

IMPLICATIONS OF ENVIRONMENTAL SECURITY TO HUMAN SECURITY

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The environmental security has been considered and it is still considered a very delicate issue which is associated with the significant impact on various aspects of human security. The economic and military security established the requirements for the development of the concept of human security. The purpose of this paper is to analyze the relationship between human security and environmental security, highlighting the connection Cause-Consequence between the constituent elements of these two concepts. In this work we will try to reply to the following question: *How is human security related to the environmental security and how do they impact the human security?* To be able to answer to this question it is first necessary to define two key concepts that will be used in this paper: human security and environmental security. After analyzing the concept of human security and environmental security, we selected the district of Shkodra as a case study because it is an issue which has a direct impact not only in the lives of people in the region but also in the public safety as it is an issue that also involves state structures.

Conclusions of this study are:

Firstly, the floods have a direct impact on human safety due to the economic and social characteristics in this geographical area. These elements are under the direct influence of climate change.

Secondly, the urban movement of the population without urban planning of these areas has made individuals more vulnerable to flooding.

Thirdly, the displaced population in this area belongs to poor strata and has limited opportunities to deal with the consequences of climate change. This shows the necessity of the operations of the state.

Fourth, any climate change may cause consequences to the economic security of this population as the sources of economic income of the population in this area are mainly related to agriculture, livestock or tourism.

Key words: *Environmental Security, Human Security, Environmental Degradation, Shkodra Region.*

Before the 90s, the period of the Cold War, the internal affairs were treated as an exclusivity of states and any interference from outside was considered as a violation of the sovereignty and territorial and political integrity of the states. The end of the Cold War was accompanied by radical changes and since that time the discipline of international relations and security studies underwent a two-dimensional transformation. The first dimension (also known as horizontal) means that the discipline has broadened its focus, including a wide range of non-military threats, such as international terrorism, nationalism, religious extremism, states collapses, epidemic diseases, poverty, environmental issues and global warming.

While the second dimension (also known as vertical dimension) means that security studies are considered by the individual level of analysis. The situation showed the need for a focus on the welfare of ordinary people who face multiple threats to their daily lives, leading to what is known as human security approach. The majority part of the security researchers is skeptical about the idea of human security. They argue that it is a too broad concept in order to be analytically and practically useful. Policy makers are becoming more and more aware about the importance of the concept of human security (Henk, 2005: 7). In the new security studies, human security emerged as an alternative and complementary approach of 'State - centric' that had prevailed in these studies until the 1990s. Moreover, issues such as terrorism, radicalism, transnational organized crime, global warming, demographic growth, HIV / AIDS etc, constitute asymmetric threats different from traditional security threats and as a result the traditional mechanisms of action against threats, they were not considered any more as suitable for dealing with such situations.

The definition of human security relates to the Human Development Report of the United Nations, 1994. According to this report, the concept of security has been interpreted from a long time as "security of the territory from external aggression, protection of national interests in foreign policy or as global security against the threat of a nuclear holocaust" (UNDP, 1994: 22). As seen from this formulation, the object reference has been the "nation-state" and not individuals living in these countries. To sum up we can say that human security has two main components: *freedom from fear* and *freedom from need*. This means safety from chronic threats as hunger, disease and repression. Also, it means protection from unexpected failures and harmful patterns of daily life - at home, work or in the community (UNDP, 1994: 23). Given that human security is an approach with a broad focus, its elements can be grouped into seven main categories (UNDP, 1994: 24): 1) Economic security - providing a minimum subsistence income for every individual; 2) Food security - ensuring physical and economic access to basic food, 3) Health Safety - ensuring a minimum protection from diseases and unhealthy ways of living; 4) Environmental security - the protection of people from short and long term natural threats, human threats in nature and the destruction of the natural environment; 5) individual security - protecting people from physical violence inflicted by the state, other states, violent individuals and non-state actors, domestic violence or by the individual (protection from suicide), 6) Community Safety - survival of the traditional culture and ethnic groups; 7) Political Security – protect civil and political rights and freedom from political oppression. From the analysis of the approach on human security, we understand that it is an approach that is focused on individuals in every aspect of life. An individual can not feel safe if he/she is not guaranteed some minimum vital. The welfare of individuals within a country is directly related to their safety but also to the safety of their country in many aspects. The level of security will be higher if the welfare indicators of individuals in a given society are high. One of the elements of

human security which has a special importance in ensuring the welfare and safety of individuals is the environmental security.

What do we mean by environment and environmental security? "Environment is the sum of all external conditions affecting the life, development and survival of an organism. It refers to the physical conditions that affect natural resources and ecosystems that support these resources "(UNEP, 2009: 6). Environmental security became an integral part of security issues because of the visibility of new security threats such as population growth, depletion or pollution of groundwater, degradation of arable land, loss of tropical forests, significantly increase greenhouse gas emissions, extinction of species, rapid urbanization, air and water pollution problems, melting glaciers, and increased frequency of storms level.

According to this view, the environmental security is linked to environmental threats such as degradation of the environment and lack of natural resources by showing its impact on the security of individuals and leading to the necessity of preventing threats and natural disasters. The focus of environmental safety is related to "remediation of the damage caused to the environment, protection of human life, protection of the environment by preventing abuses against human environment" (Morales, 2006: 4). If natural resources are wasted and not properly maintained, it can lead to ecological crises. When they are combined with ecological crises they may lead to the degradation of the environment. As a result we can say that the determinants of environmental uncertainties are: the place where people live and the kind of environmental changes in these countries, the level of skepticism of individuals against damages caused by environmental changes, and the capacity of people to adapt environmental changes (Collins, 2010: 254). The environmental degradation and limited natural resources may lead to possible conflicts between individuals or social groups and even states.

How is human security related to environmental security and what is the impact of floods on human security? After analyzing the concept of human security and environmental security, Shkodra district was selected as a case study for the only reason that it is an issue which has a direct impact not only to the lives of people in this region but also on the national security as it is a matter which involves state structures and society as a whole.

Shkodra district lies in the north - western part of Albania. It has an area of 2.049 km² and it is located near the lake with the same name (Shkodra Lake), Drini, Buna and Kiri rivers. Shkodra Lake and Drini and Buna Rivers form a system that collects water in the hydrographic basin with a total area of 19582 km² (Hydrology of Albania, 1984: 99). Shkodra has a Mediterranean climate, mild winters and wet, hot and dry summers. The average annual temperatures range from 14.5 ° C to 16.8 ° C. There falls an average of 2,000 mm of rain per year, so it is one of the most humid areas of Albania. In the district of Shkodra there are the largest hydro-power stations such as Vau Dejës and Koman. These power stations are the main producers of electricity in Albania. In this district there are also the Plains of Nënshkodra and Mbishkodra which are affected by the natural phenomenon of flooding.

This area is characterized by a high biological diversity expressed in high ecological diversity, with a variety of ecosystems, habitats and species. The high level of biological diversity of Shkodra Lake has included this lake in the Ramsar List, and together with Buna River they are included in the IBA (important bird areas) and the European Green Belt (Rakaj, 2008: 184).

Shkodra Lake and Buna River represent two of the five important areas for flora in northern Albania (IPA and IBA).

High biological diversity of this area is a result of variations of relief, geographical position, geological factors, hydrological and favorable climate conditions etc. The majority of the surface area is flat and used as agricultural land planted with field plants, but also olive groves, vineyards and orchards. An important part of this area is the water ecosystem and habitats with salt, half salt and fresh water. The capacity and high productivity of this area with fish and poultry come as a result of these factors. In Shkodra region there are about 2000 species of plants, which account for 56% of Albanian Flora (Dhora, Rakaj, 2010: 96).

The Ecological situation results to be worse due to the anthropogenic factors. In this area there are happening many actions which in making the situation worse and worse. They are as following: deforestation, cutting and burning forests, illegal hunting of birds and mammals; intensive illegal fishing by both legal and illegal means, the change of the flow of Drin and Buna rivers; the unfiltered urban sewage into rivers in some areas of the lake and Buna river; disposal of solid waste into rivers, illegal constructions in and near the lake shore, intensive grazing, poor environmental management, lack of permanent monitoring, poor social economic status of the population, high levels of unemployment and lack of investments. All above mentioned actions have made many plants and animals to be endangered or even extinct.

Demographic indicators constitute a powerful instrument of urban and inter-urban management and administration among and within municipalities or communes. The presentation of the situation of natural disasters caused by flooding would not be complete without an analysis of demographic and socio-economic indicators. Shkodra district has a favorable geographical position for trade and communication. The county administrative center is the city of Shkodra. At national level, Shkodra district is ranked the second on terms of surface and the fifth on terms of the population. The territory of the district, with a total of about 341 049 inhabitants, consists of three main regions: Shkoder, Malësia e Madhe and Puka. In this district there are five municipalities, 6 towns, 28 communes and 272 villages. About two thirds of the district population lives in Shkodra.

62.3%, of the population live in rural areas, especially in the villages of Shkodra. As in many other urban areas, Shkodra, Puka and Koplík hosted a large number of the population which came mainly from remote areas of mountain regions. During the transition period, the region has undergone to substantial demographic changes, like other regions of the country. Migration is a typical phenomenon of recent years in Shkodra district. A part of the population moved within the district of Shkodra. There has been a chaotic movement of people within a short time and they were mainly located in the city of Shkodra. This movement had negative impact on different sectors such the occupation of other's property and uncontrolled construction without permission. Families that moved have the following specifications: They are in a worse economic situation than the average of other families in the region they were located; They face the problem of the lack of agricultural land and live mainly with immigration income; They have the highest proportion of elderly (because of youth went to emigration); They live in areas that have problems with the urbanization, lack of roads, sanitation etc. When there were floods, people in these areas were less experienced or unprepared to cope with such situations. They generally have the feeling that they are not provided the service in the same way as to the indigenous

population.

Shkodra district offers a considerable potential capacity for further growth and economic development. This region has traditionally been the largest economic center of northern Albania, this also due to the favorable geographical position on the border with Montenegro. The main economic activities in Shkodra district are concentrated in light industries (agro-industry, wood processing industry), agriculture, agribusiness, construction and building materials production etc. Another important component of economic development in the region is the energy sector, which is based mainly on this region and enables the advantages of renewable energy sources (Hydro-power stations of Koman and Vau-Dejës). Tourism is another significant feature of the economy in Shkodra. This region provides favorable natural conditions for the development of four types of tourism, lake, sea, seaside (Shkodra Lake and the coast of Velipoja). Velipoja is located in Albanian north coast and is intensively frequented by tourists and held as one of the main natural resources of Shkodra, mountain and winter tourism (Alps and Bjeshkët e Namuna). Shkodra district experienced a very difficult situation during the floods in 2009-2010. The most difficult situation was in November – December 2010. The situation during this flood was as following: 14130 flooded ha of land, 4460 flooded houses, 5540 houses surrounded by water, 14210 people evacuated.

We can say that the situation during 2009-2010 has been very difficult for the specifications, size, geographical scope, variety of problems, the number of people who were involved in this situation and variety of structures that were involved in the management of this situation. For the first time, civil emergency structures at all levels from the national to the local level took part in this intervention. They coped with this situation by using all logistical and human potentials that the Albanian government currently possesses. A considerable support was provided by international organizations and foreign states that in collaboration with our structures faced this situation and managed it with professionalism. It is very important to mention that there has not been lost any human life during this critical period.

The phenomenon of flooding that has affected the region of Shkodra is as a result of natural factors and human factors. When we talk about natural factor we consider the climate change process and human factor as the actions and inactions of individuals associated with environmental protection. The combination of these factors led to the situation that faced Shkodra district and many other areas. As already mentioned above the economic resources for this region are directly related to environmental safety and human security too. Climate changes and flooding affect the performance of these sectors of economy. They can then be considered in terms of safety / economic insecurity and food for the inhabitants of this region, elements that are an integral part of the human security. A threat to the security of these sectors reflected in the security threat to the health and social life.

In conclusion we can say that:

1. Floods have a direct impact on human security due to the economic characteristics, social and geographical area, elements which are directly affected by climate change.
2. Population moved to flooded areas without any urban planning making these individuals more vulnerable to flooding.

3. The displaced population in this area belongs to poor strata and has limited opportunities to deal with the consequences of climate change. This shows the necessity of the operations of the state.

4. Since the economic sources of income of the population of this area are mainly related to agriculture, livestock and tourism, climate changes cause immediate consequences on economic security of this population.

All these elements are clear indicators of the impact of floods on human safety. In such a situation it is necessary to:

- Determine the degree of human intervention on nature and taking measures to prevent the destruction of biological balances of various natural ecosystems.
- State agencies should establish a moratorium prohibiting new construction in these areas and develop a customized layout by specifying elements of this area.
- Measures must be taken to intervene in the disposition of river beds and protective embankments in land reclamation and drainage of the area.
- Measures must be taken to protect crops and characteristic species of this area, which are a source of economic development of the area.
- Given the consequences of these floods in individuals' life welfare and safety we can say that environmental security has a direct impact on human security. An individual cannot be sure if he/she and others do not respect the environment. The negative impact of individuals accelerates the climate changes and may lead to numerous environmental effects. Climate change is a global phenomenon, the consequences of which affect, directly or indirectly of every country. For this reason the solution of this phenomenon must be global.
- International cooperation can be the solution to ensure environmental safety, and therefore human security. It is necessary that this cooperation also includes state actors as well as non-state actors. This could be the most effective response possible against this phenomenon.

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