ASEAN and Human Security: Challenges and Opportunities

Otto von Feigenblatt, M.A. [1]

Nova Southeastern University

---

[1] Otto F. von Feigenblatt is an elected Fellow of the Royal Asiatic Society of Great Britain and Ireland and is currently serving as Editor and Chief of the *Journal of Alternative Perspectives in the Social Sciences*. He has written two books about Japan and one about South Africa, and has published many articles in peer reviewed journals. Otto F. von Feigenblatt is currently completing a PhD at Nova Southeastern University, Florida.

2009

ASEAN and Human Security

Challenges and Opportunities

The Association of Southeast Asian Nations has been the driving force behind the recent growth in regionalism in the Asia Pacific Area. ASEAN+3, the Asian Regional Forum (ARF), and the East Asia Summit are all built around ASEAN. The ASEAN family of international organizations covers a wide array of issues ranging from the economy to regional security. Due to the central role played by ASEAN in Asia Pacific regionalism, the "ASEAN way" of decision-making has permeated to the other organizations. The "ASEAN way" favors reaching agreement by consensus, respect of absolute sovereignty, and non-binding decisions, inter alia. This paper deals with the challenges and opportunities in applying the Human Security Concept for the development and security of the region. First, a brief explanation of the two main variations of the Human Security concept is provided, followed by a review of ASEAN and related organizations. This review is then followed with an explanation of the "ASEAN way" and other underlying principles of the organizations as embodied in the ASEAN Charter. Finally, those previously identified principles are compared and contrasted to those of the two prevalent definitions of Human Security. Two brief case studies are provided as examples of Japan's flexible approach to Human Security in Southeast Asia. The paper concludes that while there are some theoretical incompatibilities between the principles related to the ASEAN way, the flexibility of the Human Security approach, as represented by the Japanese version of it, can be applied to the region by applying it at the community and individual levels.

Otto von Feigenblatt, M.A.
Nova Southeastern University
1/2/2009

ASEAN and Human Security: Challenges and Opportunities[2]
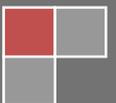
INTRODUCTION

- HUMAN SECURITY
- ASEAN FAMILY
    o ASEAN+ 3
    o ASEAN REGIONAL FORUM
    o EAST ASIA SUMMIT
- THE ASEAN WAY
    o CHARTER
- COMPARISON BETWEEN THE "ASEAN WAY" AND "HUMAN SECURITY"
    o CANADIAN VERSION OF HUMAN SECURITY VS ASEAN PRINCIPLES
    o JAPANESE VERSION OF HUMAN SECURITY VS ASEAN PRINCIPLES
- CONCRETE ATTEMPTS AT APPLYING HUMAN SECURITY IN ASEAN
- CONCLUSION

Introduction:

The Association of Southeast Asian Nations has risen to prominence due to its pivotal role in Asia Pacific Regionalism. ASEAN serves as the core of other important regional organizations such as ASEAN+3, the Asian Regional Forum, and the East Asian Summit, among others. In a region with some of the most dynamic economies in the world and also some of the most intractable conflicts, some see regionalism as an answer to the region's development and security challenges. ASEAN, made up of mostly small powers and developing nations, has taken the opportunity to shape the incipient regionalism. In other words, due to the lack of other viable centers for regionalism ASEAN has taken the helm and at the same time it has institutionalized some of its norms. This is especially the case in terms of the "ASEAN Way". The "ASEAN Way" refers to the general principles behind ASEAN and also some important procedural norms. The specific characteristics of the "ASEAN Way" will be explained in detail in later sections of the paper, but for now it will suffice to say that its main principles are decision making by consensus and non-interference in the internal affairs of member countries (Heller, 2005). Those

---

[2] Otto F. von Feigenblatt is an elected Fellow of the Royal Asiatic Society of Great Britain and Ireland and is currently serving as Editor and Chief of the *Journal of Alternative Perspectives in the Social Sciences*. He has written two books about Japan and one about South Africa, and has published many articles in peer reviewed journals. Otto F. von Feigenblatt is currently completing a PhD at Nova Southeastern University, Florida.

two important principles of the "ASEAN Way" have permeated into other regional organizations such as the ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF) and the East Asian Summit.

Concurrently and concomitantly a second set of principles has permeated the region. Human Security has been adopted by several important middle powers such as Canada, Australia, and Japan. Most importantly, the concept has received support from the United Nations Development Program and the Commission for Human Security. As a result of Japan's prominence in the Development and Humanitarian world, the concept of Human Security and the subsequent approach to development and security has spread in the Asia Pacific Region (Peng-Er, 2006). The discourse of Human Security has been used for everything ranging from grassroots development projects to international security (von Feigenblatt, 2007). Therefore, since Human Security is the approach/concept used by most NGOs and donor countries in Southeast Asia, it is important to assess the compatibility of the concept with the "ASEAN Way". Thus two currents can be found in Southeast Asia, the "ASEAN Way" and Human Security. This paper aims to compare and contrast the two currents and to determine whether they are compatible. A final section will deal with the possible consequences of an incompatibility between the two concepts for Asia Pacific regionalism.

Methodology and Theoretical Framework:

This paper will mostly adopt a constructivist approach. The two sets of norms, Human Security and the "ASEAN Way", are considered to be important factors both in policy making and implementation. A comparison of the two sets of principles will then be complemented with some case studies of development/humanitarian projects in the region claiming to be following a Human Security approach. Thus, a meta-analysis of the two main theoretical currents of the region will be followed by a micro level analysis of pertinent projects in the region. The combination of the two methods will provide a more complete picture of the effects of the two currents in Southeast Asia.

The present study will be based mostly on documentary research. Official documents released by ASEAN and related organizations will be complemented with secondary scholarly sources in order to identify the most important principles of the "ASEAN way". The same method will be used when dealing with the concept of Human Security. Official documents released by the United Nations will be used in addition to official government papers released by the Japanese government. Secondary sources will also be used to complement the previously mentioned primary sources.

Case studies will be taken from official JICA reports dealing with Southeast Asia. While those reports may be biased in favor of Human Security, they guarantee that the approach used during both policy making and implementation was the concept of Human Security. The time period to be covered will range from 1998 to the present.

Human Security:

The concept of Human Security is very broad and flexible. There is no single universally accepted definition, however they all have some elements in common (Mack, 2005). First of all, Human Security stresses that individuals should be the referent objects of security. In other words, the answer to the question "what should be protected?" is "individuals/humans". This change in the referent object of security is the core of Human Security. All other alternative security paradigms such as common security, collective security, preventive diplomacy, among others, maintain the nation-state as the principal referent of security. Once we try to go beyond this basic principle it becomes harder to find general agreement. Nevertheless all versions of Human Security stress that security encompasses much more than just military security. Economic security, environmental security, cultural security, and the protection of basic human rights are usually included in the concept. Thus, Human Security stresses that individuals should be protected against a varied array of threats which go beyond a military invasion, or a nuclear attack. At this point Human Security splits into two main camps: protective Human Security and development Human Security (von Feigenblatt, 2007; Khong, 2006, p. 160).

The two "camps" of Human Security do not represent absolute positions but rather serve as Weberian ideal types and as a heuristic device so as to understand the elusive meaning of the concept. Protective Human Security stresses the importance of protecting the individual from physical threats. This view of human security is supported by Canada and can be understood as an extension of traditional security to the individual level (Cox, 2008). According to this view there is a responsibility to protect the individual from physical threats. Those threats may arise from natural disasters, war, political repression, and abuses to human rights. It is clear that this "type" of Human Security closely resembles the Covenant of Civil and Political Rights of the United Nations and has at its aim to securitize the discourse of human rights (Khong, 2006, p. 159). While protective Human Security is still a very broad conception of security and includes environmental security and political security, its main defining characteristic is its stress in the international "responsibility to protect". This controversial proposition refers to the right and duty of the international community to intervene, with force if necessary, in order to protect individuals in other countries from genocide or other physical threats beyond the capability of their home governments, with or without their approval (Kolodziej, 2005). Therefore protective

human security aims to break the barrier of absolute sovereignty in order to enforce the protection of human rights.

At the other extreme, one finds the "development" version of Human Security. This view of the concept was first put forward by the UNDP in 1994. The Human Development Report stated that: "Human security can be said to have two main aspects. It means, first, safety from such chronic threats as hunger, disease, and repression. And second, it means protection from sudden and hurtful disruptions in the pattern of daily life" (Khong, 2006, p. 146). This view of Human Security stresses chronic threats and avoids dealing with Civil and Political Rights. It is a soft version of Human Security that favors a long-term approach to the promotion of security. There are several important aspects of this concept of Human Security. First of all it makes an important connection between security and development. It stresses that development and security are inextricably connected. Development promotes peace and peace is necessary for development to take place. Development Human Security also serves the purpose of securitizing development and thus raising it to the level of "high politics". As I have explained elsewhere, the securitization of development stresses its importance and helps bring it to the fore of the international agenda (von Feigenblatt, 2007). In summary, the development version of Human Security stresses long-term solutions to threats and also prevention rather than short-term protection. It also makes a connection between poverty and disease, and insecurity. Development Human Security does not challenge sovereignty as much as protective Human Security since it does not deny the monopoly on the use of coercive power by the nation-state.

One of the early supporters of the concept of Human Security was the Japanese government (Ashizawa, 2008; Bix, 2000; Dore, 1997; Olenik, 2005; Sakamoto, 2008; Smith, 1997). As one of the top Official Development Assistance (ODA) donors in the world and also one of the few countries with a Peace Constitution, it tried to find a middle way between the two "types" of Human Security. Japan helped promote the formation of a Commission for Human Security in the United Nations to come up with a report that would find a middle point between the two ideal types of Human Security (United Nations, 2003). The Commission came up with a very balanced and rather simple definition of Human Security as "freedom from want" and "freedom from fear". Furthermore, it stressed that both parts of the concepts are equally important and interdependent. This multilayered definition of human security stresses that both prevention and short-term protection are important and that the rights encompassed by the two

Covenants on Human Rights should be protected. Thus it provided a holistic vision of security that is very similar to Galtung's concept of "positive peace" (Galtung, 1969).

Japan's version of Human Security is meant to be flexible so as to bridge the gap between the two ideal types of Human Security. Proponents of this version of Human Security accept that such an holistic and flexible concept lacks theoretical traction when compared with other security paradigms (Paris, 2001). Nevertheless, that flexibility makes it a concept that can be accepted by a wide array of international actors and also is adaptable enough to be useful in the field (United-Nations, 2003; Wah, 2003). In other words, the Japanese version of Human Security is supposed to be a flexible approach to development and security that can be used as the guiding principle behind policy making.

The present paper aims to compare and contrast the "ASEAN Way" with the concept of Human Security. Since there are several types of Human Security both in theory and in practice, two will be chosen for the purpose of this paper. The principal version of Human Security that will be used throughout the paper will be Japanese Human Security. There are several reasons for this choice. First of all, Japan is the most important ODA donor in the Asia Pacific Region (Peng-Er, 2006). Secondly, Japanese NGOs and JICA are very active in Southeast Asia and since the Japanese government has adopted Human Security as the guiding paradigm for policy making and implementation of development projects, then it is possible to assume that the Japanese version of Human Security is more prevalent in the field than other versions such as the Canadian one (JICA, 2007a, 2007b). Finally, Japanese Human Security has received more support from the United Nations than the Canadian version and therefore has transformed into the mainstream version of Human Security in development and humanitarian circles.

The second version of Human Security that will be used in this paper will be the Canadian version which closely resembles "protective" Human Security (Cox, 2008, p. 317). Canadian Human Security will be compared and contrasted with the "ASEAN Way" as well so as to determine which version of Human Security is compatible with ASEAN, if any.

THE ASEAN FAMILY OF ORGANIZATIONS:

The origin of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations can be traced to 1967 and is currently comprised of Brunei Darussalam, Cambodia, Indonesia, Lao PDR, Malaysia, Myanmar,

Philippines, Singapore, Thailand, and Vietnam (ASEAN, 2008a, 2008b). ASEAN's most important principles are enshrined in the Treaty of Amity and Cooperation in Southeast Asia (TAC) of 1976 (Heller, 2005, p. 127). This treaty was signed by all member countries and many other non-members who wanted to become "dialogue partners" of ASEAN. The TAC is a very ambiguous document that is mostly concerned with defending the rights of the individual nation-states and also defines the procedures to be followed in the organization and by non-members who want to deal with it as "dialogue partners" (Emmers, 2001; Heller, 2005; Hwang, 2006; Limaye, 2007; Rolfe, 2008; Severino, 2007; Simon, 2008; Vu-Tung, 2007).

ASEAN's loose structure and non-binding nature proved to be an appealing formula for a region wary of super-power interference with a vivid memory of colonialism. Membership in the organization slowly expanded, especially after the Cambodian Crisis was resolved, and ultimately included former Cold War foes such as Vietnam, Lao PDR, Cambodia, and Myanmar. The basic philosophy of the organization was based on the least common denominator. In other words, all decisions had to be based on consensus which meant that the decisions reached had to please all members. This made progress slow and difficult but whatever progress was made was supported by the entire membership. It can be argued that the most important function of ASEAN, especially during the late 80s and 90s, was to provide a forum for regional leaders to meet and to discuss issues affecting the entire region. Thus, an improvement in communication, led to an increase in the flow of information, which helped built trust and, according to ASEAN officials, increased the security of the members (Severino, 2007).

As previously mentioned, ASEAN was the only viable organization in the region for many decades and due to the economic dynamism of many of its members during the period preceding the Asian Financial Crisis of 1997-1998, the association was approached by other Asia Pacific States in order to deal with common concerns. Originally, most concerns were of an economic nature, and regional economic powerhouses such as Japan and South Korea approached the Organization so as to guarantee a continued influence in the region. Both countries signed the TAC and were then joined by China. Informal meetings between ASEAN and the three East Asian Powers were institutionalized and came to be known as ASEAN + 3 (APT). The importance of ASEAN + 3 is that it is the only organization that includes Southeast Asia and East Asia. It also has the peculiar characteristic that it is a truly regional forum in that

extra-regional powers are not included (Rolfe, 2008, p. 103). Nevertheless, ASEAN + 3 is mostly a forum that deals with mainly economic issues. In practice, it has mostly served as a battlefield for Japan and China to fight for influence in Southeast Asia. Furthermore, the possible influence of ASEAN + 3 has been undermined by the rise of other alternative organizations, such as the Asia Pacific Forum for Economic Cooperation and the ASEAN Regional Forum. The former has a greater influence in economic matters while the latter has tried to tackle security issues. Thus, ASEAN + 3 has become mostly an opportunity for leaders of ASEAN to meet their East Asian counterparts in a more regional setting. It should be noted that ASEAN + 3 follows the same principles and procedural guidelines as the mother organization. Moreover, it has shown even less progress than ASEAN on the issues it has tried to tackle (Rolfe, 2008; Severino, 2007; Simon, 2008).

A third branch of the ASEAN family is the ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF). As the name implies it is a forum, and thus lacks the power to make any binding decisions. One of the strengths of the ARF is its wide membership. The current members of the ARF are the following: ASEAN, Japan, the Republic of Korea, the People's Republic of China, Australia, New Zealand, Canada, the United States, Sri Lanka, Papua New Guinea, Russia, Mongolia, the European Union, India, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Pakistan, East Timor, and Bangladesh (Rolfe, 2008, p. 103). The ARF has served to bring together the most important powers in the Asia Pacific region. Three important effects that the ARF has had are that it has promoted the continued involvement of the United States in the region, it has reassured Japan of its security, and it has pressured China to adopt international norms of good behavior (Emmers, 2001, p. 280; Heller, 2005). Moreover, the ARF has promoted the norms and principles of the "ASEAN Way" beyond the original members. Thus, the basic procedures and principles found in the TAC are also present in the ARF.

At this point it is important to note that the ARF has identified three stages for the improvement of security in the Asia Pacific. The first one is called Confidence-building which refers to the way in which the ARF can help build trust between members and also reduce risk and uncertainty by sharing information. This stage is based on confidence-building measures (CBMs). CBMs include a wide variety of activities such as participation in small arms registration, announcements of military exercises, position papers regarding security, and arms

controls (Heller, 2005, p. 129). The ARF has already entered this stage and is moving on to the second one, preventive diplomacy. PD is supposed to be voluntary, preventive, between states, non-coercive, and based on consensus (Heller, 2005, p. 130). Mediation, conciliation, enquiry, and negotiation are the main activities involved in PD. The ARF is currently working on this stage but progress has been slow due to the intrinsic characteristics of preventive diplomacy, such as the requirement of consensus, voluntary participation, and that it deals only with conflict between states. Nevertheless, the ARF has identified a third and final stage dealing with "elaboration and approaches to conflict" (Emmers, 2001; Heller, 2005).   The ARF has not entered this third stage and the prospect of it doing so in the near future appear grim. Reaching the third stage would require the active participation of the member states and a level of consensus unlikely to be reached, taking into consideration the differing interests of the member states. Therefore, the third stage represents an ideal to strive for at this point.

Finally, a new branch of ASEAN is the East Asian Summit which was established in 2005. The East Asian Summit includes ASEAN members, Japan, South Korea, the People's Republic of China, Australia, New Zealand, and India (Rolfe, 2008; Severino, 2007; Simon, 2008). It is important to note that it does not include the United States and that it lacks a formal structure. Membership in the organization requires signing the TAC and thus the implicit acceptance of the "ASEAN way". While this organization is supposed to tackle both economic and political issues, at this point it is unclear to what extent it will be able to do so.

In summary, with the exception of APEC, ASEAN has served as the core of most regional organizations in the Asia Pacific region. Due to the pivotal role of ASEAN in the establishment of the other organizations, the principles and procedures enshrined in the TAC have permeated all other organizations and helped spread its norms. Thus, the norms and principles of the small powers of ASEAN have had a disproportionate influence on the process of regionalization in the Asia Pacific. The following section will explain the "ASEAN way" and related norms.

The "ASEAN way":

Most of the following discussion will be based on the ASEAN Charter. This will be complemented by secondary sources showing how the norm is also prevalent in other related organizations. It is important to note that while the Charter includes many principles and norms only some of them are commonly identified as the "ASEAN way". In other words, the Charter includes the "ASEAN way" as its core but also reflects other influences, such as Human Security and Human Development. Therefore, this section will concentrate on the sections of the Charter that reflect the "ASEAN way" as a Weberian ideal type. Consequent sections will consider secondary norms included in the Charter and how they complement the "ASEAN way".

Article two of the Charter clearly identifies the most important principles of ASEAN. The principles usually connected to the "ASEAN way" are the following: "respect for independence, sovereignty, equality, territorial integrity and national identity of all ASEAN Member states; and non-interference in the internal affairs of ASEAN member states; respect for the right of every Member State to lead its national existence free from external interference, subversion and coercion" (ASEAN, 2008b, p. 6). Finally, the most important procedural principle of ASEAN is identified in Article 20 of Chapter VII, decision making by consensus and consultation (ASEAN, 2008b, p. 22). The previously mentioned principles have been at the core of ASEAN since its establishment in the late 1960s. Those same principles were included in the TAC and finally they reappear in the ASEAN Charter (Emmers, 2001; Heller, 2005; Hwang, 2006; Limaye, 2007; Rolfe, 2008; Severino, 2007; Simon, 2008).

It is clear from the principles that ASEAN was never meant to be, or to have the potential to become, a supranational organization in the mold of the European Union. Sovereignty lies at the heart of the "ASEAN way". Thus, the "ASEAN way" can be understood to be an Asian method of dealing with common regional problems so as to protect the independence of the "sovereign" member states.

Protective Human Security compared to the "ASEAN way":

As explained in a previous section of the paper, protective Human Security, also known as "hard Human Security", is favored by Canada (Cox, 2008). This version of Human Security stresses the importance of protection from physical threats. Thus it is a narrower conception of security than the UNDP version. Furthermore "protective" Human Security places more

emphasis on the protection of civil and political rights in the short- and mid-terms (Dhergoukassian, 2001). Moreover, "protective" Human Security is connected with the "responsibility to protect" trend in International Relations. "Responsibility to protect" refers to the duty of the international community to intervene in other countries in order to prevent or stop gross violations of human rights, with or without the approval of the host country. This literal application of the precepts of Human Security in the short- and mid-terms aims to weaken the international norms of absolute sovereignty in favor of the individual. It is evident that "protective Human Security" includes humanitarian intervention as a possibility (Cox, 2008, p. 316). Thus "protective Human Security" has, at least in theory, a clear mechanism for its implementation and enforcement (Khong, 2006; Mack, 2005).

One important point of contention regarding "protective Human Security" and human rights in general, is the matter of setting standards. Thus, one of the important problems of this version of Human Security is answering the following questions: Who decides when Human Security in a country has been threatened? According to what standards are breaches of human rights judged? The second of those questions is especially problematic in Asia. Regional elites tend to claim that human rights do not represent universal values and thus cannot be used as the standard to determine the wellbeing of their nationals. This is especially a problem in Southeast Asia due to the region's colonial legacy, or rather the rejection of it, and the heterogeneity of its political institutions. The sub-region has some of the last communist regimes in the world, Vietnam and Laos, and one of the most repressive ones, Myanmar. Other countries in the region are pseudo-democracies such as Cambodia and Thailand.

Now that the concept of "protective Human Security" has been clarified it will be compared to the "ASEAN way". First of all, the "ASEAN way" stresses the referent of security is the sovereign nation-states and in some occasions the "peoples" of Southeast Asia. On the other hand "protective Human Security" claims that the referent of security is the individual. Second, the "ASEAN way" identifies the nation-state as the proper securitizer, enforcer of security, while "protective Human Security" identifies the global community as the securitizer. Third, the "ASEAN way" promotes the gradual and voluntary cooperation of nation-states in order to achieve comprehensive security, while "protective Human Security" favors short- and mid-term decisive action with or without the cooperation of other nation-states. Finally, the

points of reference for the two approaches are different. In other words, "protective Human Security" accepts the two Covenants on Human Rights as a universal standard, while the "ASEAN way" is more ambiguous regarding the standard. The ASEAN Charter provides for a Human Rights Body in article 14, but clearly states that the points of reference it will follow will be established at a future time by the consensus of the member states (ASEAN, 2008b, p. 19).

It is clear from the previous comparison between "protective Human Security" and the "ASEAN way" that there are major differences between the two approaches. Nevertheless, difference does not necessarily mean incompatibility. Are the two approaches truly incompatible? In order to answer that question it is important to analyze the previously identified differences. First of all, the difference in referent may be incompatible from a theoretical standpoint, but may not pose any concrete problems in policy-making nor during implementation. Nevertheless it is important to qualify the previous assertion, in that it refers to the theoretical level of discrepancy regarding the referent of security; it does not refer to the operationalized approach. In other words, the rhetorical disagreement regarding referents does not necessarily make the two approaches incompatible. The second difference regarding the proper securitizer is only a problem depending on the area of security in discussion. If the global community intervenes to provide training and materiel to solve the problem of piracy in the Strait of Malacca, this may not be viewed as a problem by the members of ASEAN. However, if the global community intervenes to enforce political and civil rights in Thailand, ASEAN members may have a problem with the securitizer. Thus, in the two cases the securitizer was the global community, however in the second case, the "protective" Human Security approach interferes with a policy area and civil and political rights that are considered to be under the protection of the sovereign nation-state according to the "ASEAN way". It should be noted that in both cases there was a theoretical incompatibility between the two approaches, but in the first it did not pose a problem for actual implementation while in the second it did. A final difference must be analyzed, and that is the preferred time frame of the two approaches. Since "protective Human Security" favors immediate and mid-term solutions while the "ASEAN way" favors preventive and long-term solutions, this poses an important incompatibility between the two approaches. This difference deals specifically with the procedural norms of ASEAN. Consensus building and comprehensive security are time-consuming approaches. Thus the ASEAN way takes the long-term vision while "protective Human Security" aims to deal with the immediate threats so as to

protect the individual. This poses an important problem both for policymaking and implementation. Attempts by the international community to take quick and decisive action to deal with a Human Security threat will be rejected or delayed by ASEAN. This was seen during the international response to Cyclone Nargis. The government of Myanmar restricted access to the affected region by international humanitarian workers and insisted in having ASEAN supervise the effort (ASEAN, 2008a). Moreover, the considerable delay hampered international efforts to help the affected communities.

In summary "protective Human Security" is incompatible with the "ASEAN way" both theoretically and, toa certain extent, also in practice. The differences in temporal frame and points of reference regarding standards to be followed are important obstacles for the application of this version of Human Security in Southeast Asia.

Japanese (Holistic) Human Security and the "ASEAN Way":

The Japanese approach to the concept of Human Security is holistic and flexible in nature and thus is more adaptable than its Canadian counterpart. At the same time Japanese Human Security maintains important aspects of Human Security, such as the promotion of Democracy and Human Rights as important goals. Thus, this version of Human Security includes important Western concepts such as the universality of human rights, while at the same time taking into consideration the importance of long-term development. Therefore, Japan's version of Human Security is more holistic than either "protective Human Security" and "development Human Security". In practice Japanese Human Security is pragmatic and adaptable (JICA, 2007a). Intrinsic flexibility and pragmatism also leads to contradictions in practice (von Feigenblatt, 2007).

Some of the most important contradictions encountered in the application of the Japanese version of Human Security have taken place in Southeast Asia. Due to the region's colonial trauma and the recent backlash against globalization, many internationally recognized norms such as human rights have come under attack from regional elites. In the late 1990s there was an important debate over the universality of human rights (Trinidad, 2007). Important members of the regional intellectual and political elites claimed that human rights as represented by the two UN Covenants represent European values and not Asian values. In summary, the claim was that

human rights were not universal. Most Southeast Asian countries supported this relativist position regarding human rights. However, one important exception in Asia was Japan. While Japan had always tried to accommodate its Asian neighbors and shares many cultural similarities with other collectivist societies of the region, it clearly stated that it regarded human rights as universally valid. This placed Japan in the Western camp regarding the human rights debate. Japan took concrete steps to put its statement into practice by adding it to its Official Development Aid Charter as a conditionality clause (MOFA, 2006). Therefore Japan's version of Human Security kept the language of the UN Commission for Human Security including both "freedom from fear" and "freedom from want". This is very important since other regional interpretations of the concept of Human Security concentrate mostly on "freedom from want" and tend to overemphasize the lack of "freedom from fear" in the region to structural causes (Patcharawalai Wongboonsin, 2006). Thus many local NGOs and government officials use the language of Human Security to describe a very different approach that is influenced by post-colonial theory, especially world system theory.

While it is beyond the scope of this paper to go into detail regarding the view of regional NGOs regarding the concept of Human Security, it is important to keep the difference in mind when trying to understand the implementation of Japanese development and humanitarian projects in Southeast Asia. As was explained in previous sections of this paper, the region is guided by the principles behind the "the ASEAN way" and has to deal with donors who hold a view of human security, ranging from Japan's holistic view to Canada's protective view. Thus, most major donors operating in the region have a transformative view of humanitarian and development aid. Democracy and the universality of human rights are considered to be ideals to strive for. As with all ideals, this means that donors have an ideal view of the future of Southeast Asian States as liberal democracies that respect human rights. At a theoretical level this is clearly incompatible with the goals and principles of prominent members of regional elites. Some important examples of this are the military Junta in Myanmar and reactionary forces in Thailand. Both groups reject the universality of human rights and even of democracy. Thus, in principle there are major obstacles in the region at a theoretical level. Nevertheless, regional elites need external aid to pursue development for development's sake and for regime stability.

The question is how to make transformation more palatable to local elites. This is where one finds divergent answers provided by the different versions of Human Security and their proponents. Protective Human Security would recommend regime change or at least sanctions in order to tackle immediate threats in the region. On the other hand, Development Human Security would favor a very long vision of development and a goal for transformation established by the elites themselves. Finally, Holistic Human Security would favor adapting to the situation on the ground while maintaining a clear goal of development towards a liberal democracy in the not too distant future. In other words, the protective view of Human Security would refuse to deal with a regime such as the military Junta in Myanmar, while the development view would support economic development without seeking political and social change, and holistic human security would seek both economic development and socio-political transformation through a flexible and adaptable approach.

Taking into consideration the influence of the principles behind the "ASEAN way" in the region, it is clear that an approach based on "protective Human Security" would be unacceptable to regional elites since it could lead to regime change and deep structural changes. On the other hand, an approach based on Development Human Security would simply serve as a cover for the promotion of economic development and the strengthening of governing elites. Obviously this is the most compatible and preferred version of Human Security by regional elites and also fits perfectly with the "ASEAN way". Finally, Japan's version of Human Security keeps the transformational goals of Human Security while promoting a flexible engagement with local elites, so as to make it more palatable to them. Thus, Japan's version of Human Security circumvents the obstacles presented by the "ASEAN way" by promoting "freedom from fear" and "freedom from want" at the community and individual levels. The Japanese approach is also pragmatic in that it attempts to tackle short-, mid-, and long-term threats to both freedom from want and from fear concurrently. This allows, Japan to continue to operate in places such as Myanmar that would otherwise be inaccessible to international humanitarian organizations. Projects range from immediate aid for environmental disasters such as the one in Myanmar due to Cyclone Nargis, to the drafting of the legal code in Cambodia. Therefore, the vast array of projects have a common goal, which is to achieve a holistic vision of Human Security, while taking a flexible approach to achieve it.

In conclusion, Japan's version of Human Security coexists with the "ASEAN way" thanks to the concept's flexibility and ambiguity. Small projects such as microfinance enterprises in Myanmar can appear to be simple economic development projects to the Junta, but in reality they contain elements of participatory democracy and empowerment that transform the social fabric of entire villages. Thus, this approach plants the seeds of change through an unsuspected vector of economic aid. The protective defenses provided by the "ASEAN Way" are bypassed through the emphasis on local projects rather than macro-level changes. Thus, the emphasis on the primacy of the sovereign nation state embodied by the "ASEAN Way", has the weakness that it overlooks other important social levels in which change can take place.

Two Brief Case studies of Japanese Human Security in Practice:

Myanmar:

It is very difficult for international humanitarian and development organizations to operate in Myanmar. The Military Junta is wary of international intervention in the country and even the opposition is divided regarding the role foreign donors should play in the country. A vocal part of the opposition rejects any cooperation with the Military Junta and thus favors an approach very similar to that of "protective Human Security". They argue that the continuation of development and humanitarian projects in the country, without also dealing with issues of political and human rights, prolongs and strengthens the rule of the Military Junta and that only active opposition can bring about true human security. On the other hand, other members of the opposition favor a flexible engagement with the Military Junta in order to ease long-term threats to human security, such as poverty and disease. This is the position taken by ASEAN.

Japan has taken a middle approach regarding the Junta. It accepts that flexible engagement with the Military Junta is necessary at least in the short term and that development and other mid- and long-term goals should not be abandoned due to political considerations. However, Japan maintains its position regarding the ultimate goal of its humanitarian and development assistance, the promotion of human rights, democracy, and a market economy, in other words "freedom from fear" and "freedom from want". Japan's approach is pragmatic and circumvents this difficult political climate in which it has to operate in order to reach the

17

referents of Human Security, individual Burmese citizens. This grassroots approach is holistic in nature and combines many aspects of human security and human development as part of its individual projects in the country.

Microfinance:

One such project is the one currently in progress in the village of Legaing which is located more than 500 miles away from the capital (JICA, 2008b). The village has approximately 4,000 inhabitants who mainly survive on rice farming. Due to the frequent harvest failures in the region and lack of alternative employment opportunities, the region remains underdeveloped. JICA's project in the region is based on the concept of microfinance. The Japanese International Cooperation Agency has set up a fund to provide small loans to start home-based businesses based on appropriate technology. Loans have low interest rates and the village is provided with complementary infrastructure in order to support individual entrepreneurship. More concretely, JICA built a new rice drying facility fueled by rice husks which has improved the quality of the rice and also lowered the cost of drying it. Another important infrastructural improvement has been the construction of a restaurant with an open market next to the road leading to the village. The market provides a venue to offer the products produced by the individual enterprises, such as jams, pork, and rice. Since fruit is plentiful in the region, JICA has trained villagers in fruit preservation so as to compensate for the lack of refrigeration. It should be noted that microfinance and infrastructural development are complemented by human capital formation in the form of training provided by JICA experts. The project has allowed villagers to start small businesses making jams, growing mushrooms, and other local products. While the main and most obvious results of the project are economic in nature, there are some very important spillover effects dealing with other aspects of human security. Sanitation has improved due to the modern public toilets provided in the market, participatory democracy has been promoted through the administration of community projects such as the drying facility and the market, and finally microfinance has empowered people to take control of their own lives by giving them the means to make enough money to satisfy their basic human needs with dignity.

In summary, the four-year long project in the village of Legaing is a good example of a project based on Japanese Human Security in a country that strictly follows the principles of the "ASEAN way". While the small project does not obviously deal with all of the important aspects

covered by a holistic vision of Human Security, it does tackle important sources of human insecurity in a way that plants seeds for future transformation. The small scale of the project and its superficially economic focus, allows JICA to sidestep possible objections from the Military Junta while at the same time flexibly promotes both "freedom from want" and "freedom from fear".

Teaching the Deaf:

Another interesting JICA project in Myanmar mainly deals with human capital formation. This project is taking place in the city of Mandalay. JICA dispatched an expert trained in New Jersey (USA), to help teach the deaf in the city and to formulate a unified sign language dictionary for the country (JICA, 2008a). There are only two schools for the deaf in the country and they use different sign languages, other difficulties are that parents of deaf children do not know any sign language so they cannot communicate with their children. Mitsuko Ogawa is the Japanese expert in charge of helping the country improve its social welfare administration. While her official assignment sounds innocuous and technocratic, it deals with a very sensitive sector in Southeast Asia: education (Somwung Pitiyanuwat, 2005). Ogawa not only has the power to change the curriculum for the two schools but also to develop a unified dictionary. The power to virtually design a language can be great, as evidenced by the attempts of the French Academy of Language and the Spanish Royal Academy to maintain control over dictionary making. How can one explain the Junta's willingness to allow this project to go ahead? First of all, the wording of the official project as dealing with Social Welfare Administration gives it a technocratic and economistic appearance. In addition to that, the choice of a disempowered and marginalized group such as deaf children is not viewed as a priority sector by the Military Junta. In other words, JICA is applying Human Security flexibly in order to avoid possible obstacles from the Military Junta. It is a small but significant project that strengthens human capital and empowers a marginalized minority. Furthermore, it can be assumed that a Western trained JICA expert will teach those children concepts related to participatory democracy and human rights, and that the final sign language dictionary will embody at least some of the views held by JICA and its representatives.

The Project for the Deaf is a small but important project. It shows that Human Security deals with a vast array of issues ranging from physical threats to long-term goals such as

empowerment. This project is a small step in planting the seeds of change that will grow even in an inhospitable environment such as the one in present day Myanmar. Japan's approach to the promotion of Human Security in Southeast Asia is multileveled and multilayered and concentrates on the individual in order to flexibly pursue the goal of reaching a holistic Human Security.

Conclusions:

The coexistence of two important theoretical trends in the Asia Pacific region, namely Human Security and the "ASEAN way", is a clear indication that the region is in a state of flux. Human Security and the "ASEAN way" can be visualized as the two currents in a river at the point where it meets the ocean. Some salt water from the ocean enters the river and mixes with fresh water coming from the interior. The meeting of the two currents creates dangerous eddies in the river which then yield to calm waters composed of fluctuating proportions of fresh and salt water. In this case the "ASEAN way" represents the current coming from the interior and the ocean current represents Human Security and related discourses coming from the international community. Both currents meet in the river delta represented by Southeast Asia and its interaction with the outside world. Theeddies represent the actual humanitarian and development proposals of the donors countries and the subsequent bargaining and negotiating with regional elites. Finally, the calm waters represent the resulting projects and agreements reached which are a mix of salt water and fresh water.

The river metaphor can also be used to explain the possible results of the currents for the delta. A surge in the current coming from the interior can overflow the banks of the river and cause great damage to the area, while too much salt water entering the delta can damage fields. Thus, keeping a good balance between the two currents is very important for the environment dependent on the river delta. The situation in Southeast Asia is very similar to the previously described scenario. A sudden imposition of "protective Human Security" may be counterproductive and create a backlash from local elites, while an unchecked spread of the principles of the "ASEAN way" may create institutional ossification or even roll back decades of social progress in terms of human rights and democracy in the region. Thus, the Japanese version of Human Security is the best match for Southeast Asia considering the constraining presence of

the "ASEAN way" and also the ultimate desirability of both "freedom from want" and "freedom from fear".

REFERENCES:

ASEAN. (2008a). *2007-2008 Annual Report: One Vision, One Identity, One Community*. Retrieved November 30, 2008. from http://www.aseansec.org/AR-08.pdf.

ASEAN. (2008b). *ASEAN Charter*. Retrieved November 30, 2008. from http://www.aseansec.org/ASEAN-Charter.pdf.

Ashizawa, K. (2008). When Identity Matters: State Identity, Regional Institution-Building, and Japanese Foreign Policy. *International Studies Review, 10*(3), 571-598.

Bix, H. P. (2000). *Hirohito and the Making of Modern Japan* (Paperback ed.). New York: Perennial.

Cox, B. C. W. S. (2008). Global Order, US Hegemony and Military Integration: The Canadian-American Defense Relationship. *International Political Sociology, 2*(4), 305-321.

Dhergoukassian, K. (2001). Human Security: A Brief Report of the State of the Art [Electronic Version]. *Columbia International Affairs Online*. Retrieved February 23, 2007, from http://www.ciaonet.org/wps/dek01/dek01.pdf

Dore, R. (1997). *Japan, Internationalism and the UN* (2nd ed). London: Routledge.

Emmers, R. (2001). The Influence of the Balance of Power Factor within the ASEAN Regional Forum. *Contemporary Southeast Asia, 23*(2), 275-291.

Feigenblatt, O. v. (2007, October 4-5). *Japan and Human Security: 21st Century Official Development Policy Apologetics and Discursive Co-optation.* Paper presented at the International Development Studies Conference on Mainstreaming Human Security: The Asian Contribution, Bangkok.

Galtung, J. (1969). Violence and Peace. *Journal of Peace Research*, 167-191.

Heller, D. (2005). The Relevance of the ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF) for Regional Security in the Asia-Pacific. *Contemporary Southeast Asia, 27*(1), 123-145.

Hwang, H.-d. (2006). APEC and emerging regionalism in North East Asia. *Asia Europe Journal, 4*(4), 499-510.

JICA. (2007a). *Human Security and JICA*. Retrieved May 26, 2007. from http://www.jica.go.jp/english/about/policy/reform/human/pdf/anzen_01e.pdf.

JICA. (2007b). JICA Policies Human Security Overview. Retrieved May 26, 2007, from http://www.jica.go.jp/english/about/policy/reform/human/index.html

JICA. (2008a, October 2008). From Interior Design to Teaching the Deaf. *JICA News*. Retrieved December 17, 2008, from http://www.jica.go.jp/english/news/focus_on/myanmar/my_2.html

JICA. (2008b, October 2008). Mushrooms, Jams and Pigs All Make for a Brighter Future. *JICA News*. Retrieved December 17, 2008, from http://www.jica.go.jp/english/news/focus_on/myanmar/my_5.html

Khong, S. N. M. a. Y. F. (2006). *Human Security and the UN: A Critical History* (1st Edition ed.). Indianapolis: Indiana University Press.

Kolodziej, E. A. (2005). *Security and International Relations*. New York: Cambridge University Press.

Limaye, S. P. (2007). United States-ASEAN Relations on ASEAN's Fortieth Anniversary: A Glass Half Full. *Contemporary Southeast Asia, 29*(3), 447-464.

Mack, A. (Ed.). (2005). *Human Security Report 2005: War and Peace in the 21st Century*. New York: Human Security Centre/ Oxford University Press.

MOFA. (2006). *Japan's Official Development Assistance White Paper 2006*. Retrieved. from http://www.mofa.go.jp/policy/oda/white/2006/ODA2006/html/honpen/index.htm.

Olenik, W. S. M. a. J. K. (2005). *Japan: Its History and Culture* (Fourth Edition ed.). New York: McGraw-Hill Inc.

Paris, R. (2001). Human Security: Paradigm Shift or Hot Air. *International Security, 26*(2).

Patcharawalai Wongboonsin, A. P., Supang Chantavanich, and Chanchutha Sookkhee (Ed.). (2006). *Promoting Human Security in APEC Countries* (First Edition ed.). Bangkok, Thailand: Institute of Asian Studies Chulalongkorn University.

Peng-Er, L. (2006). Japan's Human Security Role in Southeast Asia. *Contemporary Southeast Asia, 28*(1), 141-159.

Rolfe, J. (2008). Regional Security for the Asia-Pacific: Ends and Means. *Contemporary Southeast Asia, 30*(1), 99-117.

Sakamoto, T. F. C. T. (2008). *Japan Since 1980*. New York: Cambridge University Press.

Severino, R. C. (2007). ASEAN Beyond Forty: Towards Political and Economic Integration. *Contemporary Southeast Asia, 23*(3), 406-423.

Simon, S. (2008). ASEAN and Multilateralism: The Long, Bumpy Road to Community. *Contemporary Southeast Asia, 30*(2), 264-292.

Smith, P. (1997). *Japan A Reinterpretation*. New York: Random House.

Somwung Pitiyanuwat, S. S. (2005). *Civic Education in Thailand: Policies and Practices in Schools* (1st ed.). Bangkok: Chulalongkorn University Press.

Trinidad, D. D. (2007). Japan's ODA at the Crossroads: Disbursement Patters of Japan's Development Assistance to Southeast Asia. *Asian Perspective 31*(2), 95-125.

United-Nations. (2003). *Human Security Now, Final Report of the Commission on Human Security*. Retrieved February 23, 2007, from http://www.humansecurity-chs.org/finalreport/English/FinalReport.pdf

Vu-Tung, N. (2007). Vietnam's Membership of ASEAN: A Constructivist Interpretation. *Contemporary Southeast Asia, 29*(3), 483-505.

Wah, C. K. (2003). Japan's Renewed Focus on Human Security [Electronic Version]. *ISEAS*. Retrieved February 23, 2007, from http://www.iseas.edu.sg/viewpoint/ckwapr03.pdf