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Human Security in Practice: East Asian Experiences

Human Security in Practice: The Chinese Experience

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Abstract

This paper has tried to address the three research questions this project raises by elaborating on how the idea of human security is understood or defined by the government and social actors in China; how the distinction between the "protection" aspect and "empowerment" aspect of human security is understood and accepted; and what particular downside risks are perceived as pressing human security issues in China - the major ones include air pollution, food security, and cyber security. The facts reveal that although as a term "human security" is not frequently used, there have been various human security practices in China. The idea of human security has been firmly established and threats to human security detected. For both the government and academic community in China, human security and state security are not necessarily confrontational but rather can be combined and they can complement each other. The recent developments in China are pointing in a healthy direction in terms of human security in the country.

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Introduction

Human security, defined as freedom from want，freedom from fear and to live in dignity by the Commission on Human Security led by Sadako Ogata and Amartya Sen, which the UN General Assembly endorsed by referring to the "right of people to live in freedom and dignity," has drawn attention in China as well where it made progress over the years. Though the very term "human security" (人的安全 in Chinese) is not widely used thus far, a number of similar ideas or practices have been flourishing in China. In response to the questions this project raises, this paper tries to elaborate on China's experience with respect to human security by respectively dealing with three major issues, namely: how the idea of human security is understood or defined by the government and social actors; how the distinction between the "protection" aspect and the "empowerment" aspect of human security is understood and accepted; and what particular downside risks are perceived as pressing human security issues in China. The paper concludes by an overall assessment of the human security practices in China and the right direction these are indicating.

1. The Understanding of Human Security in China

1.1 A New Consensus

In China, the government is often wary of the new academic terms and tends not to directly use them. However, the facts, according to our previous study, have clearly showed China's trajectory of increasingly attaching more importance to "human" (both individual and collective) security. Much more attention has been paid to mitigating threats to human security and a number of measures are being taken in the practice to fulfill the mandate.[1] We emphasize the convergence of the human security idea and China's practices. Our findings have disproved the following statement: "the very notion of 'human security' has so far not appeared in the Chinese

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[1] See Ren Xiao and Li Yanxing, "A Return to People: China's Approach to Human Security," in *New Approaches to Human Security in the Asia-Pacific: China, Japan and Australia*, ed. William Tow et al. (Farnham, Surrey, England: Ashgate, 2013).

language in any possible translation, and the People's Republic of China (PRC) has not even accepted or adopted the concept of 'human security' in either domestic development papers or foreign policy guidelines…".[2] Our examination has suggested otherwise. Though the Chinese government has only used the very term "human security" on a few occasions, China has been engaged in the enterprise for enhancing human security.

China's becoming more open and susceptible to human security has much to do with its experience within the United Nations system. As one of P5 of the UN Security Council, China has long been supportive of the UN, the most important international organization in today's world, and has played a proactive role in various areas such as peace-building, development, and global governance. Over the years, the UN has encountered a number of criticisms and it is widely believed that reforms are needed, which China supports. Nevertheless, Beijing always believes that the UN is playing an irreplaceable role in global governance and tries to prop up the UN to encourage it to play such a role well.[3] This has been an unchanged priority on China's foreign policy agenda.

China's steady backing has boosted the status of the UN in world affairs, at a time when the world is faced with growing global challenges into the first decades of the 21st century. Meanwhile, the UN has taken the lead in advocating and/or spreading norms and principles, and this helps affect and shape China's ideas concerned. Usually, the UN initiatives or proposals attract China's attention and prompt Beijing to take a closer look at them before taking actions to adapt to the new norms or principles. For example, China was involved in the deliberations and adoption of the UN World Summit Outcome document in 2005. Although it is not the same thing as the "Responsibility to Protect" idea proposed by the International Commission on

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[2] Guoguang Wu, "Human Security Challenges with China," in *China's Challenges to Human Security – Foreign Relations and Global Implications,* ed. Guoguang Wu (London and New York: Routledge, 2013), 1.

[3] See, for example, Samuel Kim, "China and the United Nations," in *China Joins the World: Progress and Prospects,* ed. Elizabeth Economy and Michel Oksenberg (New York: Council on Foreign Relations, 1999).

Intervention and State Sovereignty (ICISS),[4] to some extent the Outcome Document is consistent with this in terms of the thinking of protection. The Outcome Document attempts to strike a balance between protecting innocent people around the world from being harmed and avoiding the abuse of external intervention or selfish behavior in the name of protection. For this the outcome document imposes limitations by listing four specific crimes against which the international community should take action to protect people from being jeopardized, i.e., genocide, war crimes, ethnic cleansing, and crimes against humanity. In this way the Outcome Document has become a new international legal document. China was involved in this process and made its own contribution to it. Thus involvement in global or regional institutions has pushed China to clarify or develop its thinking on human security.

Against the backdrop of the great earthquake and tsunami that devastated Japan's Tohoku region in June 2011, the Ministerial MDGs Follow-up Meeting was held under the UN framework in Tokyo, Japan. China sent Vice Foreign Minister Cui Tiankai to attend the meeting. In the speech he delivered, Cui, as the representative of the Government of China, stated:

"To discuss the MDGs from the angle of human security offers a thought-provoking perspective. We believe that the MDGs and human security are interrelated and should be mutually reinforcing. The MDGs embody so many aspects of human security, while the realization of MDGs aims at greater well-being and security of more people in the first place."[5]

By pointing to the fact that "the general picture of global security remains disturbing. Civilians in North Africa and the Middle East continue to bear the brunt of turmoil. Innocent women and children are still being displaced or killed in armed conflicts in various parts of the world," Cui stated, "These give rise to the call for *a new concept on security* (italics added) and an international political order where the United Nations should play a central role. We strongly believe that the purposes and principles of the UN Charter should be upheld, and Security

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[4] The International Commission on Intervention and State Sovereignty, *The Responsibility to Protect* (Ottawa: The International Development Research Centre, December 2001).
[5] "From commitment to concerted action, remarks by Vice Foreign Minister Cui Tiankai of China at the Ministerial Follow-up Meeting, 2 June 2011, Tokyo, Japan," accessed March 8, 2015, http://www.fmprc.gov.cn/eng/wjdt/zyjh/t827392.shtml.

Council resolutions should be implemented in a faithful manner. ……In a word, if human security in the larger sense of the term is still so much threatened, there is little hope for better individual security."[6]

This is an illuminating example that China clearly and definitively adopted and used both the idea and the term of human security in the context of a formal UN meeting. Though it was an event on MDGs and not specifically on human security, the term "human security" was explicitly employed to express China's opinion and position.

This discourse was reinforced by further developments. In February 2014, Ms. Fu Ying, Chairwoman of the National People's Congress Foreign Affairs Committee, was invited to and spoke at the Munich Security Conference. She argued that the security for people to survive and develop is the fundamental of any security. The core of the Chinese Dream of the revival of the Chinese nation that President Xi Jinping has proposed is to make the 1.3 billion Chinese people live a happy life. In other words, all ordinary people have the right and are entitled to live with dignity in a secure environment. This is the attraction of China's success story to the world, as well as the charm of the Chinese dream.[7] This line of thinking has many elements in common with the widely shared "human security" idea. For instance, both have emphasis on individuals and their happiness, and this has to be fulfilled together with the national development. Ends and means should be consistent, and the persistent value is that people should not be sacrificed for national goals.

The key point here is that China's security concept is undergoing a profound transformation. A new consensus has emerged which assumes security does not equal military security, and security should not only be comprehensive but also people-centered. "National security" now has new connotations.

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[6] "From commitment to concerted action, remarks by Vice Foreign Minister Cui Tiankai of China at the Ministerial Follow-up Meeting, 2 June 2011, Tokyo, Japan," accessed March 8, 2015, http://www.fmprc.gov.cn/eng/wjdt/zyjh/t827392.shtml.
[7] Accessed March 20, 2014, https://www.securityconference.de/en/media-library.

1.2 The Third Plenum

During the landmark Third Plenum, which was held in November 2013, a major resolution to comprehensively deepen China's reform was deliberated and passed. The long reformist document has sixteen parts and sixty items. As an element in the thirteenth part on a new social governance system, it announced the decision to create a new National Security Commission (NSC). The purpose is set to improve the relevant institutions and strategy in order to better safeguard China's national security. According to the explanatory speech Xi Jinping gave, reform and development are conditioned on national security and social stability, without which reform and development cannot be further advanced. At present, China is faced with the dual pressure of safeguarding national sovereignty, security, and development interests externally, and maintaining political security and social stability internally. All kinds of risks that can or cannot be foreseen are clearly increasing, while the country's institutions and mechanisms for security cannot meet the need of maintaining national security well. Thus comes the demand for setting up a powerful and capable platform to coordinate the whole national security work. The responsibilities of the NSC include formulating and implementing national security strategies, advancing the construction of national security rule of law, deciding national security guidelines and policies, and studying and solving the major issues in the national security work.[8] Quite understandably, this major decision drew considerable attention both home and abroad.

In April 2014, the first meeting of the new NSC was held. According to the speech Xi Jinping delivered, the security of people has to be the purpose. It must be insisted that state security should in every sense serve the people and rely on people. The mass foundation of state security has to be laid and consolidated.[9] This means that state security and human security are not confrontational but rather the two can be combined in coexistence.

Internally, China is undergoing a period of the modernization process during which a number of contradictions are growing. At a time of rapid economic and social development, a

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[8] For the full text of the Resolution and Xi's explanation, see *Renmin ribao* (People's Daily), November 16, 2013.
[9] See *Renmin ribao* (People's Daily), April 16, 2014.

series of social problems are accumulating which have not been "digested" well. For some Chinese observers, the "group incidents" that resulted from unbalanced distribution of interests break out often and they are affecting social stability negatively. Externally, when China continues to grow, some powers and neighboring countries are hedging against China, and as a result contradictions and frictions in China's neighborhood are increasing. Moreover, challenges to social stability and security, from home and abroad, are affecting each other and they are interlinked. Coping with them is becoming a more difficult job. In the current era, the concept of national security is enriching in depth and widening in breadth, involving various issues in various areas. They cannot be dealt with only by foreign affairs, national defense, and security departments but rather are demanding more agencies, social organizations, and even the whole society to work together.[10]

Since the initiative to create China's NSC appears in the "social governance system" part of the November 2013 resolution, its domestic and internal security dimension is self-evident. In the meantime, it is also obvious that the commission's work involves two dimensions (both external and internal) rather than just one. Thus the security the initiative refers to is of a comprehensive nature. It is not difficult to come to that conclusion simply by thinking of the July 5, 2009 incident in Xinjiang, the riots in Tibet and Tibet-related immolations in its neighboring provinces, and the horrible killing at the Kunming Railway Station on March 1, 2014. During all these incidents innocent people were killed or injured and some of the incidents were taken advantage of by the hostile external forces. That is why it is widely believed that internal security will be the dominant concern for China's NSC, at least in its early stage. When ordinary people can be harmed by violent terrorist attacks in any places unknown and without any alert, the sense of insecurity arises and this can be frightening. Thus, when freedom from want is no longer a problem in today's China, ordinary people also have to be free from fear. A broad concept of security of this kind logically becomes the goal for China's NSC.

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[10] Hu Hao and Wang Dong, "Ruhe kandai sheli guojia anquan weiyuanhui" (How we should perceive creating the National Security Commission), *Liaowang xinwen zhoukan* (Lioawang News Weekly), November 18, 2013, 30-31.

In fact, as Cui Shunji of Zhejiang University points out, since the initiation of reform, China's high-level attention paid to poverty reduction, the pursuit for a sustainable development model, and China's proposals for constructing a "harmonious society" and "harmonious world" all indicate that China has regarded guaranteeing basic human needs, social justice, and harmony as well as sustainable development as a continuum for national security.[11] "Letting people live a happier life with more dignity" has become the goal of national development, which indicates that China's recognition of human security has been elevated to the political level. Putting people first and "governing for the people" have become the new thinking for governing the country. As a reflection of the foreign policy changes, handling foreign affairs for the country is shifting to handling foreign affairs for the people.[12]

1.3 The "Non-Traditional Security" Discourse

In China's research community, "human security" is often related to the discourse on "non-traditional security." For years the Chinese researchers have worked their way by the term "non-traditional security." Obviously, the so-called "non-traditional" matters are opposite to the more "traditional" matters. Traditional security usually refers to military security, namely, assuring national security through boosting military power. After the end of the Cold War, threats to security increasingly come from non-military domains and become unconventional or "non-traditional" security threats. "Non-traditional" security issues emerge. There are many such issues and they have often been listed as financial crisis, terrorism, transnational crime, environmental degradation, spread of HIV/AIDS, scarcity of water resource, food security, and so forth.

According to the summation by a leading Chinese researcher, non-traditional security is broad-based, complex, and multi-dimensional. First, non-traditional security is broad-based. While traditional security falls into military, political, and diplomatic areas, and its supreme

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[11] Cui Shunji, "Ren de fazhan yu ren de zunyan: zaisi ren de anquan gainian" (Human development and human dignity: rethinking the concept of human security), *Guoji anquan yanjiu* (Journal of International Security Studies) No. 1 (2014): 68-69.
[12] Ibid.

value is the pursuit of peace and the elimination of war or the "possibility of war," non-traditional security is more about economic, social, cultural, and environmental threats as well as the emerging cyber security and space issues. In addition to peace, "non-traditional security" relates more to risk, crisis, emergency, and daily threats to life. It more relates to natural disaster, accident, emerging public health incident, and major public security event.

Second, non-traditional security is complex. The threats to non-traditional security are mainly the threats to "societal security" and "human security." Society and people are the chief referent objects of non-traditional security, and a "safe China" has societal and human dimensions. For individuals, "safety" means that security of people is guaranteed, namely, individuals enjoy a state of existence in which a person's body is not injured, mind is not harmed, property is not deprived, and living environment is not undermined.

Third, non-traditional security is multi-dimensional. According to the place and origin of non-traditional security events, the threats to non-traditional security facing a country can be distinguished into four categories: (1) "exogenous" non-traditional security threats which take place abroad and chiefly require diplomatic dealing; (2) "endogenous" non-traditional security threats which take place at home and chiefly require domestic handlings; (3) "bi-dogenous" (双源性) non-traditional security threats which take place in the peripheral areas that involve both domestic and international handlings; and (4) "multi-dogenous" (多源性) non-traditional security threats that involve both traditional and non-traditional security issues and require the involvement of the military in addition to other organizations.[13]

Throughout the above process of ideational transition, there occurred a few landmark crises that struck China deeply, including the 1997 Asian financial crisis that highlighted the importance of financial security, the 2003 SARS crisis that highlighted public health security, and the March 1, 2014 terrorist attacks at the railway station of Kunming, the capital of Yunnan

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[13] Yu Xiaofeng, "Fei chuantong anquan zhili yu 'hemei zhongguo'" (Non-traditional Security Governance and a 'Safe China'), in *Zhongguo fei chuantong anquan yanjiu baogao* (Report on China's Non-Traditional Security) (2012-2013), ed. Yu Xiaofeng (Beijing: Shehui kexue wenxian chubanshe, 2013), 3-6.

Province. The March 1 violence against innocent people especially amplified the serious security threat that ordinary people could encounter in their daily lives. This genuine risk could give rise to a sense of fear which may occur in everybody.

The earlier security idea in China was mainly focused on state security, the importance of which nobody denied. Now, "human security" has been put forward and it is gaining momentum. It has undeniable value orientation. In fact, Chinese scholars speak highly of "human security" and argue that it goes beyond the limits of state-centric traditional security research and is the least traditional theory in the non-traditional security domains.[14] Human security research explicitly sees people as a collectivity and individuals as the referent object of security. This transcends the dilemma of more traditional security theory, since the state can bring about insecurity to its citizens. Such a possibility, after all, raises a question on the relationship between state security and human security. Generally speaking, the Chinese researchers often do not endorse the view that human security overrides state security or the two are confrontational, but rather affirm the reasonableness and value of state security at the same time.

For Shi Bin, a professor at Nanjing University, the human security idea is a focal embodiment of non-traditional security and "new security" concepts, and yet the relationship between "human security" and state security is actually much more complicated. He has tried to elaborate on this.

First, both state security and human security, in terms of their security concern or value pursuit, have legitimate claims. However, neither of them has any reason to become absolutely dominant. "Human security" is of course the fundamental goal and ultimate value of human development. The value orientation of putting people first, with "human security" at the center, possesses the moral high ground and legitimacy. However, a person has both individuality and sociality, and an individual is often weak and helpless. Resisting foreign military invasion, and safeguarding national sovereignty and territorial integrity are therefore the nation's common

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[14] Yu Xiaofeng, "Gongxiang anquan: fei chuantong anquan yanjiu de zhongguo shiyu" (Shared Security: A Chinese Perspective on the Study of Non-Traditional Security), *Guoji anquan yanjiu* (Journal of International Security Studies) No. 1 (2014): 18.

interest. Nonetheless, the traditional state-centric security idea and strategy indeed ignore the security needs of many non-state or sub-national entities, and cannot adequately deal with external non-military threats such as environmental degradation and pandemic disease.

Second, although there is a tension between "human security" and "state security," and the two may conflict in practice, they can still be mutually accommodating and complementary if handled and balanced well. Therefore this can be favorable for upgrading the overall security degree of all entities. People's security and welfare, and the improvement of their living condition and life quality, are an important base for national identity, social stability, and political legitimacy. In this sense, "human security" and state security are not necessarily contradictory.[15] For Shi, the "human security" discourse has tangible Western value orientation and bears the liberal color, and in practice it has a tendency to override the security interests of a sovereign state. The acclaimed "paradigm shift" from the state to the individual excessively downgrades the positive role of the state in dealing with various security challenges.

For Zhang Yunling of the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences, the rise of non-traditional security issues does not mean that traditional security is no longer important. The appearance of non-traditional security on the agenda and that it is stressed imply that it has been included in the category of "security," and therefore the formation of a "comprehensive security" concept that includes both traditional and non-traditional security as well as the corresponding security policies.[16]

Taken together, when "non-traditional security" is increasingly becoming the mainstream discourse in China, the researchers tend not to deny the value of state security but rather see human and state security as mutually accommodating. Nevertheless, the theoretical shortcoming of "non-traditional security," as Guoguang Wu rightly points out, is obvious as it is just coined against "traditional security" without any positive and substantive defining of the contents and

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[15] Shi Bin, "'Ren de anquan' yu guojia anquan," ('Human Security' and National Security), *Shijie jingji yu zhengzhi* (World Economics and Politics) No. 2 (2014): 97-100.

[16] Zhang Yunling, "Preface," in *Zhongguo fei chuantong anquan yanjiu baogao* (Report on China's Non-Traditional Security Studies) (2011-2012), ed. Yu Xiaofeng (Beijing: Shehui kexue wenxian chubanshe, 2012).

nature of new "securities."[17]

Moreover, these days many things are securitized and many issues become security issues. This may not be a healthy situation. When security is discussed too much, this could mean a growth of insecurity. For example, in China "food safety" was not discussed often before but is now widely talked about. This means food safety was not an issue but it is now. The deterioration of food safety is a negative development which involves the need for moral reconstruction in the society.

State security and personal security are not a zero-sum relationship. More state security does not mean less personal security, and vice versa. The ultimate goal should be a calibrated balance between the two.

As have been shown, the Chinese research community has attached more importance to the issue of "human security." Meanwhile, they are not just following others' footsteps, but rather have come up with their own analyses and views. Some researchers stress that both the starting point and the ultimate purpose of any society are the individuals. The emancipation of man should be the fundamental core of any social emancipation. It is man who is the final destination of security and is the core value any security is supposed to protect, while the state is the means or a temporary purpose.[18] The establishment of "man is the purpose" as a value has great significance for the Chinese society after having drawn lessons from the history of the People's Republic since 1949.

During the Cultural Revolution period, many innocent people were attacked, detained, or persecuted illegally and immorally, and the rights of people ignored or harmed. After the disastrous decade, people reflected on their painful experience and thought about the phenomenon of imposing horrible acts on innocent people which should never happen again. In the early reform period there emerged an intellectual movement in China's intellectual

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[17] See Guoguang Wu, "Human Security Challenges with China," 5.

[18] Li Jia, "Ren de anquan: fei chuantong anquan nengli jianshe de xinshijiao" (Human security: a new perspective on the non-traditional security capacity building), in *Zhongguo fei chuantong anquan nengli jianshe* (Non-traditional Security Capacity Building in China), ed. Yu Xiaofeng (Beijing: Zhongguo shehui kexue chubanshe, 2013), 74-75.

community to discuss the issues of humanism (*rendao zhuyi*) and alienation (*yihua*), during which many academics affirmed the significance of humanism and argued for the promotion of human value. Some of them cautiously adopted the term "Marxist humanism" or "socialist humanism" to distinguish from the so-called "capitalist" doctrine. Not long after, the debate abruptly came to a halt due to a political intervention. However, along with further economic reform and considerable social development, the awareness of man in China was awakening and the value of man confirmed. The initiative for humanism in the 1980s in fact, later became accepted by the whole of Chinese society. This was also reflected in the discussions and research on "human security" since it was made clear that guaranteeing human security is the value base for maintaining non-traditional security. The protection of people and human development should be set as the ultimate goals of any security course.[19] Obviously, this is a precious progress in Chinese society and this deserves appreciation.

The paradigm of human security opposes harming of the human freedom and rights out of the motive for economic growth or social stability. Neither is it in favor of the behavior of pursuing economic benefits and communitarian policies at the expense of sacrificing the security and dignity of the individuals or the nation. The fundamental reason lies in the value of man, which is the key and ultimate goal, and there is no higher goal than this.

The previous practices of both "collective security" and "common security," one leading scholar in human security argues, could not have avoided the limitations of regarding the state as the chief actor.[20] Different from these, "shared security," which he has proposed, regards the human community as the central position of security, the protection of human life as the value base of security, social safety and prosperity as the priority goals of security, and harmony and cooperation as the supreme principles for security interactions between the states.[21] This has

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[19] Author's interview, July 5, 2014.
[20] Yu Xiaofeng, "Gongxiang anquan: fei chuantong anquan yanjiu de zhongguo shiyu" (Shared Security: A Chinese Perspective on the Study of Non-Traditional Security), *Guoji anquan yanjiu* (Journal of International Security Studies) No. 1 (2014): 33.
[21] Yu Xiaofeng, "Gongxiang anquan: fei chuantong anquan yanjiu de zhongguo shijiao" (Shared Security: Chinese Perspectives on Non-traditional Security), *Guoji anquan yanjiu* (Journal of International Security

gotten beyond the traditional discourse and has the potential of being further developed theoretically.

2. Protection and Empowerment

According to the *Human Security Now* report and the October 2012 resolution adopted by the United Nations General Assembly as a follow-up to paragraph 143 on human security of the 2005 World Summit Outcome, as well as the definition and design of this project, human security has two dimensions: protection and empowerment. In China, the dimension of protection has drawn much attention as is epitomized in the doctrine of "putting people first" (*yiren weiben*) and "diplomacy serving the people" (*waijiao weimin*), which we have discussed in a detailed way in an earlier study.[22] This is reinforced by further evidence and here is one example. There was a Chinese newspaper correspondent who reported from the National People's Congress (NPC) sessions and wrote about his impression. He was deeply impressed by the attention the NPC delegates paid to the concrete issues concerning people's daily lives, including social insurance, income distribution, rights of the peasant workers, food safety, unreasonably high drug prices, and protection of the stakeholders' interests. For him, never before were those kinds of issues so meticulously discussed at the NPC.[23] The changes the correspondent detected indicated the ongoing healthy trends in human security terms.

A harmonious society has to be a society that puts people first, which means people's everyday life is a priority for the society. A government that puts people first is a government that represents people's interests. Economic and social development should put human development at the center, and human development is the ultimate value judgment for social progress.[24] Meanwhile, "the achievement of human security is a cooperative venture between

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Studies) No. 1 (2014): 33-34.
[22] Ren Xiao and Li Yanxing, "A Return to People: China's Approach to Human Security."
[23] Yuan Xialiang, "'Ren' de daxie" ('People' Amplified), *Wenhui Bao* (Wenhui Daily), March 8, 2005, 3.
[24] Ibid.

the individual, society, and the state."[25] Government as a "necessary evil" is very much a Western invention and it is not a Chinese idea. Traditionally, people in China often have wishes for government and they want the government to do good things for them. Compared to the Western political culture, they have less vigilance and more expectations for the government. One revealing example is the use of the term "parent officials" (*fumu guan*) to refer to government officials, and people expect them to play a paternalistic role. Without a cooperative venture, human security cannot be achieved.

On the protection side, while the people-oriented ideals are noble ones, the challenges come from the process of implementation. Not surprisingly, many problems are lingering, A prominent one among them is in the area of land recruitment and residents relocation. Sometimes the failure to protect the rights and interests of the ordinary people led to acute standoffs and conflict, and in some cases even extreme acts of protest. When property development businessmen and power coalesce, they would together undermine the interests of the ordinary people who are affected. Protecting people's legitimate interests has become an outstanding issue in China's human security amidst the drastic social changes and urbanization.

Moreover, the leadership came into office with a promise to narrow a widening gap between rich and poor, and to shift to a more environmentally and economically sustainable growth model. The "GDP worship" has prevailed since the GDP became the government officials' brand of accomplishment and they have tended to initiate both the projects to show their "achievement" and projects for their good "image." These poorly planned projects could lead to ill-conceived planning and environmental damage. When this became obvious, a strategic shift had to be undertaken. "No GDP growth at the expense of environment" is becoming a new norm and "ecological civilization" the new banner.

The reform era has been characterized by success in terms of rapid economic growth and the improvement of people's living standard. After three decades of successful economic development, the country was standing on a new starting point. If the ruling party's historical

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[25] Robert E. Bedeski, "Anthropocentric Theory of Human Security," in Guoguang Wu ed., 29.

promise to "let some people get rich first and eventually arrive at common prosperity" was a prerequisite for the reforms to unfold, and if three decades later this historical task was basically fulfilled, what the reform enterprise has to accomplish now is the other half, namely, to realize common prosperity. This is a goal that will justify and inform further reforms. The reaffirmation of realizing common prosperity in line with the principles of governing for the people and building a comprehensive and balanced well-off society will guide future reform with a clear direction.[26] To fulfill its pledge to narrow the gap between rich and poor and to "unwaveringly pursue common prosperity," the leadership has to have the people in their heart and take them seriously. This is part of the "Chinese dream" which is not a bad term. After the 18th Party Congress, the new top leader Xi Jinping expressed that "to fulfill the people's desire for better lives is what we shall strive for."[27] This sounded dear and close to the ordinary Chinese people.

On the empowerment side there have also been a number of measures. Only when a person has the capability for survival and development can he or she enjoy real freedom. The capacity for development empowers an individual. Today's China should not only accept empowerment besides protection but also appreciate its importance as a way to realize human freedoms and guarantee human security.[28]

Education as a right is the fundamental and most significant empowerment, as the human experience has repeatedly revealed. Thus, educational development is a significant way to empower people, especially compulsory education. China has reasons to be proud in this regard. It has the tradition that puts much emphasis on education, in which parents always try their best to pave the way for their children to receive good education and often they are willing to make sacrifices. In China, nine-year compulsory education has been in practice for years. In 1989, Project Hope was set up as a supplement which later became well known throughout Chinese society. It was initiated by the Central Youth League and the China Juvenile Development Foundation as a philanthropic enterprise to help the less developed areas to establish primary

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[26] "Editorial," *Ershiyi shiji jingji baodao* (21st Century Economic Report), October 16, 2003, 2.
[27] Xi's remarks at the closing of the 18th Party Congress in November 2012.
[28] Author's interview with a Chinese researcher, December 7, 2013.

schools, financially support the children who have dropped out of school in the poorer regions to return to school, and to improve education in the rural areas. The project received society-wide attention and support. Implemented successfully, the project has positively changed the fate of hundreds of thousands of kids of poor families and has also beefed up the whole society's awareness of educational importance and therefore helped enhance China's fundamental education.

As a major initiative for the future, the Third Plenum set the aim to modernize China's "governance system" and governing capability - a long-term goal for China. An important part of it is to reshape a new social governance system. During the 2014 National People's Congress session, President Xi joined the Shanghai delegation for deliberation of the government's work. For him, the key for future social governance is institutional innovation and its core lies in people. Only when our people are living harmoniously can the society be operating stably and orderly. For Han Zheng, the party secretary of Shanghai, social governance is up to everybody and the governing process should serve the all-round development of people. Rule of law is the foundation of social governance, without which there can be no base for long-standing good governance and robust stability.[29] For that matter, what is required of the grass-root cadres includes regarding people's matters as their own matters and always trying to understand their feelings and demands. Again, the key challenge is to make this happen in real life. Fortunately, in China there have been local autonomous grassroots organizations that play an intermediate role and serve to help handle the problems at the grassroots level. They offer assistance to ordinary people who encounter any difficulty and they also, for example, mobilize donations to help people in the regions that have been struck by an earthquake or other natural disaster. The work of these local self-help organizations has proved to be useful and reassuring in terms of social governance.

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[29] See *Wenhui Bao* (Wenhu Daily), March 7, 2014, 1.

3. Prominent Human Security Threats and the Chinese Responses

Since "human security is central to non-traditional security, what it is concerned about are all kinds of factors that are directly threatening human security."[30] In today's China, prominent among those direct threats include air pollution, food safety, and cyber security.

First, the air pollution threat.

2013 was a year that impressed upon everybody in China the seriousness of air pollution. Heavy smog emerged in not just North and Northeast China but also was reported from other regions and this was an alarming situation. The degree of seriousness alerted the neighboring Japan and South Korea as well. When smog was spreading it became obvious that the environment people were living was deteriorating. A red light was signaling warnings to the existing pattern of economic growth, which was consuming a great amount of energies and yielding considerable wastes. If people had already been aware of the issue, the smog covering the whole country in 2013 shocked and awakened everybody to an unprecedented degree. Different from before, this threat and the related risks were so real and they were right there. When many people walking in the streets were wearing masks, the sense of human insecurity was true and imminent. In this context, the specific threat of air pollution that was facing everyone almost became the number one risk that made people feel threatening.

To cope with this threat, in June 2013 China's State Council laid out ten measures to prevent and combat air pollution. As a follow-up, in September China released an Action Plan to implement this, which was a blueprint to fight against air pollution by 2017.

This has continued. In his Government Work Report delivered in March 2014, Premier Li Keqiang swore to "fight pollution like fighting poverty." When he was looking around the city of Beijing, President Xi emphasized that the sprawling pattern of urban development had to be contained and steps should be taken to deal with smog pollution and improve air quality.

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[30] Zhou Jiehong, "Zhongguo shipin anquan wenti yu qushi," in *Zhongguo fei chuantong anquan yanjiu baogao* (Report on China's Non-Traditional Security) (2011-2012), ed. Yu Xiaofeng (Beijing: Shehui kexue wenxian chubanshe, 2012), 255-256.

Among the five requests Xi made, one was logically to reinforce the degree of reining in air pollution. The top priority set for combating air pollution and improving air quality was to control PM2.5, and the major steps should be taken in areas including reducing the burning of coal, strictly limiting the growth of cars, adjusting industries, tightening management, and joint prevention and control.[31] Xi's move was clearly sending a signal to steadfastly take measures for better air quality.

Previously, the Chinese leadership pledged to launch a "revolution in energy production and consumption," and said that urbanization must be balanced with "ecological security."[32] However, pollution was worsening – which is now posing a serious threat to human health and social stability. To reduce air pollution and carbon emissions, Beijing (pop. 20m) is attempting to phase out coal-fired power plants within the city's urban core, replacing them with cleaner-burning natural gas power plants. These measures are also basically valid for other cities. After all, fighting pollution is relevant to everybody's security and this has become a high-degree consensus of the Chinese society.

Similarly, China's energy sector had a watershed year in 2013. Reforms that could have a profound impact on China's environment and energy policy were floated. And with concerns over air pollution mounting throughout the year, the country is poised to shift away from its reliance on coal and to use more clean energy including natural gas. Shale gas exploration is making progress in parts of the country. Driven by the crises, a true transformation is under way but surely will take time.

Second, food safety.

In recent years a series of food contamination incidents have occurred throughout the country which caused serious concerns among the Chinese people. While the broadcast of the recording movie *A Bite of China* is absolutely popular nationwide, a bite of food and its safety has become a case in point. A 2010 poll by *Xiaokang* (小康[Moderately Well Off]) Magazine

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[31] *Renmin ribao* (People's Daily), February 27, 2014.
[32] Lesley Hook, "Battle To Balance Urbanization With Ecological Sustainability," *Financial Times Special Report – China*, December 12, 2012, 1.

and Tsinghua University in 12 Chinese cities found that food safety ranked number one of all social concerns among those surveyed, reflecting mounting anxiety after the 2008 melamine crisis.[33]

In the context that the continual food safety problems are plaguing China and threatening human security, it is not true that the government is unaware of or insensitive to the food safety problems. When appearing before the press conference, Premier Le Keqiang responded by stressing that "food safety is of utmost importance."[34] When answering the question concerning the missing MH370 aircraft, he stressed that "a case involving human life has to be treated with utmost care" (*renming guantian*). Again, the 2014 Government Work Report promises to adopt the strictest surveillance, the most severe punishment, and the most serious accountability measures to resolutely govern pollution at the meal table and reassure "security on the tongue tip."[35] In fact, making efforts to ensure food safety is a widely shared necessity and a consensus in China.

Specialists distinguish the issue into two kinds, one is food security which refers to sufficiency in quantity, and the other is food safety which refers to the quality of food. While the former involves the question whether there is sufficient overall provision of food, for which China avows to "hold the bowl firmly in our own hands," the latter involves the question whether people can be assured they eat food safely every day. In the good old way, food scarcity trumpeted food safety. But today the main problem in China lies in food safety as alarmed by all kinds of contamination. This even spilled over into China's foreign relations, as was epitomized in the spoiled Jiaozi (dumpling) incident between China and Japan in recent years.

The incident originated in Hebei Province. An employee in the Tianyang food factory resented his income. As revenge he deliberately poisoned jiaozi. The contaminated jiaozi were

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[33] See Zhang Zhiwei, "Food Security Tops People's Concern in Survey," *The China Daily*, June 30, 2010, accessed March 6, 2015, www.chinadaily.com.cn/china/2010-06/30/content_10042303.htm, and Elizabeth Wishnick, "Food Security and Food Safety in China's Foreign Policy," in Guoguang Wu ed., 256.

[34] Li's remarks at the 2013 National People's Congress press conference held in March 2013.

[35] Li Keqiang, "Zhengfu gongzuo baogao" (Government Work Report), *Renmin ribao* (People's Daily), March 14, 2014.

exported to and sold in Japan. Some customers bought and ate them and were hit. Eventually, pesticides were found in the frozen dumplings exported from China to Japan. This was a single case of crime that caused grave consequences. The reputation of China's food products was seriously hurt and the Sino-Japanese relationship was somewhat affected also. This once again highlighted the close link between domestic and international issues.

In the final analysis, the root cause lie with individuals. The issue of "moral collapse" has been raised to refer to the situation. To what extent it is true can be debated. It was believed that the overuse of fertilizer and pesticide was rampant. The growers distinguish between what themselves eat and what are to be sold in the market, even if they knew the latter is not good to be eaten. Again how widespread the phenomenon is can be discussed, yet the existence of these kinds of practice suffices to make people feel unsafe regarding food.

As a result, in China today there is an obvious lack of public trust in food safety. Tighter regulation has to be carried out. More transparency helps to build public trust, including more official data and statistics about the improvement (or deterioration) in food safety, more freedom for media and civil society to verify the official data, more effective actions from the government in handling the corruption and malfeasances involved in food safety issue, and more protection to the whistle blowers who uncover production of unsafe food and, more importantly, the corrupt officials involved. Further measures have to be taken for China's improved food safety regulations, consumer education, as well as supply chain traceability and sustainability.

Third, cyber security

The use of the internet has increasingly become a part of people's everyday life in China. By 2013, there were over 600 million internet users in the country, and mobile internet users reached 461 million. The size of "netizens" (*wang min*) is the world's largest. Thus cyber security has become a prominent issue. In fact, China is one of the major victims of cyber attacks. The covert activities Edward Snowden revealed highlighted the vulnerability of those

nations and individuals who are monitored illegally and immorally.[36]

At the government level, a Central Small Leading Group on Cyber Security was created and it held its first meeting in February 2014. It was emphasized that cyber security involved national security and development, as well as the career and everyday life of the vast number of ordinary people, and was therefore a major strategic issue.[37] The breakdown and vulnerability of the internet can have a widespread impact on people and their lives.

Conclusion

This paper has tried to address the three research questions this project raises by elaborating on: how the idea of human security is understood or defined by the government and social actors; how the distinction between the "protection" aspect and "empowerment" aspect of human security is understood and accepted; and what particular downside risks are perceived as pressing human security issues in China, the major ones include air pollution, food security, and cyber security.

As has been indicated, though "human security" as a term is not frequently used, there have been various human security practices in China. The idea of human security has been firmly established and threats to human security detected, while problems exist as China has been undergoing a still unfinished process of industrialization, urbanization, and drastic social changes. The good news is progress is being made. And theoretically, only when it comes down to individuals can there be globally accepted values and can one occupy a moral high ground. China has gotten far beyond the lip service level of cheaply talking about people's interests. This can fully integrate into human security in its full sense. The threats to human security can be domestic risks, yet they often are transnational ones such as air pollution and sand storm. They require different sectors of the society and neighboring countries to work together.

Twenty years ago, the Commission on Global Governance drafted a report which

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[36] Meng Wei, "Wangluo anquan: guojiazhanlue yu guoji zhili" (Cyber security: national strategy and international governance), *Dangdai shijie* (Contemporary World) No. 2 (2014).
[37] *Renmin ribao* (People's Daily), February 28, 2014, 1.

emphasized the distinction between the security of states and the security of peoples.[38] Twenty years later, the security of peoples has gained momentum. This is also true in China, the most populous country in the world. China's practices have considerably reinforced the overall trends of affirming the value of people, protecting their lives, legitimate interests and dignity, and empowering them not only to survive but also to live a respectful life. What is happening in China is indicating a healthy trend in this direction.

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[38] Commission on Global Governance, *Our Global Neighborhood: The Report of the Commission on Global Governance* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995). Chinese edition in 1995.

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Abstract (in Japanese)

要約

　本稿では、「東アジアにおける人間の安全保障の実践」研究プロジェクトで提示された 3 つのリサーチ・クエスチョンに取り組んでいる。まず、中国において人間の安全保障の概念が政府および社会的アクターにどのように理解・定義されているか。次に、人間の安全保障における「保護」と「エンパワメント」という二つの側面の区別がどのように理解され、受容されているか。そして、中国ではどのようなダウンサイド・リスクが人間の安全保障に対する差し迫った脅威として認識されているか。3 つ目の問いについては、主なものとして大気汚染、食料安全保障、サイバー・セキュリティが挙げられる。研究で確認された事実から、中国では「人間の安全保障」という言葉は頻繁には使われていないものの、実践では人間の安全保障のための様々な取り組みがなされていることが明らかとなった。中国において、人間の安全保障の概念は確立してきており、人間の安全保障に対する脅威の存在も認識されている。同国では、政府および学術界の双方において、人間の安全保障と国家の安全保障は必ずしも対立するものではなく、むしろ両者は結び付き補完し合うものと捉えられている。近年の中国に見られる変化は、人間の安全保障の観点から正しい方向に向かっているものと言えよう。