. Manageable Instability (The countries under risk – Kirgizstan, Belorussia, Azerbaijan, Uzbekistan, Turkmenistan, Tajiki-stan, Armenia, Ukraine)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Manageable instability situation demonstrates mostly latent public dissatisfaction and frustration with periodically breaking up elements of open protest against existing elites and order, based on objective situation of lasting economic and political stagnation, lack of freedoms (of freedom from want), and high risk of deprivation of freedom from fear. The both conservative majority and liberal minority tries to manage the situation my their own means, so that government tries to protect status-quo by means of official resource and propaganda, which with time loses its effectiveness, while population actively migrates from the country in order to get rid of the stably unsolved problems.

The post-Soviet societies have been highly educated and well informed, having good access to all kinds of modern IT in active use. International Mass Media

\textsuperscript{14} “It is impossible to live under an authoritarian regime,” said one protester, Elkhan Alnagiyev, who was promptly arrested by undercover police officers who had seen him speaking to a journalist. Another protester, Rashad Aliyev, said he had come because he was unemployed. “It’s not that there are no jobs; it’s that I don’t know anyone who will put me in a job,” Mr. Aliyev said. “They are oppressing us.” – See: Police in Azerbaijan Arrest Antigovernment Protesters (By Ellen Barry), The New York Times, March 12, 2011, http://www.nytimes.com/2011/03/13/world/asia/13azerbaijan.html; see also: Azerbaijan: Facebook Protests Result in Arrests (by Khadija Ismayilova), http://www.eurasianet.org/node/63057, March 11, 2011.

and communication technologies including Internet and mobile phone are widely shared and easily accessible in Armenia, Georgia, Azerbaijan, Belorussia, Ukraine, Kazakhstan and other post-Soviet countries, having many options and varieties. Besides that, Armenia, Georgia, Ukraine and some others has always been the knowledge societies, which currently affects the level of satisfaction by objective conditions of lasting problems and insecurities in the negative sense, determining the high level of migration in terms of above mentioned manageable instability.

The Mass-Media-determined perceptions in the most of the post-Soviet societies coincide with unchangeable to worsening objective situation (life condition). This overlapping of unchangeable to declining life conditions with growing consumerism and public demand in reforms may lead to transformation of existing Human security situation from Manageable (option 4) to the Active instability (option 2, The Arab Spring model).

**Conclusion**

Human Security notion is still in its development process, being determined by the both academic efforts and reality changes, getting new evidences from the societies in transformation where Mass Media effects create real opportunities for reforms, and risks to lose not only status-quo situation being created during decades, but also national identity based on traditions of tolerating human insecurity in a wider sense. Transformation of Human Security perceptions in the Arab countries, as well as in societies of transformation from the post-Soviet totalitarianism to either national varieties of political culture and behaviour (called by national elites the “national models of democracy”), or to permanently chaotic condition, demonstrates the process of narrower Human Security as security of life and freedom from fear, being replaced by wider Human Security and freedom from want. Every day more and more people in the World affected by International communications, Mass Media and Internet, want to live better, to be a part of International consumerism, to have more and better, to buy, have, spend and use.

Lack of reforms and stagnation in political, economic and social life in the countries affected by the wave of International communications, determines the clash of objective traditions and limits, on the one hand, and subjective desire to have more, to get and use. Arab Spring countries demonstrate the situation when neither political elites, nor the population are unable to manage the situation in a peaceful way of community ties and traditional rules, while there is still a possibility in some countries in transformation (including most of the post-Soviet countries) to manage the instability, using traditional elements of corruption, and enforcing emigration flows making problems leave with people.

Reformulation of the Human Security doctrines based on elements of traditional community ties in the most of above mentioned societies, and on constant dialogue between society and state bodies in order to synchronize public demand (subjective perceptions) and political supply (objective possibilities), may be the first step toward overcoming the negative effect of clashing elites and societies (the
Арабский мир сформулирован в контексте современных социальных движений в арабском мире. — Понятие человеческой безопасности появилось в системе социальных наук недавно. В конце XX — начале XXI века было сформулировано несколько основных её концепций — так называемые американские, японские и канадские.

В статье рассмотрены основные положения и недостатки этих концепций. На основе анализа важнейших тенденций, присущих современным социальным движениям и революциям в арабском мире, выявлены факторы человеческой безопасности, повлиявшие на возникновение и ход нынешних событий. Существующие ныне концепции человеческой безопасности пополняются пунктами, обусловленными течением арабских революций. Кроме того, продемонстрированы риски подобного развития событий, актуальные для ряда стран, которые имеют серьезные проблемы с безопасностью личности.