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Abstract

The paper aims to examine the discursive practice of human security in Thailand both in terms of concept and operationalization. It particularly focuses on the questions of why and how Thai policymakers have imported and embraced the concept of human security in the Thai polity, as well as how they perceive values and challenges related to human security issues. By reviewing the literature and interviewing nine key informants from the government, non-government, and academic sectors, the paper contends that the positions of the Thai state on human security issues are Janus-faced. While seemingly mainstreaming human security issues, both by promoting the discourse abroad and by establishing a human security ministry, there is also a flipside to the process. Apart from the reductionist view of human security simply as social security for vulnerable groups the concept of human security is always secondary to ‘state’ or ‘national’ security. As a result, the Thai style of human security contains only a loose substance of the original and human security is still in the dark shadow of state security. Finally, the paper reveals that the discrepancy between the ideals and practices of human security in Thailand is ascribable to the vagueness of the concept in the eyes of policy stakeholders, the gap between policy architects and policy implementers, and the de-politicization of the concept.

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Introduction

This research aims to examine the practice of human security in the Thai polity. In doing so, the researchers realize that while necessary, an analysis of the policy content as well as perceptions of the policy stakeholder is insufficient to grasp the overall picture of human security. The current unprecedented chaotic dynamism in Thai politics, moving back and forth within a closed circuit of democratic elections, polarization within civil society, and a series of vehement protests (red and yellow shirts) and coups (September 2006 and May 2014), best demonstrates how the political context can badly erode the human security situation in Thailand. This research, then, will analyze human security policy in relation to political context.

In attempting to elaborate on why and how Thai policymakers have imported and embraced the concept of human security in the Thai polity, as well as how they perceive values and challenges related to human security issues, the authors primarily employ qualitative research methods. Regarding the first question and objective, process tracing will be employed, a method that empirically traces the possibly causal sequence of events within a case that intervene between independent variables and observed outcomes.³ Process tracing is useful in this study as it can identify key actors and the causal mechanism for importing or practicing human security in Thailand.

As a requirement of the process tracing method, data are gathered from a variety of sources, both primary and secondary. First, we focus on the roles of policy actors that can be observed from various sources, such as government publications, policy statements, speeches, feasibility studies, newspaper interviews, and policy-related activities. The tracing process, however, does not focus exclusively on the roles of policy actors. Instead, we pay equal attention to other variables, such as the roles and positions of stakeholders and other actors in civil society, and the changing international and domestic context, which may affect policy outcomes as well.

³ Daniel Little, *Microfoundations, Method, and Causation* (New Brunswick: Transaction Publishers, 1998), 211.

Apart from documentary research, it is equally necessary to gather information from in-depth and informal interviews with key informants. Basically, we have identified two groups of key informants: first, key actors or direct policy stakeholders; and second, observers or those who may not be direct actors in the human security policy network but have some close connection with this policy issue. The first group of key informants includes officials from the Ministry of Social Development and Human Security (MSDHS), and other related agencies, such as the Office of the National Economic and Social Development Board (NESDB). The second group consists of academics, independent organizations, such as the National Human Rights Commission, civil society organizations, and an independent policy consultant.

This study is organized into three parts. The first section of the study looks into the conceptualization and institutionalization of human security in Thailand. It also looks back to trace the development and different interpretations of the concept in the international arena. The second part elucidates how the concepts have been perceived by policy actors in Thailand. The research emphasizes certain dimensions, such as the definition and core values of human security, major challenges, approaches, and cross-border issues. Moreover, the study aims to compare human security as perceived by policy actors with the human security that appears in the policy papers and policy actions of agencies. Finally, the paper raises some critical observations about the characteristics of human security in Thailand.

1. Human Security in Thailand: Conceptualization and Institutionalization

The history of human security in Thailand can be analytically divided into two periods, namely human security as foreign policy and human security as social welfare.⁴ The inception of the concept in 1994 marked the beginning of the first stage. The term abruptly gained momentum in Thailand after the 1997 Asian financial crisis. Intriguingly, it declined when the Thai economy began to recover and human security was being institutionalized with the establishment of the

⁴ The division of the history of human security into two periods is purely for analytical purposes. The authors realize that in the real world, the periods may overlap and policies in the first period may continue into the later stage.

Ministry of Social Development and Human Security in 2002. The slowing momentum, however, did not mark the end of human security in Thailand but rather represented a significant deviation in approach from human security as foreign policy to human security as social welfare.

This section focuses on how human security has evolved over time and how it has been conceptualized and institutionalized in the Thai polity. In addition to analyzing the historical development of human security in the two phases, the section investigates various policy papers and action plans on human security.

1.1 First Stage: Human Security as Foreign Policy

Although it is common to associate the first usage of the concept of human security with the *Human Development Report 1994* by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), it is rather difficult to pinpoint exactly when the concept was first employed in Thailand. One Thai academic work that was seemingly akin to the concept of human security was the book, *Environment and Security: State Security and Citizens Insecurity*.⁵ This book, however, was first published in 1992, two years before the official launch of the human security concept. What we can say for certain is that human security became increasingly popular in the aftermath of the 1997 Asian economic crisis, and the most vocal presenter of this concept at that time was Surin Pitsuwan, who was then Minister of Foreign Affairs. Yet the first official Thai statement on human security did not aim primarily to develop the concept on home soil but rather represented an attempt to promote this concept within the regional forum of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN).

By the time Thailand proposed the human security initiative at the regional level, the concept had become increasingly contested, particularly among middle powers. Apart from the conceptualization of human security as “freedom from fear and freedom from want” by UNDP, some states, notably Canada and Japan, began to promote their own styles of human security. Although it acknowledged the UNDP version, the Canadian government stressed, above all, the

⁵ See Chai-Anan Samudavanija and Kusuma Snitwongse na Ayudhaya, *Environment and Security: State Security and Citizens Insecurity* (Bangkok: Institute of Public Policy Studies, 1992).

political dimension of “freedom from fear” resulting from violent conflicts. Based upon its own version of human security, Canada successfully ran two important campaigns on the Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-personnel Mines and their Destruction (the “Ottawa Convention”), and the establishment of the International Criminal Court (ICC). Later, in November 2000, it sponsored the launch of an International Commission on Intervention and State Sovereignty. The end result of the work of this commission was the introduction of the concept of the Responsibility to Protect (R2P).⁶ Even when the international community witnessed the instability resulting from the 9/11 terrorist incidents, Canada could aptly adapt its approach to the new milieu by highlighting state-building in failed states as its new human security agenda.⁷

Table 1. Comparing core values of human security

Actors	Core values
UNDP (1994 report)	Freedom from fear, freedom from want.
Canadian government	Freedom from fear, Responsibility to Protect (political approach).
Japanese government	Freedom from want (developmental approach).
Commission on Human Security	Freedom from fear, freedom from want, freedom to live in dignity.
Thai government (1998)	Freedom from fear, freedom from want.
Thai government (2002 onwards)	Social welfare, self-sufficiency, communitarianism.

The Japanese government’s race to be the champion of human security, officially started in December 1998, when Prime Minister Keizo Obuchi visited Southeast Asian countries

⁶ See Shahrbanou Tadjbakhsh and Anuradha Chenoy, *Human Security: Concepts and Implication* (London: Routledge, 2007), 30-31.

⁷ Prosper Bernard Jr., “Canada and Human Security: From the Axworthy Doctrine to Middle Power Internationalism,” *The American Review of Canadian Studies* 36:2 (Summer 2006): 249-250.

and announced his government's program on human security assistance for vulnerable people affected by the 1997 economic crisis, and the plan to set up the UN Trust Fund for Human Security. In 1999, Japan officially endorsed human security in the *Diplomatic Blue Book* (Chapter 2 (3A)).⁸ One of the very first moves after that was to initiate and sponsor the Commission on Human Security, co-chaired by Sadako Ogata and Amartya Sen. The final output of this commission, *Human Security Now*,⁹ reflected the Japanese version of human security, which emphasized the non-military and developmental dimensions.¹⁰ The importance of human security in Japanese foreign policy, however, has since the dawn of the new millennium, been increasingly downplayed from the leitmotif of Japanese foreign policy to an important element of Japanese official development assistance (ODA) policy.¹¹

For its part, the Thai government adopted a balanced but comprehensive approach to human security that incorporated both political and developmental dimensions. This is clearly reflected in Surin's statement at the 1999 Lysoen Meeting that "whichever way we conceive it [human security]...fears and wants must be accommodated."¹² This position was in line with the UNDP's first version of human security.

During this stage, it seemed that Thailand employed two strategies for promoting human security, namely bending with the wind depending on the human security initiatives of the middle powers at the international level, and taking the lead at the regional level. Thailand started with the latter strategy first. Although Thailand's image had been somewhat tarnished by being the country that triggered the 1997 crisis, the Chuan Leekpai government turned the crisis into an opportunity to promote a new regional agenda of human security. At the ASEAN Post-

⁸ Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan, *Diplomatic Bluebook 1999: Japan's Diplomacy with Leadership Toward the New Century* (Tokyo: Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan, 1999), accessed August 10, 2014, <http://www.mofa.go.jp/policy/other/bluebook/1999/index.html>.

⁹ Commission on Human Security, *Human Security Now* (New York: Commission on Human Security, 2003).

¹⁰ Bert Edstrom, "Japan's Foreign Policy and Human Security," *Japan Forum* 15:2 (2003): 213-214; and Jun Honna, "Japan and the Responsibility to Protect: Coping with Human Security Diplomacy," *Pacific Review* 25:1 (March 2012): 102.

¹¹ Bert Edstrom, *Japan and Human Security: The Derailing of a Foreign Policy Vision* (Stockholm: Institute for Security and Development Policy, 2011).

¹² See quotation of Surin's statement in David Capie and Paul Evans, *The Asia-Pacific Security Lexicon* (Singapore: Institute of Southeast Asian Studies, 2002), 144.

Ministerial Conference (PMC) in Manila in July 1998, Surin Pitsuwan proposed the idea of setting up the ASEAN-PMC Caucus on Human Security. The main rationale was that regional cooperation on human security could ameliorate various aspects of human suffering that resulted from severe economic crises, such as unemployment, poverty, and a lack of social safety nets and welfare.¹³ Nevertheless, Thailand's first endeavor to promote human security at the regional level received only a lukewarm response from other ASEAN members, as most of them were uncomfortable with the language and implications of "human security," believing that it might adversely affect state sovereignty. As a result, the title of the caucus was accordingly changed to Social Safety Nets.¹⁴

¹³ "Statement by H.E. Mr. Surin Pitsuwan Minister of Foreign Affairs of Thailand at the PMC 9+10 Session, Agenda Item 2 (a)-(c) Manila, Philippines, 28 July 1998," Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), accessed August 10, 2014, <http://www.asean.org/news/item/statement-by-he-mr-surin-pitsuwan-minister-of-foreign-affairs-of-thailand-at-the-pmc-910-session-agenda-item-2-a-c-manila-philippines-28-july-1998>.

¹⁴ Capie and Evans, *The Asia-Pacific Security Lexicon*, 144.

Table 2. Chronology of key events

Year	Key events
1994	UNDP coins the human security concept in the UNDP Human Development Report.
1997	The Ottawa Convention on anti-personnel landmines.
1998	Thailand proposes the idea of the ASEAN-PMC Caucus on Human Security. However, the name of the caucus is changed to Social Safety Nets.
1999	The UN Trust Fund for Human Security is established with financial support from the Japanese government (largest trust fund in UN history).
	The Human Security Network is formed with 13 countries, including Thailand.
2000	The Canadian government supports the establishment of the International Commission on Intervention and State Sovereignty. The end result of this commission is the Report on the “Responsibility to Protect (R2P).”
2001	The Commission on Human Security is set up with support from the Japanese government. One of the commissioners is Surin Pitsuwan.
2002	The Ministry of Social Development and Human Security is established in Thailand.

In spite of its failed attempt at the regional level, Thailand still made efforts to promote this concept at other levels. However, the failure did induce Thai policymakers to alter their human security approach, giving rise to the “bamboo in the wind strategy.” Between the competing camps of human security led by Canada and Japan, Thailand did not take a specific side. It participated in both sides of the activities. In 1999, Thailand joined a coalition of the Human Security Network (HSN) along with 12 other countries, including Austria, Canada, Chile, Costa Rica, Greece, Ireland, Jordan, Mali, the Netherlands, Norway, Switzerland, and

Slovenia. This network, as stated earlier, was an initiative of Canada and Norway and emphasized the political aspect of human security. The major accomplishments of this network include the Ottawa Process, the Rome Statute to create the International Criminal Court, the United Nations Security Council resolutions on children and armed conflicts, as well as on women, peace and security, and the “Responsibility to Protect” principle.¹⁵

According to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Thailand played an active role in this network as its chairman in 2002. Thailand took the opportunity at that time to promote some functional issues such as HIV/AIDS, anti-human trafficking, capacity building in areas of health infrastructure, and anti-personnel landmines.¹⁶ Apart from its involvement in the Human Security Network, Thailand also supported the R2P agenda promoted by the Canadian government. Keokam Kraisoraphong revealed that Thailand’s indirect engagement with R2P issues through the appointment of former Prime Minister Anand Panyarachun as Chairman of the UN High-Level Panel on Threats, Challenges and Change provided the impetus for Thai support of R2P.¹⁷

Thailand also took part in various Japanese-led human security initiatives. When Japan launched the Commission on Human Security in 2001, then Thai Minister of Foreign Affairs Surin Pitsuwan was appointed as one of its ten distinguished commissioners. When the mission of the commission was completed with the publication of the final report, *Human Security Now*, Surin Pitsuwan and later Vitit Muntarbhorn, a law professor from Chulalongkorn University, were also appointed as board members of the Advisory Board on Human Security. In the early years, Thai representatives from the Permanent Mission to the UN were usually present at the board meetings. When Japan inaugurated its new initiative on “Friends of Human Security” in 2006, Thailand always sent delegates to attend the meetings. Apart from that, Thailand also

¹⁵ Allan Rock, “The Human Security Network: Fifteen Years on,” *Center for International Policy Studies Blog*, May 21, 2013, accessed July 30, 2014, <http://cips.uottawa.ca/the-human-security-network-fifteen-years-on/>.

¹⁶ Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Thailand, “Kruekai Kwam Mankong Manut” (Human Security Network), accessed July 30, 2014, <http://www.mfa.go.th/main/th/issues/9895-เครือข่ายความมั่นคงมนุษย์.html>.

¹⁷ Keokam Kraisoraphong, “Thailand and the Responsibility to Protect,” *Pacific Review* 25:1 (March 2012): 5-6.

contributed US\$30,000 to the UN Trust Fund for Human Security in 2013. It consequently received around US\$4.6 million of assistance from the UN Trust Fund for Human Security for the project “UN Joint Programme on Integrated Highland Livelihood Development in Mae Hong Son” in 2009.¹⁸

Three observations can be made regarding the introduction of the human security concept into Thailand in the first stage. First, the post-1997 crisis context provided an almost perfect setting for both policymakers and academics to import or invent new reform ideas. At that time several ideas, such as social capital, social safety nets, good governance, and civil society, appeared and became popular buzzwords in Thai society.¹⁹ Second, policy architects or reform importers of human security were mostly from the areas of foreign affairs or international relations. As the debates on human security initially revolved around three important questions in the field of security studies—security of whom, security from what, and security by what means—the most likely consumers of this concept were certainly those with a background in international relations. Coincidentally, Surin Pitsuwan, the international relations academic-turned-politician, was appointed as the Thai Foreign Minister. He subsequently assumed the key role as a human security policy architect and steered the direction of policy during the first stage. Finally, Thailand’s human security campaign in this first stage seemed to seek external rather than internal reform impact. The underlying objective might have been to achieve status as a norm leader, at least at the regional level, and as an active member of the progressive camp in international society.²⁰

¹⁸ Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan, “Assistance by the United Nations Trust Fund for Human Security to the project ‘UN Joint Programme on Integrated Highland Livelihood Development in Mae Hong Son’ in Thailand,” October 13, 2009, accessed July 30, 2014, http://www.mofa.go.jp/announce/announce/2009/10/1196590_1144.html.

¹⁹ In the case of the “good governance” concept, see for example Barbara Orlandini, “Consuming ‘Good Governance’ in Thailand,” *The European Journal of Development Research* 15:2 (December 2003): 16-43; and Bidhya Bowornwathana, “Importing Governance into the Thai Policy: Competing Hybrids and Reform Consequences,” *International Public Management Review* 8:2 (2007): 1-13.

²⁰ Kasira Cheeppensook, “The ASEAN Way on Human Security,” (paper presented at the International Development Studies Conference on Mainstreaming Human Security: The Asian Contribution, Bangkok, October 4-5, 2007).

1.2 Second Stage: Human Security as Social Welfare

It should also be noted that during the first stage, there was another remarkable attempt that could have potentially become a monumental accomplishment in human security, namely the formation of the Ministry of Social Development and Human Security (MSDHS). This ministry was established as a result of major bureaucratic reform. Thai officials and academics often proclaim that it was perhaps the first human security ministry in the world. The work of this ministry portrays the defining characteristics of the second stage of human security in Thailand.

Before considering how human security has been institutionalized in this second period, it would be worthwhile examining the background of the MSDHS in brief. The MSDHS was the product of major bureaucratic reform in 2002 that reorganized several agencies responsible for social affairs into a single ministry. An interesting point to note in this regard is that the idea of having a human security ministry was deliberated on in a workshop on social policy rather than one on security.²¹ At first, there was a proposal to relocate the social welfare functions of the Ministry of Labor and Social Welfare to the newly created ministry, which was initially named the Ministry of Social Development and Quality of Life.²² Later, at a workshop in September 2011, the phrase “quality of life” in the ministry’s name was replaced by “human security.” Although there is no clear evidence pinpointing who proposed the use of the words “human security,”²³ one thing that is certain is that state officials, academics, and civil society actors were not involved in the process. According to Professor Surichai Wun’Gaeo, one of the

²¹ In the bureaucratic reform workshop, the Thaksin administration further divided participants into three mini-workshops grouped around three different functions, namely economic, security, and social affairs. See “Sarubpol Workshop Patiroobrabobratchakarn: Euk Kwamhwang Khong Kon Thai Chak Rattabarn Thaksin” (Conclusion of the Bureaucratic Reform Workshop: Another Hope of Thai Citizens to Thaksin Administration), *Lokwannee* (Global Today), August 13, 2001, 5.

²² *Ibid.*

²³ When asked who put the words “human security” into the name of the newly created ministry, key informants voiced different opinions. While officials from the National Economic and Social Development Office thought that it was Mr. Paiboon Wattanasiritham, an NGO leader who later became Minister of the MSDHS during the Surayud government, Professor Surichai Wun’Gaeo opined that it might have been Dr. Surakiart Sathirathai, the then Minister of Foreign Affairs. According to an official MSDHS document, however, the initiator of the Ministry of Social Development and Human Security was Prime Minister Thaksin Shinawatra. See Supachai Saracharas ed., *Ruam Patakatha darn Sangkom Prime Minister Thaksin Shinawatra* (Collection of Speeches on Social Policy by Prime Minister Thaksin Shinawatra) (Bangkok: Ministry of Social Development and Human Security, 2003), Preface.

commissioners on the Commission on Bureaucratic Reform, in the two or three months before it finalized the bureaucratic reform plan, the Thaksin government never convened meetings of the commission; instead, there were only high-level meetings among key members of the cabinet.²⁴

Another interesting fact is that there is only one department in the MSDHS, the Department of Social Development and Welfare, which stands at the Ministry's core (see Figure 1: Organizational chart, below at page 15). This department is the reincarnation of the Department of Public Welfare (DPW), which was previously under the Ministry of Interior or the Ministry of Labor and Social Welfare. The key mandate of this department was to address what the Thai state considered to be social ills, such as beggars, homeless persons, and prostitutes, and to provide basic relief to vulnerable groups, such as orphans, the handicapped and disabled, and senior citizens. This department, which had long been regarded as a C-grade department in the Ministry of Interior, was criticized for lacking policy direction and the resilience needed to adapt to new social challenges.²⁵

The working philosophy of the DPW originated from the Thai-style Buddhist philanthropic value that rulers and “the haves” should help “the have-nots.”²⁶ This implied the existence of hierarchical relations between rulers and the ruled, and is clearly reflected in the Thai language name of the department, *prachasongraha*. The first word, *pracha*, means people. The second word, *songraha*, gives the sense of helping those in need. In earlier times, the function of *songraha* was bound up with temples, which were usually under the patronage of the haves, whether members of the royal family, the nobility, or merchants. When the modern nation state was formed, this function was gradually centralized and institutionalized under bureaucratic agencies.²⁷ The key point illustrated by this research is that the newly founded MSDHS inherited the organizational culture and worldview of the Department of Public

²⁴ “Nakvichakarn Rum Ad Rat Patiroob Sanong Karnmuang” (Academics Criticize Government that Reform Serves Political Interests), *Krungthep Turakit* (Bangkok Business News), January 28, 2002, 4.

²⁵ Juree Vichit-Vadakan, *Krom Pracha Songraha* (The Department of Public Welfare) (Bangkok: Thailand Development Research Institute, 1989).

²⁶ Department of Public Welfare, *60 Years Anniversary of the Department of Public Welfare (1940-2000)* (Bangkok: Department of Public Welfare, 2000), 28.

²⁷ *Ibid.*, 28.

Welfare or, to put it idiomatically, the old wine of traditional Thai-style social welfare has been put in the new bottles of human security.²⁸ The possible problem stemming from this situation is that the old culture may not be compatible with the new norm of human security.

Definitely the case when MSDHS officials started working under the new ministry. According to key MSDHS informants who had worked for the DPW before being transferred to the MSDHS, about two-thirds of the officials in the MSDHS could not comprehend what human security referred to.²⁹ One of their very first tasks, therefore, was to research the definition, scope, and way to operationalize this concept in practice.³⁰ Their challenge was compounded by the fact that at that time, there was virtually no research on human security in the Thai language, and there was no course on human security in the Thai university curriculum.³¹

On the way to operationalizing the concept of human security, MSDHS officials seemed to adopt a two-pronged strategy. Firstly, they sought and received technical support from actors outside the ministry, particularly from the academic sector and international organizations. Examples of this include: The Faculty of Social Development, National Institute of Development Administration, and Thammasat University conducted research that helped the MSDHS develop human security indicators; Chulalongkorn University published numerous books on human security³² and arranged various seminars and conferences, including the

²⁸ Interestingly, most of the key informants pointed out in the same way that there is nothing new in the concept of human security. One of the very first articles about human security in Thai language also indicated this point. See Nithirat Srisirojnakorn, “Kwammankongkhongmanut kab kwamsiangthangsankom” (Human Security and Social Risks), *Karnprachasongraha* (Public Welfare) 45:2 (March-April 2002): 59-64.

²⁹ Interviews with three key informants from Ministry of Social Development and Human Security, June 26, 2014, June 30, 2014, and July 7, 2014.

³⁰ This point was confirmed by an interviewee who was posted at a MSDHS provincial office. He also mentioned that the first task his boss assigned him was to research the definition of human security. He admitted that he (and his boss) had not previously known this concept. Interview with an official posted at the MSDHS Chiang Mai Office, July 7, 2014.

³¹ Supachai Saracharas, *Tidtang Mai Kwammankongmanut nai Pratate Thai* (New Direction of Human Security in Thailand) (Bangkok: Ministry of Social Development and Human Security, 2002), 1. Note that according to the preface written by Permanent Secretary of the Ministry, Ms. Panit Nititanprapas, this book is the first book in the Thai language on the topic of human security.

³² See for example Surichai Wun’Gaeo, ed., *Challenges to Human Security in a Borderless World* (Bangkok: Center for Social Development Studies, 2003); and Surichai Wun’Gaeo, ed., *Human Security Now: Strengthening Policy Networks in Southeast Asia* (Bangkok: Center for Social Development Studies, 2004).

International Symposium on Human Security, co-organized by the Commission on Human Security and various organizations; the Thailand Development Research Institute held a seminar on human security in 2003; and UNDP prepared a Thailand Human Development Report in 2009, called *Human Security: Today and Tomorrow*,³³ and more recently granted support to help the MSDHS formulate a ten-year strategy. It is worth pointing out that most of the support the MSDHS received from these actors was aimed primarily at mainstreaming human security into Thai public policy making and habituating the MSDHS to the new concept.

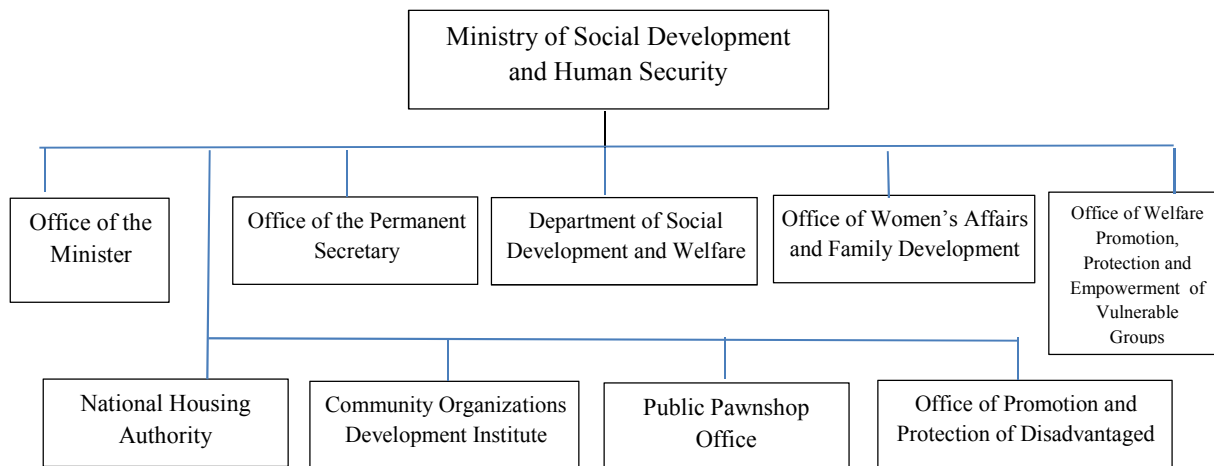
Secondly, there also seemed to be a return to DPW's basic philosophy of *songraha*, which emphasized functions of social welfare for vulnerable groups.³⁴ According to key MSDHS informants, the human security concept was too ambiguous and elusive to translate into practical operation. One informant considered this concept unenthusiastically as a discourse whose essence did not substantially differ from its predecessors, such as social security, social protection, social work, and social welfare. For the MSDHS informants, social concepts come and go like fashions, but as state officials they need a solid reference base to help them smoothly deliver social services to target groups.³⁵ This is probably why the very broad concept of human security was simply narrowed down to social welfare issues by MSDHS officials. This is clearly reflected in the MSDHS's organizational design, official policy papers, and action plan.

³³ United Nations Development Program (UNDP), *Human Security, Today and Tomorrow: Thailand Human Development Report 2009* (Bangkok: UNDP, 2010).

³⁴ This point was also raised by Sora-Ath Klinpratoom, the second minister, who wrote, "We [officials in the MSDHS] are still stuck to the old framework of '*songraha*'." See "Sora-Ath Klinpratoom: Poo Khor Langbang Kraxuang Karn Patana Sangkom" (Sora-Ath Klinpratoom Offering to Clean the MSDHS), *Matichon*, Dec 10, 2003, 26.

³⁵ Interviews with two MSDHS officials, one overseeing overall policy direction and the other working at a provincial branch, June 30, 2014 and July 7, 2014.

Figure 1. Organizational chart of the Ministry of Social Development and Human Security



Source: MSDHS website

According to Figure 1, the MSDHS has one department, five offices, two state-owned enterprises (National Housing Authority and Public Pawnshop Office), and one public organization (Community Organizations Development Institute). If we leave aside the two offices responsible for administrative tasks and the two state-owned enterprises, the major responsibilities and duties of the one remaining department and the three offices are as follows:

- (1) to provide social welfare to different vulnerable groups, such as persons with disabilities, older persons, and children, among others;
- (2) to promote and protect the rights of target groups, such as women and ethnic groups;
- (3) to empower vulnerable groups to be able to become active citizens.

For its part, the Community Organizations Development Institute (CODI) has a clear mandate to help develop and strengthen the vibrant roles of community organizations, especially in the area of community welfare.³⁶

³⁶ Ministry of Social Development and Human Security, *Ministry of Social Development and Human Security* [booklet] (Bangkok: Ministry of Social Development and Human Security, 2003).

The narrow focus of the ministry on the provision of welfare for vulnerable groups was indeed reflected in a speech made by Prime Minister Thaksin on the establishment of the ministry: “In October [2002], we established the new ministry, the Ministry of Social Development and Human Security, to take care of some hopeless people in society and certain groups, such as the handicapped, the poor, women and children....”³⁷ In addition to the interpretation of human security as social welfare, two other interrelated values also defined the meaning and direction of the ministry: self-sufficiency and communitarianism.

It was Thai King Rama IX who proposed the idea of self-sufficiency on various occasions since the 1970s. The idea became crystallized in a speech made by the King in December 1997 as a guideline for economic recovery in the wake of the 1997 economic crisis. It consists of three abstract components, namely moderation, reasonableness, and self-immunity, with the Buddhist virtue of the “middle path” as a philosophical cornerstone.³⁸ Since then, it has become a hegemonic ideology in Thailand. As Eli Elinoff argues, almost all development policies in Thailand have attempted to establish a linkage with the self-sufficiency principle.³⁹ As a consequence, Thai public policy circles since then have witnessed an increasing use of the “self-sufficiency” bottle, or key word, to contain and probably legitimize policy content, notwithstanding some considerable incompatibility and incoherence between certain policies and the self-sufficiency principle.⁴⁰

In the area of human security, self-sufficiency philosophy is translated, if not transformed, into the spirit of communitarianism. The two values are not incompatible with

³⁷The quotation of this speech appeared on the first page of the first academic paper series of the Ministry, which compiled speeches of Prime Minister Thaksin on social policy on various occasions. See Supachai Saracharas, ed., *Ruam Patakatha darn Sangkom Prime Minister Thaksin Shinawatra* (Collection of Speeches on Social Policy by Prime Minister Thaksin Shinawatra) (Bangkok: Ministry of Social Development and Human Security, 2003).

³⁸ Chaityawat Wibulsawasdi, Piyanut Piboolsravut and Kobsak Pootrakul, *Sufficiency Economy Philosophy and Development* (Bangkok: Bureau of the Crown Property, 2010), 1-4.

³⁹ Eli Elinoff, “Sufficient Citizens: Moderation and Politics of Sustainable Development in Thailand,” *PoLAR: Political and Legal Anthropology Review* 37:1 (May 2014): 90.

⁴⁰ One case in point was the use of self-sufficiency rhetoric to spruce up the populist policies of the Thaksin government, known as “Thaksinomics,” despite the difference in developmental standpoints. See Paul Chambers, “Economic Guidance and Contestation: An Analysis of Thailand’s Evolving Trajectory of Development,” *Journal of Current Southeast Asian Affairs* 32:1 (2013): 91.

each other, as the latter is indeed the forerunner of the former.⁴¹ Communitarianism constitutes the core value among most Thai development-oriented NGOs as well as the Community Organizations Development Institute (CODI), the public organization under the supervision of the MSDHS. During the Thaksin administration, CODI was instrumental in implementing *Baan Mankong*, or the Secure Housing Program, one of two housing schemes for the poor under the ambitious goal of the government to provide one million units of housing for the poor within five years (the second program was *Ban Ua Arthorn*, or the We Care Housing Program).⁴²

Table 3: Evolving key words and core values of MSDHS under various Thai regimes

Period	Key words and core values
Thaksin government (2001-2006)	Social welfare for vulnerable groups, populist policies (housing for the poor), communitarianism, anti-human trafficking.
Military regime (2006-2007) and Abhisit government (2008-2011)	Social welfare for vulnerable groups, good society or society with morality, self-sufficiency, communitarianism, anti-human trafficking.
<i>Pheu Thai</i> government (2011-2014)	Social welfare for vulnerable groups, anti-human trafficking, communitarianism.

Although all Thai governments in this second period tended to equate human security primarily with social welfare, there were nevertheless some variations in policy direction in each government. During the period of the Thaksin government, in addition to social welfare and communitarianism, another key mandate of the MSDHS was to implement the so-called populist policy of providing one million units of housing for the poor. In contrast, the popular key words of the MSDHS during the Surayud Chulanont interim government under the military

⁴¹ Elinoff, "Sufficient Citizens," 92-94.

⁴² See detailed information at <http://www.codi.or.th/housing/FrontpageHistory.html> (accessed on August 3, 2014).

regime and the Abhisit government were “good society” or “society with morality and self-sufficiency.”⁴³ Interestingly, the change from a military to a civilian regime under the Abhisit administration was not accompanied by a significant policy departure but instead featured policy continuity, especially in regard to the strategic focus on “society with morality.” When politics returned temporarily to a state of normalcy under the elected civilian government of the *Pheu Thai* Party, however, the core values of the ministry reverted to social welfare and communitarianism.⁴⁴

Besides these core values and key words, another emerging issue was connected to the MSDHS in the second period, namely human trafficking. This issue had increasingly come under the spotlight as a result of rising international awareness. There are at least three agencies conducting annual monitoring and reporting on human trafficking: the US Department of State, the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), and humantrafficking.org. Among these, the report published by the US Department of State is undoubtedly the most influential. Owing largely to the publication of these reports, the Thai government felt perhaps uncomfortably obliged to respond to this issue. In the past, Thai governments addressed these kinds of issues primarily with a “national security” or “national interests” approach, which tended to give priority to the nation’s political and economic interests of controlling borders while also securing sources of cheap labor over safeguarding the human rights of victims.⁴⁵ Without a central body to orchestrate policy direction on human trafficking, relevant agencies such as the Royal Thai Police, the Royal Thai Army, the Ministry of Interior, and the Ministry

⁴³ See Poldej Pinprateep and Patchara Ubonsawat, *Sangkom Thai pen Sankom Tee Dee Ngam lae Youyen pen Suk Ruamkan* (Thai Society is a Good Society Living Together Peacefully) (Bangkok: Ministry of Social Development and Human Security, 2006).

⁴⁴ See Ministry of Social Development and Human Security, “Kwam Chiamyong Pankollayut Khong Kraxuang Pattana Sangkom Lae Kwammankongkhong Manut Tangtae 2546 (BE)-Patjuban” (Linkage between Strategic Plan of the Ministry of Social Development and Human Security from 2003 to the Present), October 8, 2014, accessed October 22, 2014, http://www.m-society.go.th/ewt_news.php?nid=12502.

⁴⁵ Edith Kenny, “Securitizing Sex, Bodies and Borders: The Resonance of Human Security Frame in Thailand’s War against Human Trafficking,” in *Gender, Violence and Human Security: Critical Feminist Perspective*, ed. Christina Ewig et al. (New York: New York University Press, 2013), 86.

of Labor had to work under their own jurisdictions and organizational mandates, which were irrelevant to the principle of human security.

The rising current of the human security paradigm in international society indirectly forced Thai governments to change their approach to human security. In 2003, two years after the US Department of State launched its annual Trafficking in Persons (TIP) Report, the Thai government established operation centers on human trafficking at three different levels - international, national and provincial - with the MSDHS as the focal point for coordination. One year after Thailand was listed in the Tier 2 list (Watch List) in the 2004 TIP Report, the Thaksin administration hastily responded with a declaration of war on human trafficking in August 2004. It was the first time that a Thai government had responded in such a manner. Since then, successive governments have prioritized human trafficking issues. In 2008, a new anti-trafficking law was enacted, and new principles as well as institutional mechanisms were established accordingly. A new institution, the Office of Anti-Trafficking in Persons Committee, was established under the MSDHS with the primary responsibility of coordinating policy on human trafficking with other agencies.

Despite some legal and institutional improvements, the situation of human trafficking in Thailand, according to the TIP Report, has deteriorated. From 2010 to 2013, Thailand was categorized as a Tier 2 (Watch List) country. More recently, in 2014, Thailand was downgraded to Tier 3.⁴⁶ Several critics point out weaknesses in the human trafficking regime, such as slow institutional reform and law enforcement, and discriminatory attitudes toward victims among state officials. Above all, Thai governments seem to focus more on legal reform and less on addressing structural violence and exploitative structures conducive to human trafficking.⁴⁷

⁴⁶ See the US Department of State's *Trafficking in Persons Report* from various years at <http://www.state.gov/j/tip/rls/tiprpt/>.

⁴⁷ Siroj Sorajakool, *Human Trafficking in Thailand: Current Issues, Trends and the Role of the Thai Government* (Chiang Mai: Silkworm Books, 2013), 138-139; and Kenny, "Securitizing Sex," 101-102.

1.3 Human Security in Official Policy Documents

According to an official policy paper, the MSDHS defines human security in the broadest sense as “person who has self-reliant and can access to basic need as dignity and sustainable including live in society as normal and happiness life” (*note that this is a direct quotation from the bilingual book published by the MSDHS without any revisions or modifications*).⁴⁸ This official definition of human security reflects an attempt to localize the alien concept of human security to suit the Thai context. First, it opts for “basic needs” instead of “(freedom from) want,” which is considered a problematic concept because of its subjectiveness and all-inclusive character.⁴⁹ Note that the words “basic needs” first appeared a long time ago in Thai public policy circles. Second, the definition officially incorporates the idea of “freedom to live with dignity.” The reason for this, according to a key informant in the MSDHS, is that notwithstanding its vagueness and abstraction, it enables practitioners to relate human security to social concepts that are familiar to them, such as public welfare, social development, the social safety net, and so on.⁵⁰ Third, by putting the words “self-reliance” at the beginning of the definition, there seems to be a marriage of convenience between the human security concept and the local hegemonic ideology of the self-sufficiency philosophy. Finally, the MSDHS’s version of the definition intentionally omits “freedom from fear,” one of the core components of human security.

Regarding the major challenges to human security, the MSDHS derives its perspective from the 11th National Economic and Social Development Plan, which identifies major threats as follows:

⁴⁸ Ministry of Social Development and Human Security, *Human Security Standards* (Bangkok: Bureau of Social Development and Human Security Standards, 2013), 50.

⁴⁹ Interview with a key MSDHS informant, July 7, 2014.

⁵⁰ Interview with a key MSDHS informant, June 30, 2014.

- (1) Globalization and regionalization (ASEAN Community) are the contexts posing a challenge to human security missions in terms of regulations that raise human security standards, domestically and internationally;
- (2) The arrival of an aging society is a great tsunami that will strike Thai society;
- (3) The internal weaknesses of Thai society, namely the weakness of family, the parallel between higher education and lower ethics, chronic diseases resulting from inappropriate lifestyle, drug addiction among youth, higher social welfare with lower social security, and the weakness of Thai identity amidst cultural assimilation at the global level.⁵¹

Based on the scope of human security and the interpretation of threats to human security, the MSDHS has specified four strategic agendas and action plans as follows:

- four projects on social welfare and social protection development, both at the national and the community level;
- four projects for the elderly: welfare payments for the elderly; preparation for a quality aging society; job provision for the elderly; and the organizing of a learning and development center to take care of the elderly;
- four projects on women and family empowerment;
- two projects on people with disabilities;
- two projects on children and youth;
- five projects on shelter development by the National Housing Authority (NHA) and the Community Organizations Development Institute (CODI); and

⁵¹ Ministry of Social Development and Human Security (MSDHS), *Strategy of Ministry of Social Development and Human Security 2012-2016* (2014 revision) (Bangkok: MSDHS, 2014), 13-19. Note that the overall list of threats that appeared in the 11th National Plan includes political uncertainty and protracted conflict, and environmental degradation from global warming and climate change.

- two projects for the promotion of human security in general: strengthening of human security at all levels, and the promotion of social assistance in crisis situations.

In addition, the MSDHS also utilizes and operationalizes this concept through the development of a monitoring and reporting mechanism on human security standards and the *Annual Social and Human Security Report*. The Human Security Standards are a set of indicators that the MSDHS uses to collect secondary data from agencies whose responsibilities are related to human security. After obtaining all the data, the MSDHS analyzes it and presents it to the public in the form of the *Annual Social and Human Security Report*. In 2011, the third version of the standards was improved and implemented. It should be noted that even though the standards were based on the UNDP's seven dimensions of human security, the Thai human security standards were slightly different because of the expanded agenda that human security in the Thai context encompasses, as shown in Table 4.

Some part of the expanded human security agenda visible in Table 4 is attributable to the organizational structure and bureaucratic functions of the MSDHS. For example, "security of shelter and inhabitants" is related to the existence of the National Housing Authority, while "community and social support" are related to the CODI, and "family security" is linked with the Office of Women's Affairs and Family Development. Another additional component, the religion and culture dimension, originates from Thai traditional values.

It is worth noting that although a concrete version of human security has been operationalized in the form of the Human Security Standards/Human Security Index, there is still no guarantee of actual implementation. As mentioned above, the MSDHS's action plan narrowly focuses on providing welfare and support to target groups, which directly covers only four dimensions of human security, namely employment and income, community and social support, shelter and inhabitants, and family. There is virtually no implementation plan for the remaining eight dimensions, which are under the jurisdiction of other ministries and agencies.

Table 4. Comparing human security standards

UNDP (1994) 7 essential dimensions of human security ⁵²	Major elements of MSDHS human security standards		
	2003 11 dimensions at personal level	2005 10 dimensions at personal and community level	2011 12 dimensions at personal level
Economic security	Economic security	Employment and income	Employment and income
Food security	Food security		Food security
Environmental security	Environmental security		Environment/resource and energy
Health security	Health security	Health security	Health
Personal security	Personal security	Personal security	Life and assets safety
Community security	Community security	Social support	Community and social support
Political security	Political security	Rights and Justice; Politics and governance	Rights and Justice; Political security
	Shelter and inhabitants	Shelter and inhabitants	Shelter and inhabitants
	Education	Education	Education
	Family	Family	Family
	Religion and culture	Religion and culture	Religion and culture

Moreover, some of the indicators developed in the Human Security Standards have never been shown. To cite one example, in the environmental security dimension there are five indicators, yet only three of them were completed with data in the 2011 Thai *Human Security Report*.⁵³ This is partly attributable to the fact that the MSDHS depends mostly on secondary data from other agencies and is not equipped with the authority to order them to gather needed information. In this sense, the Human Security Standards resembles a rather luxurious reporting tool that has virtually no policy impact.

2. Different Perceptions of Human Security: Definitions, Major Challenges, Approaches, and Cross-border Issues

This section presents the ways in which different policy actors perceive the four important aspects of human security, namely, definitions and core values, major challenges, approaches,

⁵² United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), *Human Development Report 1994* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1994), 22-33.

⁵³ Ministry of Social Development and Human Security, *Kwammankong khong manut pratet Thai 2554* (Human Security in Thailand, 2011); and interview with a key MSDHS informant, June 26, 2014.

and cross-border issues. Policy actors in this research cover bureaucrats from the MSDHS and the Office of the National Economic and Social Development Board (NESDB), an academic (Professor Surichai Wun’Gaeo), an NGO leader, and a policy consultant who has extensive working experience as an academic in Chulalongkorn University, at a think tank, and as a former staff member of UNDP.

2.1 The Government’s View

In Thailand, the government agencies with direct responsibility for human security are the MSDHS and the NESDB. The Bureaucratic Reform Act 2002 designates the MSDHS as the main ministry for the social realm, whose responsibilities include social development affairs, promotion of fairness and equality, and development of quality and security of life, family, and community.⁵⁴ The NESDB traces its origins back to the National Economic Council (NEC), which was established in 1950 with the primary mission to provide the government with opinions and recommendations on national economic issues. At the zenith of its power in the two decades from 1960 to 1980, the NESDB was one of the most influential agencies in the Thai bureaucracy, directing and orchestrating Thailand’s overall development policy. However, since the early 1990s, its role and power have gradually waned, being restricted to the area of preparing the national plan, setting social development goals and target groups, and monitoring and reporting on the socioeconomic situation.

2.1.1 Views from MSDHS

Conceptual basis of human security

For the former DPW and current MSDHS officials, there is nothing new in the concept of human security, and the concept’s roots can be traced back to the period before the establishment of the ministry. The concept was first introduced into the Thai language in 2001 in the *Public Welfare Journal*, an official bi-monthly journal of the DPW. In an article entitled “Human Security and Social Risk: Old Wine in a New Bottle,” Nithirat Srisirirojnakorn defined

⁵⁴ Amending Ministry, Sub-ministry and Department Act B.E. 2545, part 6 article 16.

the concept as an antagonistic version of national security in the context of the post-Cold War era. In order to elaborate the definition, he started by acknowledging the limitations of UNDP's abstract definition. Then he interpreted the concept on the basis of economic security and social development. The author also pointed out the linkage between human security and previous social development concepts, namely well-being, basic needs, poverty eradication, and social risks. In this view, human security was just another instance of academic jargon, which was the "old wine in a new bottle." Finally, he summarized the implications of human security as an auxiliary concept in reviewing the current situation and looked toward the proactive role of the new ministry (MSDHS) in the near future.⁵⁵

Key informants from the MSDHS tended to perceive the definition and values of the human security concept in line with the above mentioned article. They criticized this concept as being too broad, vague, and no different to proceeding concepts. When asked how to define the concept, one of the key informants opined that human security should be defined as "freedom from the lack of (basic) needs," which could be narrowly and concretely interpreted into practical operation. In regard to the component of "freedom to live with dignity," which has already been incorporated into the ministry's official definition, although one key informant considered this to be too abstract and ideal, he still optimistically felt that this component could at least be related to other social development concepts in a way making it possible to operationalize.⁵⁶

Major issues for human security

The key informants from the MSDHS seemed to see a more specific set of challenges to human security compared with the broader institutional view cited above. Although the senior official felt that the Royal Thai Government had succeeded in providing universal social welfare to Thai citizens (i.e., the universal health coverage program and the allowances for the elderly and

⁵⁵ Nithirat Srisirirojnakorn, "Kwammankongkhongmanut kab kwamsiangthangsankom: Laokao Nai Kuadmai" (Human Security and Social Risks: Old Wine in a New Bottle), *Public Welfare Journal* 45 (2002): 59-64.

⁵⁶ Interview with a key MSDHS informant, June 30, 2014.

disabled), he also understood that there were many marginalized people, especially people living under the poverty line, who were still unable to access these benefits. In his view, however, poverty posed not just the major threat for Thailand but for the whole of ASEAN. Although ASEAN seemed progressive in creating the ASEAN Declaration on Strengthening Social Protection, which guarantees social protection for all vulnerable groups, it could not guarantee the extent to which it could be implemented because of the so-called ASEAN way.⁵⁷ For their part, even though the provincial officials accepted that poverty was a major threat for Thai people, they recognized that this problem might not be easily solved because of several reasons such as the difficulty in measuring poverty and the multidimensionality of poverty that involves both material and ideological aspects.

Perception of two approaches to human security

The practice of human security consists of two approaches, top-down and bottom-up. While the former focuses on the provision of welfare and protection of vulnerable groups by government agencies, the latter emphasizes the importance of empowering people so that they are able to handle various risks by themselves and able to be active players in the public policy process. Because the MSDHS realizes the limitations of each approach, it adopts a balanced approach. In relation to the top-down approach, the MSDH officials have witnessed constant change and volatility in government policies from the Thaksin, Surayud, Abhisit, and Yingluck administrations. They have also repeatedly experienced failed attempts to propose various policies, such as income insurance schemes for people living under the poverty line.

MSDHS officials tended to consider the bottom-up approach as an alternative approach. Similar to the top-down approach, the bottom-up approach has several shortcomings, notably its limited capacity and sustainability. This is clearly reflected in the opinion expressed by one key informant, which is worth quoting at length:

⁵⁷ Interviews with two key MSDHS informants, June 30, 2014 and July 7, 2014.

If you see one starving pregnant woman who has been absolutely abandoned, who should help her and how should this support be sustained? First, in case there is a strong community, there would certainly be some people who could help her, but how far and how long could they help? Second, the sub-district administrative organization could help her for a very short period because of its limited resources. Compared with the state policy that guarantees her access to basic needs, which option would be more sustainable?⁵⁸

For them, the top-down approach is required to guarantee universal access to basic needs for all people, while the bottom-up approach can be a supplemental approach, appropriate for certain situations, such as disasters.

Cross-border responses to human security challenges

Cross-border responses to human security challenges can be categorized into two types: massive natural disasters and escalation of violent conflicts. In the Thai context, the 2004 tsunami and the 2011 floods were apparent cases of massive natural disasters, while the series of recurring violent political conflicts were examples of escalation of violent conflict.

In the case of massive natural disasters, wherever they happened, the two key informants strongly supported cross-border intervention, for either humanitarian or human security reasons. If Thailand were the recipient, one of them was not quite sure which approach would be the most appropriate, direct support to victims or indirect support via an incumbent government or non-governmental organization network. While the former approach has the advantage of reducing the opportunity for corruption, it is too difficult for foreign donors to access victims directly, which is the strength of the latter. On the other hand, if Thailand were a donor and governments of affected countries were reluctant to accept assistance from foreign countries, two options were recommended: providing assistance on behalf of international

⁵⁸ Interview with a key MSDHS informant, June 30, 2014.

organizations like the United Nations or the International Committee of the Red Cross, and indirect support through existing international humanitarian organizations or other NGOs in that country.

In the case of an escalation of violent conflict, the two key informants disagreed with cross-border intervention, both in the scenario where Thailand would be a donor and where it would be a recipient. Their justification related to political sensitivity, since foreign assistance might be misinterpreted as taking sides. However, in the worst case scenario, like the genocide in Rwanda, the key informants agreed that international intervention would be required but absolutely not in the form of bilateral assistance. Instead, it must come from global or regional organizations.

2.1.2 Views from NESDB

As the institution whose mission is to prepare the national development policy and report on the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), the NESDB is quite familiar with new jargon, including “social capital,” “social safety net,” “good governance,” “human security,” and recently, “social quality.” Unfortunately, it is hard to find the words “human security” directly addressed in official NESDB policy papers.⁵⁹

Conceptual basis of human security

Key informants from the NESDB defined human security as physical and mental security of the people, the soft-sided version of security. In their view, human security is closely related to “well-being,” the term they prefer to use over “freedom from want.” Moreover, they were quite comfortable with the element of “freedom to live in dignity,” since the current national development plan prioritizes the issue of inequity, which can be related to “dignity.”

⁵⁹ The most similar term that was addressed in the 8th National Economic and Social Development Plan was “social security.” In addition, “food and energy security” has been identified in the 11th plan (2012-2016). See details in National Economic and Social Development Board (NESDB), *The 8th National Economic and Social Development Plan 2001-2004* (Bangkok: NESDB, 2000); and National Economic and Social Development Board (NESDB), *The 11th National Economic and Social Development Plan 2012-2016* (Bangkok: NESDB, 2011).

In general, the key informants considered the concept of human security to be an all-inclusive development framework, able to contain various development concepts within it, similar to those used by the NESDB in the national plan, such as people-centered development, public participation, and sufficiency economy. However, human security is more ambiguous than other concepts.

Although the NESDB did not adopt the language of human security in the national development plan, the key informants admitted that human security was useful in defining threats, risks, and vulnerable groups. Therefore, elements of human security can be found in some NESDB policy documents. Examples include social security in the 8th plan, food and energy security in the 10th and 11th plans,⁶⁰ economic security in terms of poverty and hunger eradication in the MDG report,⁶¹ and human quality, social security, and environment in the social indicators and social outlook, as well as the NESDB's quarterly and annual reports.

Major issues for human security

The key informants outlined an extensive list of threats to human security by referring to the analysis in the 11th development plan:⁶²

- (1) arrival of an aging society;
- (2) risk in the quality of education and children's cognitive abilities ;
- (3) disadvantaged groups still have inadequate access to social protection and social welfare programs;
- (4) income inequality and unequal access to resources;
- (5) deterioration in morals and ethics;
- (6) drug abuse and gambling addiction among children and juveniles;

⁶⁰ Interviews with two key informants from Office of the National Economic and Social Development Board, July 25, 2014.

⁶¹ Office of National Economic and Social Development Board, *Thailand Millennium Development Goals Report 2009* (Bangkok: NESDB, 2009).

⁶² See the NESDB threat perceptions in NESDB, *The 11th National Economic and Social Development Plan* (Bangkok: NESDB, 2012), 3-14.

- (7) degradation and depletion of natural resources, which is intensified by climate change;
- (8) political conflicts and unrest in the south have negative impacts on the economy, people's daily life, international confidence, and a peaceful society; and
- (9) corruption.

In addition, the plan mentioned a number of challenges, such as changes in global and regional rules and regulations, health and environmental effects stemming from global warming and climate change (including natural disasters), and the expansion of international terrorism (e.g., the tragic incident involving Malaysia Airlines MH370).

From this long list of challenges, the key informants considered poverty and income inequality to be the most daunting. Apart from that, they also recognized the human trafficking problem as an emerging issue. What concerned them most about this issue was the negative perception of Thailand resulting from its being listed as a Tier 3 country in the 2014 Trafficking in Persons (TIP) Report, the lowest possible ranking given for non-compliance with minimum standards. Of concern was also the possibility that non-humanitarian and non-trade-related assistance from the US and other developed countries might be withdrawn.⁶³

Perception of two approaches to human security

Although the NESDB's primary responsibility to draft the national development plan seems to be top-down by nature, the key informants still recognized the significance of the bottom-up approach as well. Since the 8th national development plan, the NESDB has adopted public participation as one of the guiding principles in mobilizing bottom-up input to help prepare the national development plan. Nevertheless, similar to the MSDHS officials, the key informants

⁶³ US Department of State, *The Annual Trafficking in Persons (TIP) Report* (Washington DC: US Department of State, June 20, 2014), accessed July 30, 2014, <http://www.state.gov/documents/organization/226844.pdf>.

from the NESDB realized the limitation of the bottom-up approach and the necessity to balance top-down and bottom-up approaches.

Cross-border responses to human security challenges

When the key informants were asked to consider human security in a cross-border sense, they hesitated to use the language of human security to justify international intervention. In the case of massive natural disasters, however, they agreed with the notion of providing international assistance on humanitarian grounds. They felt foreign assistance could be distributed through various channels, whether indirectly through the central government and NGOs, or directly to the communities affected. However, if the affected country was not willing to accept assistance from foreign countries, as in the case of Cyclone Nargis in 2008, foreign countries could bypass this resistance through international organizations with humanitarian missions or international NGOs in that country.

In the case of violent conflict escalation, such as the invasion of Iraq or Afghanistan, the key informants were suspicious about the hidden objectives of international intervention, especially when this occurred in a unilateral way. They preferred to see the international community acting collectively to help find a way out of the conflict.

2.2 The Academic's View

Conceptual basis of human security

The role of the academic sector is quite instrumental in helping policy actors understand the essence of and the way to operationalize newly imported social concepts. In the case of human security, one of the key scholars who has continually played an essential role in coordinating and disseminating knowledge on human security is Professor Surichai Wun'Gaeo. He was appointed as a commissioner on the Commission of Bureaucratic Reform, the main body responsible for drafting the bureaucratic reform roadmap. He also organized various seminars and symposiums on human security, including the International Symposium on Human Security held at Chulalongkorn University on December 11, 2002. This symposium invited a number of

key persons to participate, including HRH Princess Maha Chakri Sirindhorn, Amartya Sen, and Sadako Ogata (the latter two were co-chairs of the Commission on Human Security), former Prime Minister Anand Panyarachun, and Deputy Prime Minister Jaturon Chaisaeng.

With his extensive experience, Professor Surichai has an interesting opinion on the conceptual basis of human security. Regarding the definition of human security, in spite of its ambiguity and indefinite characteristics, he optimistically considered it an opportunity to invite new actors to participate in the policy-making process, to include new issues and challenges in the policy stream, and to create a crosscutting policy platform.⁶⁴ Pertaining to the newly added component of “freedom to live with dignity,” he realized the necessity to pay more attention to this cultural and identity dimension in the era of globalization. However, more reflexive discussions are needed to obtain a better understanding of the interrelationship among the three elements of human security.

Major issues for human security

For Professor Surichai, the major issue for human security is related to the lack of sufficient insight in operationalizing the concept. Based on the situation in Thailand and other countries, it seems the discursive practices of human security have not succeeded because the dominant discourse has been oriented towards national interests and the politics of territory. To cope with this obstacle, academics have a role to play, not only as producers of knowledge, but also as network builders in organizing multi-stakeholder platforms that engage affected people with policy makers.

Other alarming issues, especially for Thai society, include political conflicts, destructive natural and man-made disasters, and poverty. For the Southeast Asian region, a number of challenges can be highlighted. First, international political conflicts may be both urgent and long-term threats to people, especially those who live along the border. The Preah Vihear dispute between the Thai and Cambodian governments is a prime example. Second, the

⁶⁴ Interview with Surichai Wun’Gaeo, Emeritus Professor of Sociology at Chulalongkorn University, April 11 and 17, 2014.

divergence of environmental standards and the lack of a regional mechanism to deal with it could cause environmental problems in the long run. Finally, the case of the disappearance of Malaysia Airlines flight MH370 pinpoints the inevitability of regional and international cooperation.

Perception of two approaches to human security

Between the two approaches for operationalizing human security – bottom-up empowerment and top-down prevention – it seems that since the 8th national development plan and the 1997 constitution, community empowerment has been the dominant discourse in Thai social development. Additionally, one key informant also pointed to the problem of binary opposition between the two approaches. Both styles of human security, empowerment and protection, could belong to both the top-down and bottom-up approach. Furthermore, a balance between the two approaches is necessary and care must be taken to use them with new insight. For example, efforts to empower victims of disaster must take care not to dehumanize them by using the word “empower.” In the case of top-down protection, policymakers have to acknowledge the major limitations of the approach and recognize that in the real world, there are many uncontrollable factors that cannot be understood.

Cross-border responses to human security challenges

In the case of cross-border challenges, the key informants agreed with the idea that international assistance should be provided in the case of massive disasters, whether natural or man-made, both in terms of donors and receivers. However, if an affected country was reluctant to open its doors, as was the case of Cyclone Nargis in Myanmar, regional organizations like ASEAN would have to take a proactive role. Close neighbors of affected countries could also play supportive roles in facilitating international missions to affected countries. In contrast, in the case of violent conflicts, all key informants disagreed with the provision of international assistance that is justified by human security. In their view, previously existing international

norms like the Responsibility to Protect (R2P) would be sufficient for international intervention based upon a consensus of the international community.

2.3 Civil Society Organizations' View

Conceptual basis of human security

The perception of the key informant who works in civil society organizations is quite different from the others. As the Secretary-General of the NGO Coordinating Committee on Development (NGO-COD), the key informant engages in a wide range of Thai NGO activities. In 2002, when the International Symposium on Human Security was held at Chulalongkorn University, representatives from NGO-COD, including the key informant, were invited to present a paper on human security. In that paper, NGO-COD first recognized the complexity of human security issues. It then accepted the UNDP's definition of "freedom from want and freedom from fear" with an additional opinion that the concept of human security should also contain an awareness of sources of threats, especially those stemming from existing unjust power structures.⁶⁵

Although it seems that Thai NGOs acknowledged the emergence of human security discourse, they nonetheless felt that the discourse of human rights has been much more influential and powerful. Consequently, they did not officially adopt the language and discourse of human security but instead just made use of the term when they wanted to accommodate certain organizations, such as UNDP and the MSDHS.

Major issues for human security

From the NGOs' perspective, the major issues for human security are a result of new types of fears that come about due to unjust power structures, both within the country and in the globalizing world. Based on extensive experience at the grassroots level, they realize that the root cause of the problem has much to do with the unequal social structure that enables

⁶⁵ NGO Coordinating Committee on Development (NGO-COD), "Sustainable Development of Human Security," in *Challenges to Human Security in a Borderless World*, ed. Surichai Wun'Gaeo (Bangkok: Center for Social Development Studies, 2003), 159-164.

industrial capital and corrupt policy actors to enjoy overt influence at the expense of marginalized people. The creeping advance of neoliberal economic policies, including free trade agreements (FTAs) and deregulation, have tended to further exacerbate the situation and introduce new types of challenges, such as the threat to food sovereignty.

Perception of two approaches to human security

The key informant preferred a balance of bottom-up and top-down approaches. In her experience, the bottom-up approach is quite limited in scope and area. There are only some cases in which grassroots forces amassed and were able to bring about changes in public policy, while in many others, their efforts ended up not bearing fruit. Recently, as a result of the coup d'état on May 22, 2014, Thai civil society organizations experienced another failed attempt to push for a law creating a civil society empowerment fund. Likewise, just changing macro policy without empowering the people could also result in policy failure, as evidenced in various government initiatives, such as the Thai Women Empowerment Fund.

Cross-border responses to human security challenges

Regarding the response to cross-border challenges to human security, the key informant also agreed with informants from other sectors by giving a green light to intervention in the case of massive natural disasters, but a red light to politically motivated intervention. In the case of Cyclone Nargis, Thai NGOs had the experience of entering affected areas to provide necessary support, which was channeled through the local NGO networks. In her view, empowering civil society in affected countries is equally important as exerting pressuring for governmental reform.

2.4 Perceptions of the Former UNDP Staff Member and Policy Consultant

Conceptual basis of human security

The former UNDP staff member, who is currently a policy consultant, has broad experience in the area of human security. She adheres to UNDP's original definition of human security as "freedom from want and freedom from fear." Since its inception, human security has become a

framework for integrating various concepts in development, such as human development and human rights.⁶⁶ Its major contributions, however, extend beyond the theoretical sphere into the world of public policy. It helps policy practitioners in screening and identifying critical issues and vulnerable groups in the development agenda. In addition, the concept also facilitates the linkage between different agendas in development, such as environment with human rights.

While “freedom from fear” reflects the political dimension of human security, “freedom from want” is broader and more inclusive. In regard to the new component of “freedom to live in dignity,” she thought that it lies in the middle between the previous two components. Generally, “dignity” is based on other elements, such as status and rights. Therefore, the concept of human rights could be addressed within the “freedom to live in dignity.” What is important in order to realize the human security vision is to link the concept with various existing concepts, such as human rights, human development, and social protection, and to orchestrate a number of human security-related functions to work within the same melody of human security.

Major issues for human security

The key informant outlined two striking challenges for human security in contemporary Thailand: political conflict, as well as natural disasters and environmental degradation. The ongoing political conflicts in Thailand have been protracted, lasting a decade so far. This situation of conflict not only impacts Thailand but also has the potential to cause political instability throughout the Southeast Asian region. To address the latter challenge, more efficient mechanisms are required both at the domestic and international level.

Perception of two approaches to human security

According to the key informant, the two approaches have to go hand in hand. The top-down approach is more applicable for a wider scale of problems and challenges, such as

⁶⁶ Her view on human security also appeared in an article presented at the International Symposium on “Challenges to Human Security in a Borderless World.” See Parichart Siwaraksa and Decharut Sukkumnoed, “Human Security through a Thai Kaleidoscope: Ideas, Situations and Actions,” in *Challenges to Human Security in a Borderless World*, ed. Surichai Wun’Gaeo (Bangkok: Center for Social Development Studies, 2003), 167-168.

environmental degradation and global warming. For the bottom-up approach, the key point is to raise people's awareness about the numerous risks to human security and to better equip them with the knowledge and skills necessary to handle unexpected situations.

Table 5. Policy actors' perceptions of human security

	Definition/Core values	Major challenges	Approaches	Cross-national issues
MSDHS	- freedom from the lack of basic needs - social welfare - vagueness of the concept - not different from other social concepts	- poverty	- balanced approach between top-down and bottom-up - recognition of limited capacity of the bottom-up approach	- supportive of intervention for the sake of humanitarianism but not in situations of violent conflict
	- officially MSDHS defines human security as freedom from fear, freedom from want, and human dignity - policy action focuses exclusively on provision of social welfare	- officially MSDHS identifies various challenges, such as globalization, regionalization, aging society, political conflict, global warming, and environmental degradation		
NESDB	- well-being - vagueness of the concept - not different from other social concepts	- poverty and income inequality	- balanced approach between top-down and bottom-up - recognition of limited capacity of the bottom-up approach	- supportive of intervention for the sake of humanitarianism but not in situations of violent conflict
	- NESDB has not officially adopted this concept	- similar to MSDHS		
Prof. Surichai Wun'Gaeo	- realized elusiveness of the concept but considered it as an opportunity to open policy space and to induce cross-sectoral dialogue	- political conflicts and natural and man-made disasters	- balanced approach - recognition of various problems of top-down	- supportive of intervention in case of natural disaster but not in the case of political conflict

	Definition/Core values	Major challenges	Approaches	Cross-national issues
			approach	
NGOs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - freedom from fear and freedom from want - too broad and less powerful than human rights concept in pushing for reform 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - new types of fear arising from unjust power structure - side effects of development projects 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - balanced approach between top-down and bottom-up 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -supportive of intervention in case of natural disaster but not in the case of political conflict
Former UNDP staff member and policy consultant	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - freedom from want and freedom from fear 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - poverty - political conflict in Thailand including political instability in the region - environmental degradation in the ASEAN countries and no regional institution to cope with it 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - balanced approach - in the bottom-up approach, focus on empowering community awareness of risk management, because most threats are national, regional, or global, and communities themselves cannot cope with them 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - supportive of intervention in case of natural disaster but not in the case of political conflict

Cross-border responses to human security challenges

The key informant was inclined to agree with other interviewees that intervention or international assistance should not be based on political but humanitarian reasons. Apart from reasons and circumstances, she suggested that we should pay equal attention to the way in which international assistance should be organized and coordinated with different organizations at different levels so as to channel flows of support in a more efficient and effective way. In this sense, it is perhaps more appropriate to direct assistance via existing networks within affected countries, or experienced organizations such as the International Committee of the Red Cross.

Conclusion: Implications of the Human Security Concept in Thailand

Some interesting points can be drawn from examining the way that Thailand imported and embraced “human security.” These points are summarized in the following discussion. First, there is a huge gap between human security principles and the actual functions of the MSDHS. The statement of the former foreign minister and one of the key architects of human security in Thailand, Surin Pitsuwan, best mirrors this gap and is therefore worth quoting at length: “We have perhaps the first human security ministry in the world but, unfortunately, with the understanding that human security equals human welfare/social welfare. Human security is more than social welfare...there is an element of fulfillment, there is an element of human rights, there is an element of human development, there is an element of fuller freedom.”⁶⁷

Since its inception, despite the fact that political bosses and administration might have added some auxiliary values and political mandates, such as populist policies or the rhetoric of “the good society,” the core value of the MSDHS has remained the same: *songraha* or the provision of social welfare for vulnerable groups. As Surin Pitsuwan mentioned above, this interpretation falls short of capturing the real spirit of human security. This does not mean that the MSDHS is uninformed or lacks knowledge about human security. On the contrary, it has

⁶⁷ Surin Pitsuwan, “Human Security in South-East Asia and the Experience of the Commission on Human Security,” in *Proceedings of the ASEAN-UNESCO Concept Workshop on Human Security in South-East Asia* (Jakarta: ASEAN, 2007), 68.

relatively abundant knowledge, in both academic and practical forms, supplied by academic institutions and international organizations.

In this sense, Thai-style human security is far from being balanced and comprehensive, as proclaimed by Surin Pitsuwan in the first phase. Instead it is rather unbalanced, fragmented, and incomprehensive. Compared to other versions of human security, whether UNDP, Canadian or Japanese, the Thai approach is the narrowest in focus. By focusing on social welfare, it constitutes only a small portion of “freedom from want.” Omitted from the Thai version of human security are the whole component of “freedom from fear” and some elements of “freedom from want,” such as environmental security and economic security. All of this seems to suggest that human security has never been mainstreamed in the Thai public policy process. It was rather depoliticized by strictly demarcating human security issues as belonging within a C-grade ministry.

Second, there was virtually no linkage between policy architects in the first stage and policy implementers in the second stage. Because the main actors in the first stage were in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs while those in the second stage were in the Ministry of Social Development and Human Security (the reincarnated form of the Department of Public Welfare), there might have been some unbridgeable cultural gap between the two. A gap also existed in the bureaucratic reform process when the proposal for establishing the MSDHS was placed on the table. While the reform initiators, who were mainly high-level cabinet members, directed and thoroughly controlled the process of reform, policy practitioners themselves had only a negligible role. The policy architects in the first stage and reform drivers during the bureaucratic reform process might have found the concept of human security intriguing and promising in terms of promoting their organizational missions, which in turn helped elevate the status of Thai diplomacy in the eyes of the international community.

Yet, while promotion of a foreign concept abroad is one thing, actual implementation of that concept on home soil is an utterly different thing. When foreign concepts enter the implementation phase, according to Bidhya Bowornwattana, a clash of ideas and values may be

inevitable and “ugly reform hybrids” may ensue.⁶⁸ This was certainly the case for the importation of human security into the Thai polity. The problem in this case was complicated even more by the fact that the policy architects (Ministry of Foreign Affairs) and the policy implementers (Department of Public Welfare) had completely different policy orientations, and bureaucrats in the Department of Public Welfare, who constituted the core of the newly created human security ministry, were not significantly involved in the process of establishing the new ministry.⁶⁹ When they found that the concept of human security was too abstract, broad, ambiguous, and elusive to operationalize into bureaucratic function, they seemed to return to their old working philosophy of providing social welfare to needy people.

Third, the introduction of the human security concept into the Thai polity unfortunately did not engender the necessary debate and discussion about security structures, not to mention the security policy shift or security sector reform. As alluded to earlier, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs employed the concept of human security in a way that was aimed primarily at improving Thailand’s diplomatic image rather than driving an internal reform agenda. In the same vein, when the Thaksin administration labeled the newly established ministry with the term “human security,” it had no intention of pushing for security reform and instead limited deliberation exclusively to the area of social issues rather than including security issues. In the end, state or national security seems to be as dominant as ever, untouched by the arrival of human security.

Fourth, according to the UNDP’s approach, human security encompasses a wide range of dimensions, including health security, food security, political security, economic security, environmental security, personal security, and community security. Yet the integration of all these aspects into a single ministry seems unfeasible, both on paper and in practice. Thailand is a case in point. The jurisdiction of the human security ministry in Thailand includes only small portions of the overall concept of human security, covering merely community security, shelter and inhabitants, family, and some aspects of economic security. Other dimensions of human

⁶⁸ Bidhya Bowornwathana, “Bureaucrats, Politicians and the Transfer of Administrative Reform into Thailand,” in *Comparative Administrative Change and Reform: Lessons Learned*, ed. Jon Pierre and Patricia Ingraham (Montreal: McGill-Queen’s University Press, 2010), 211

⁶⁹ Interviews with two key MSDHS informants, June 26 and 30, 2014.

security fall under the jurisdiction of various other ministries and agencies, including a number of A or B-grade ministries, such as the Ministry of Interior, Ministry of Defense, and economic ministries.

Numerous problems arise from this situation, notably various vulnerable groups, such as migrants, informal laborers, and people in the three southern border provinces, are left outside the protective cover of human security. Moreover, there is a lack of coordination among different agencies with different mandates under the rigid vertical structure of the Thai bureaucracy. Even worse, when policy objectives and organizational interests are in conflict, human security always remains secondary to national economic interests and national security. This holds true not only for the MSDHS, but also for other agencies that deal with certain dimensions of human security, such as the National Health Commission (NHC).

With a framework oriented toward participation and communitarianism, the NHC has engaged with many key stakeholders, especially from the civil society sector, by organizing Health Assemblies as a deliberative policy platform. The outputs from Health Assemblies are various health policy recommendations related to physical, social, environmental, and socio-economic dimensions of health. Issues covered by these health policy recommendations include health impact assessment (HIA) regulations, teenage pregnancy, social inequality reduction, impact from free trade agreements (FTAs), and radical decentralization in the form of “self-managed communities.”⁷⁰ In principle, the NHC could propose the policy recommendations from the National Health Assemblies directly to the cabinet, but in reality the cabinet merely acknowledges many of NHC’s policies without taking steps to implement them. In conclusion, in spite of the fact that the NHC was established as another organization related to the new discourse of human security, it seems that in practice the commission lacks sufficient real-world influence in terms of human security policy.

Fifth, according to key informants, the major cause of the failure to mainstream human security in Thailand may stem from its ambiguity and the vagueness of the concept. For academics, the elusiveness of the concept seems to be more of an appealing feature than a

⁷⁰ See examples at www.samatcha.org.

shortcoming, as it enables new types of challenges to be included in the policy stream. However, for policy practitioners, it is a source of confusion, since they do not know how to prioritize policy problems or how to transform the concept into practical operation. For NGOs, the abstraction of the concept makes it much more difficult to gather bottom-up support for campaigns around human security. Therefore, they have opted instead to privilege the human rights concept, which they regard as more practical and powerful than human security.

Finally, as this research aims to shed light on the process of human security practices in Thailand, it recognizes the limitations as well as the potential for future research. Some areas and dimensions that this research did not have enough space to thoroughly examine are worthy of further study. For example, it would be interesting to investigate discursive practices of various local hegemonic concepts, such as a “sufficiency economy philosophy” and “society with morality,” as well as the intersection between these home-grown concepts and the imported concept of human security. Likewise, on the emerging and alarming issue of human trafficking, more in-depth research is needed to examine the seemingly Janus-faced responses of the Thai government to external stimuli. Moreover, comparative studies, whether cross-country or cross-issue, could be very helpful in opening up new perspectives and gaining a better understanding not only of human security policy, but also public governance processes.

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List of Interviewees

Name	Title	Date of Interview
1. Prof. Surichai Wun'Gaeo	Professor of Sociology	April 11 and 17, 2014
2. Prof. Dr. Amara Pongsapich	Chair, NHRC Thailand	April 18, 2014
3. Ms. Pornprapa Sintunava	Leading staff in the Office of Social Development and Human Security Standard, Ministry of Social Development and Human Security (MSDHS)	June 26, 2014
4. Mr. Chinchai Chie-charoen	Deputy Director of the National Commission on Social Welfare Promotion Office, Ministry of Social Development and Human Security (MSDHS)	June 30, 2014
5. Ms. Parichart Sivaraks	Independent consultant, Former UNDP officer	July 3, 2014
6. Mr. Manasporn Bhamornbhutr	Senior staff at Chiang Mai Provincial Office of Social Development and Human Security	July 7, 2014
7. Ms. Suntaree Hathee Saeng-ging	Secretary General of NGO Coordinating Committee on Development, Thailand	July 18, 2014
8. Dr. Piyahuch Wuttisorn 9. Ms. Dauangkamon Thongmuang	Director Specialist Social Database and Indicator Development Office, Office of the National Economic and Social Development Board (NESDB)	July 25, 2014

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Abstract (in Japanese)

要約

本稿は、タイにおける人間の安全保障の実践について、概念と実務における運用の二つの観点から検証するものである。特に、なぜ、そしてどのように、タイの政策立案者が人間の安全保障の概念を同国の政治機構に導入し受容したか、また、彼らが人間の安全保障の問題に関してその価値と課題をどのように認識しているか、という点に焦点を当てる。文献レビューおよび政府・非政府・学术界の各セクター計9人の主要関係者に対するインタビューを通して、タイという国の人間の安全保障に対する姿勢には二面性があることが明らかとなる。タイは、海外においては人間の安全保障に関する言説を推進し、国内においては人間の安全保障省を設立することによって、人間の安全保障の問題を主流化しているように見えるが、こうしたプロセスには裏の面が存在する。人間の安全保障を脆弱な人々のための社会保障としてのみ捉える還元主義的な見方とは別に、「人間の安全保障」という概念は常に「国家」（政治的実体としての、或いは国民の共同体としての）の安全保障に対して二次的なものと位置付けられている。その結果、タイ型の人間の安全保障では、同概念が元々有していた本質的内容は曖昧化し、依然として国家安全保障の暗い影の中に埋もれている。最後に本稿は、タイにおける人間の安全保障の理想と実践の間にある乖離は、同概念が政策関係者の目から見て曖昧であること、政策立案者と政策実施者の間のギャップの存在、そして同概念の脱・政治化に起因することを明らかにする。



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