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Human security in Australia: public interest and political consequences

JULIET PIETSCH AND IAN McALLISTER*

The new human security paradigm has reconceptualised security beyond traditional physical threats to encompass 'lifestyle' concerns, such as health and environmental security. This article uses national survey data collected in Australia in 2007 to examine how public opinion views this new paradigm and to evaluate its political consequences. The results show that the public makes a clear distinction between all four types of human security—health, the environment, national security and the economy. Longitudinal analysis shows that health and the environment have gained greater prominence with the public since 1990. Each dimension of human security has only limited roots in the social structure. However, each has important consequences for the ideological orientation of the public, and for party support. The authors conclude that as 'lifestyle' concerns become more prominent for the public, parties of the right will have to adapt to the new paradigm in order to ensure that they are not electorally disadvantaged.

Traditionally, the prevailing perceptions of security threats among the public have been in terms of physical threats emanating mainly from state actors. This was particularly the case during the cold war period, when the ever-present threat of nuclear war focused attention on the threat posed by rival nation states. For the advanced democracies, the end of the cold war in 1990, rising economic prosperity, effective social safety nets and increasing globalisation have made concerns about physical security less relevant. In turn, attention has shifted towards a much broader conception of security, encompassing health, the economy and the environment. This change was benchmarked by the United Nations Commission on Human Security's (CHS) 2003 report *Human Security Now* (see also Frerks and Goldewijk 2007; Rudolph 2003).

A key element in the human security paradigm is the role of public opinion. We know much about how the public views traditional threats from state actors, and post-9/11 there has been much US research on the public's views of terrorism orchestrated by non-state actors (Davis and Silver 2004; Huddy *et al.* 2005).¹ Nevertheless, we still know little about the relative importance placed on the main aspects of the human security paradigm by the public; even less is

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known about the explanations for views of the paradigm, or about its political consequences. This article contributes to this new debate about human security by examining the role of public opinion. Using the 2007 Australian Election Study (AES) survey (McAllister *et al.* 2007), the article has three aims. First, we identify the new types of security concerns emerging within the Australian public drawing on this broadened approach to security. Second, we explore whether different social groups have particular human security concerns. And third, we explore how these security concerns influence political ideology and support for political parties. As a background, we begin with an introduction to human security as a useful analytical framework for investigating new security threat concerns in Australia.

Australia is a particularly appropriate case study to examine the public's views of the human security paradigm for two main reasons. First, since World War II, there has been no external security threat to Australia, and although Australia participated in the Vietnam War until 1972, it was never the polarising political issue that it became in the United States. Australia has also been relatively immune from terrorism, and until the Bali bombings in October 2002, such incidents that have occurred have generally been small scale, isolated and, for the most part, have involved attacks on foreign diplomats by groups concerned with grievances in their home countries.² The Bali bombings, which killed 202 people, 88 of them Australian, while occurring outside Australia, made public opinion acutely aware of the threat from terrorism (McAllister 2008). At the same time, as a middle power state, Australia has promoted a foreign policy which emphasises its defence alliance with the United States, as well as engagement with its Asian neighbours (Beeson 2003; Tow 2004).

The second reason why Australia represents an appropriate case study is because there is a significant gap in the literature on the application and operationalisation of human security in developed countries. For instance, Chandler (2008) suggests the need to conduct empirical research on human security discourses appropriated by policy makers and Owen (2008) argues that human security not only affects developing countries but developed countries as well. While human security concerns tend to have less impact in developed countries, there is still a need for the developed world to respond to human security crises in neighbouring developing countries. Therefore, this research seeks to ascertain the level of public interest in human security concerns that are, on the one hand, local but, on the other hand, linked to developing countries within the region. After ascertaining the level of public interest, we can then gauge whether Australia's elected representatives are responding appropriately.

The human security paradigm

In recent years there has been much discussion on broadening the security paradigm beyond the traditional physical threats to the state to include a wider

range of threats. The shape that any framework of human security might take has been widely debated in government and academic sectors. The idea of human security originated from the possibilities of new threats emerging in a post-cold war era. On the one hand, the risks associated with global confrontation and interstate conflicts associated with the cold war have decreased. On the other hand, significant new security threats have emerged including intrastate conflicts, terrorism, environmental degradation, food insecurity, rising fuel prices, HIV/AIDS and drugs smuggling. According to Bajpai (2004: 360): 'human security refers to threats to the life and liberty of individuals and communities, balanced by capacities to deal with those threats'. Proponents of the human security paradigm argue that the traditional state-based security paradigm has failed to protect the lives of millions across the world (Acharya 2004; Axworthy 2001; Leaning 2004; Thakur 2004).

There are various definitions of human security. The original United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) report defined human security as 'first, safety from such chronic threats as hunger, disease and repression. And second ... protection from sudden and hurtful disruptions in the patterns of daily life – whether in homes, in jobs or communities' (UNDP 1994: 23). The original report included seven conceptual groupings of potential security threats: (1) economic security; (2) food security; (3) health security; (4) environmental security; (5) personal security; (6) community security; and (7) political security. Since the publication of the report, scholars have developed new understandings of human security to respond to specific security threats. For instance, in line with the position of the CHS (2003), Alkire (2004) and Leaning (2004) suggest that the human security paradigm should be significantly widened to include social, psychological, political and economic aspects of vulnerability. Axworthy (2001) similarly argues that the new approach should encompass a wide variety of vulnerabilities.

Advocates of human security suggest that improving the quality of life by providing economic, health and environmental security will lower the risk of serious internal threats. Thakur (2004) argues that human security is improved when the quality of life in any society is upgraded. Without a good quality of life in terms of reasonable living standards and adequate health care, security threats are likely to escalate. For example, at the height of the Asian financial crisis in 1998, price rises and job losses resulted in ethnically targeted violence towards Chinese Indonesians (Turner 2003). Ten years later, in 2008, rising food and oil prices triggered riots in Egypt, Indonesia, Cameroon, Peru and Haiti, contributing to a heightened awareness of internal security threats. Clearly, then, there is good evidence to suggest that these various dimensions of human security are all closely interrelated.

The broadening of the security agenda recognises the need to link security concerns affecting the individual and security concerns affecting the state (national security). In *People, States and Fear*, Buzan (1991) demonstrates the need to broaden the concept of security used in international relations to include

other sectors apart from military or national security. Similarly, Liotta (2002) notes that human and state/national security are now understood in increasingly sophisticated and interconnected ways. Liotta (2002: 474) argues that we may be witnessing a 'boomerang effect' in which we must give equal attention to both national and human security in order to adapt to a changing security environment. Liotta predicts that in the future we will see a blurring of foreign and domestic policy concerns in powerful developed states.

Different developed countries have adopted the concept of human security as an integral part of their foreign policy, in order to address the different kinds of security threats that affect the livelihood of their citizens and those to whom they provide foreign aid. In 1998, the Japanese Prime Minister, Keizo Obuchi, launched his country's program on human security as a central plank of its foreign policy. The Japanese government incorporated a very broad list of concerns as part of a human security agenda, including environmental degradation, violations of human rights, transnational organised crime, illicit drugs, refugees, poverty, anti-personnel landmines and infectious diseases. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan (MOFA) also set up the CHS and the largest trust fund in the United Nations (MOFA 2008).

While Japan has a wide definition of human security, Canada has a much narrower focus, which includes pervasive threats to human rights, safety and lives (Axworthy 2001). Lloyd Axworthy, the Canadian Minister of Foreign Affairs between 1999 and 2000, led the way in promoting a human security foreign policy. Canada also joined with Norway to take the lead in establishing a Human Security Network (HSN) of states and non-governmental organisations. The HSN promotes human rights, the rule of law, democratic governance and democratic structures as well as promoting sustainable human development. Some of the most successful achievements of Canada's leading role in promoting human security policy include the establishment of the International Criminal Court (ICC), founded in 2002, and the International Convention to Ban Landmines, launched in 1999, which now includes 158 countries as signatories. However, since the end of Lloyd Axworthy's tenure, human security has received less attention in Canadian foreign policy and the United Nations more generally (see Wibben 2008). Instead, the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq and terrorism have dominated the policy agenda (Suhrke 2004).

Following Liotta's prediction, Australia has broadened its security agenda to link individual security concerns that form part of the human security paradigm with state/national security concerns. The Australian government commissioned a new defence White Paper in February 2008 and as part of the White Paper process released a defence policy discussion paper in June 2008 entitled *Key Questions for Defence in the 21st Century* for community consultation (Australian Government, Department of Defence 2008). The discussion paper argues that any new defence policy must incorporate human security concerns such as the environment, terrorism and crime, energy security, infectious diseases and global demographic changes, as well as national security.

The discussion paper recognises that the causes of potential conflict in Australia have broadened considerably. Of significance for Australia is the maintenance of regional stability in the Asia-Pacific where there are known terrorist groups and extremist ideologies. Other possible causes of conflict might stem from the scarcity of resources such as water and arable land. For example, a significant concern for Australia is the likelihood of conflict due to a scarcity of resources in the Asia-Pacific region (HREOC 2009). Overall, the discussion paper recognises the interdependence of a range of human security challenges and the likelihood of threats emerging from within states as well as between states. The United States is also planning to build stronger links between economic and environmental security with state/national security by committing funds to renewable energy sources which will decrease the dependence on foreign oil. Naturally, decreasing dependence on foreign oil will contribute to long-term national security (White House 2009). This plan demonstrates an acknowledgement of the emerging links between human and national security.

Human security and its critics

While the idea of human security has proven influential within the United Nations and in some states, there is considerable debate on the usefulness of the concept for policy makers, who are given little guidance in the prioritisation of competing policy goals. Critics of the human security paradigm have contested the broad conceptualisation of human security, which includes a long list of concerns such as economic security, the provision of good education and health care, environmental security and safety from violent threats (Buzan 2004; Krause 2004; MacFarlane 2004; Newman 2004; Paris 2001). Most notably, scholars and policy makers highlight that more research is needed to draw conclusive links between development and security concerns (Chandler 2008; IPI 2004; Paris 2001).

Other scholars are critical of the underlying political motives of a human security paradigm, which are often driven by a normative agenda. It is argued that the conflation of normative theorising with policy practices is potentially problematic. Chandler (2008: 428), for instance, argues that human security is 'the dog that didn't bark', in that its integration into the mainstream of policy making has reinforced, rather than challenged, existing policy frameworks. The idealistic or normative agenda of human security, according to Chandler, is often not supported with real policy outcomes or any clear strategic foreign policy visions. Chandler refers to the concept of 'anti-foreign policy' whereby 'policy makers seek to evade responsibility for strategic policy making' (Chandler 2007: 365). Chandler's main argument is that ambitious policy claims that are normative in orientation often bear little or no relationship with practice on the ground. However, Wibben (2008: 459) points out that while proponents of traditional

studies have claimed that they do not hold a normative position, it is true that visions of the political underlie all political thinking.

The issue of securitisation is also problematic (see MacFarlane and Khong 2006; Mack 2002). The European 'Copenhagen School', distinguished by the work of Ole Wæver and Barry Buzan, attempted to bridge the traditional understandings of security with broader approaches to security through the concept of securitisation (see Floyd 2007; Huysmans 1998). The Copenhagen School examined the processes of real-life securitisations and *how* issues become securitised in particular contexts. It is generally understood that securitising an issue may move it up the policy hierarchy of governments. However, critics suggest distinct policy areas such as the military and the environment should be treated very differently (see Deudney 1990). While military threats tend to be very specific and deliberate, environmental threats are often unintended, transboundary and involve a wide range of actors, and therefore require a unique policy response. For instance, the responses to environmental problems tend to be more long term and often involve nearly all actors of society.

While there are many complex criticisms relating to how security should be practised, human security is still largely a work in progress which has the future potential to improve both the lives of individuals and national security through effective policy making and global governance. It seems clear that the narrow frameworks of traditional approaches to security need to be revisited (see Wibben 2008). Therefore, there is still considerable work involved in implementing human security in practice and drawing on human security as a viable policy framework. Even though there are considerable limitations, one of the key advantages for emphasising human security in addition to traditional security concerns is that it provides an opportunity for political parties to identify new local and global security issues that are of concern to their electorate and respond appropriately.

This article responds to several of the criticisms mentioned above in three distinct ways. First, we operationalise and apply the concept of the human security paradigm within an industrialised context. Second, to counter some of the difficulties associated with a broad conceptualisation of human security, we narrow the focus of human security into several key policy areas for reasons of conceptual clarity and analytic rigour. Third, we build links between government agendas and public policy by examining the role of public opinion in influencing public policy. In terms of this latter point, it is generally agreed among social scientists in democratic countries that public opinion influences policy 'most of the time, often strongly' (Burnstein 2003: 29). Where there is less certainty is just how much impact public opinion has in shaping public policy (see Page 1994; Stimson *et al.* 1995).

Exploring the final question may address some of Chandler's criticisms that human security agendas are rarely translated into substantive public policy on the ground. For example, it is possible that governments may want to commit large amounts of public funds to sustainable development or other human

security issues, but in doing so could face electoral defeat if they ignore the immediate concerns of their own electorate. It is also possible that the public may be in favour of a strong commitment to human security issues. However, there are also influential interest organisations whose political activities may not be in line with public opinion. Exploring these dynamics reveals the complexity of linking normative human security agendas with public policy frameworks. To unravel some of this complexity, we examine public opinion towards human security in Australia.

Public opinion towards human security

How far does the public identify the various dimensions of human security as potential threats to their well-being, and to what extent are the dimensions viewed as being interrelated? We begin our analysis by examining the structure of public opinion towards human security. The 2007 AES asked the survey respondents how important they considered 14 election issues were to them personally in deciding how to vote.³ We used a multivariate factor analysis to improve the internal validity of our measures. Factor analysis is used to extract the general dimensions underlying groups of questions (de Vaus 2002). Table 1 shows that 11 of these 14 election issues form four distinct factors, each representing one of the dimensions of human security.⁴ The strongest factor is environmental security, incorporating items on the importance of global warming, the environment and water management. Most important to the public is water management, not surprisingly, coming after a period of prolonged drought; 70 percent of voters regarded it as 'extremely important', with only health being regarded as of greater importance. The second factor represents national security, and includes the traditional security items of defence and terrorism, along with immigration. The public identifies immigration as an aspect of physical security because it is seen as one part of a general view about border protection (McAllister 2003).

The remaining two factors in Table 1 represent different aspects of security. Health and well-being is represented by industrial relations, education and health. Industrial relations was a major election issue because of the Liberal–National Coalition government's attempt to reform the system and remove legally guaranteed workers' rights, and was thus interpreted by voters as an issue related to their well-being, rather than as a broader economic issue. In fact, industrial relations was the single most important issue that caused voters to defect from the Liberal–National Coalition to Labor (Bean and McAllister 2008). Finally, economic security consists of two items: taxation and interest rates. The strong growth in the economy up to the 2007 election, fuelled by the demand for resources from China and India, meant that the economy was not a major issue for voters in the election; this is reflected in the relatively low proportion of voters mentioning these two issues as of importance to them.

Table 1. The structure of public support for human security

	Percent saying 'extremely important'	Factor loadings			
		1	2	3	4
<i>Environmental security</i>					
Global warming	52	0.86	0.01	0.11	0.01
Environment	59	0.80	-0.06	0.29	0.03
Water management	70	0.70	0.28	0.09	0.08
<i>National security</i>					
Defence and national security	40	0.12	0.82	0.08	0.14
Terrorism	43	0.12	0.79	0.00	0.24
Immigration	32	-0.13	0.51	0.50	0.00
<i>Health and well-being security</i>					
Industrial relations	51	0.14	-0.05	0.72	0.10
Education	68	0.26	0.08	0.70	0.08
Health and medical care	76	0.38	0.30	0.49	0.06
<i>Economic security</i>					
Taxation	39	-0.03	0.14	0.12	0.85
Interest rates	43	0.12	0.18	0.07	0.84
Eigenvalues		3.31	1.75	1.02	0.99
Percent variance		30.1	15.9	9.5	9.0

Note: Varimax rotated factor loadings from a principal components factor analysis with unities in the main diagonal. Reliabilities (Cronbach's alpha) for the four factors are 0.76, 0.63, 0.58 and 0.69, respectively. The question was: 'Here is a list of important issues that were discussed during the election campaign. When you were deciding about how to vote, how important was each of these issues to you personally?' N = 1873.

Source: Australian Election Study (McAllister *et al.* 2007).

By combining these items into four scales, we can arrive at a summary measure of the public's support for the human security paradigm, in the context of the 2007 Australian federal election.⁵ Most important is health and well-being, with a mean of 8 on the 0–10 scale. This reflects the long-term concern of the public about health as an election issue and, to a lesser extent, education. Health was also the most important issue for voters in the 2004 election, followed by taxation and education. Environmental security is just behind health and well-being in importance to voters. The environment had previously been a second-order issue for voters; it peaked in importance in the 1990 election, which saw a surge in support for the Greens, but declined in importance during the course of the 1990s. The prolonged drought and concerns about global warming and the effects this would have on Australia's climate have made environmental security a first-order political issue. The remaining two scales—economic security and national security—are of lesser importance to voters, reflecting the positive economic conditions prevailing up to the 2007 election and the absence of any traditional physical threat (see Figure 1).

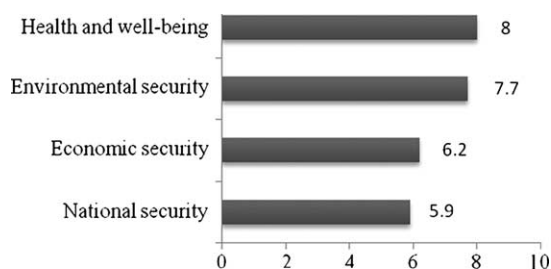


Figure 1. Public support for the human security paradigm.
Source: Australian Election Study (McAllister *et al.* 2007).

These four dimensions represent the public's priorities concerning the human security paradigm. What we might call 'lifestyle' concerns—health and the environment—are very much the main priority for voters, followed by concerns about 'physical' security—represented by the economy and national security. Following a peak unemployment rate of 11 percent in 1993, unemployment declined throughout the late 1990s in line with the growth in demand for commodities, dropping to a rate of 4.1 percent in March 2008. Heightened concerns about border protection, reflected in the Tampa incident which overshadowed the 2001 election, have been rare, and the general absence of any physical threats to Australia's security since the end of the Vietnam War in 1975 has meant that this has been a low priority for voters.⁶ As a consequence of these changes to the international environment and to the domestic economy, lifestyle issues have become more important to most Australian voters.

Decreasing conflict in the international environment coupled with sustained economic growth should have produced a gradual shift away from concerns about physical security, towards a concern for lifestyle security. Combining the two physical security scales (national and economic security) into a single scale, and doing the same for the two lifestyle concerns (health and the environment), allows us to test this hypothesis.⁷ The AES has asked these questions successively in surveys since 1990, allowing us to examine the extent to which the public sees each set of concerns as a priority over nearly two decades.⁸ Figure 2 shows an increase in lifestyle security since 2001, after remaining reasonably stable for much of the 1990s. By contrast, the public's concern about physical security has decreased, reaching its lowest point in 1996. It increased again in 2001, following the 9/11 attacks in the United States and the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq, but dropped to 40 percent in 2007, compare to 62 percent in 1990. The survey evidence, then, does suggest a significant change over the period in the public's views about which of these two dimensions is of most concern to them.

The results suggest, then, that the public does see human security in terms of four distinct dimensions which closely resemble those defined by the United Nations, and that these dimensions in turn coalesce into a general orientation

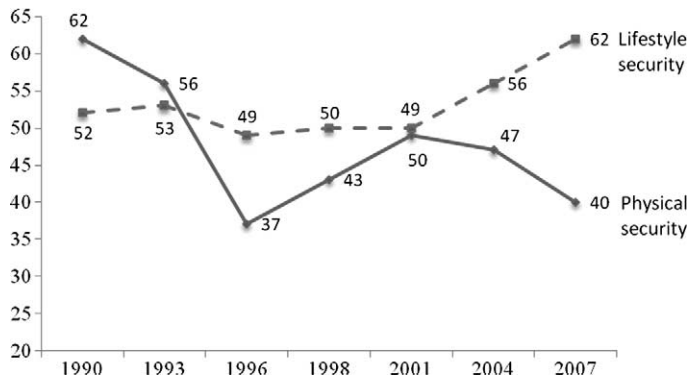


Figure 2. Public support for two human security dimensions, 1990–2007.

Note: The figures are the mean percent of respondents saying election issues are ‘extremely important’.

Sources: Australian Election Studies (Bean *et al.* 1998, 2001, 2004; Gow *et al.* 1999; Jones *et al.* 1993, 1996; McAllister *et al.* 1990, 2007).

towards ‘lifestyle’ security on the one hand, and ‘physical’ security on the other. In line with broader international and societal changes, these two orientations have enjoyed changing levels of popularity with the public. Nevertheless, their relative stability over an extended period is notable, and it is to the social bases of these orientations that we now turn.

Explaining support for human security

Theories of human values, such as Abraham H. Maslow’s (1943) classic ‘theory of human motivation’, stress the importance of socialising experiences in forming a value structure that persists throughout the life course. Building on Maslow’s work, Inglehart (1990, 1997) has argued that childhood experiences shape distinctive sets of value priorities, with periods of physical insecurity (such as wars or economic depression) leading to lifelong (‘materialist’) concerns about physical safety and economic security, while peace and economic affluence lead to enduring (‘post-materialist’) values that emphasise self-actualisation. The unprecedented economic affluence and physical security enjoyed by First World countries during the latter half of the twentieth century has resulted, it is argued, in unprecedented support for such post-materialist values. This has been expressed in many ways, but most visibly in support for protest activity, in membership of environmental groups, and in votes for Green parties (see, for example, Dalton and Kuechler 1990; Inglehart 1995; Tranter 1999).

If these value theories are useful in explaining support for human security priorities, we would expect age to play an important role, with younger people being more supportive of the two lifestyle goals—health and well-being and the

environment—and less supportive of the two physical security goals—economic and national security. Value theories also point to the role of tertiary education in promoting support for post-materialism, and we would also expect possession of a university education to distinguish those who emphasise lifestyle goals from those emphasising physical security (Tranter 1997). ‘New class’ theories should also influence human security goals, so that a person’s position in the class structure, as well as the material resources they possess, should determine their outlooks. Studies of the composition of new social movements, in particular, have demonstrated the importance of the new class in promoting environmental activism (Korpi and Palme 2003; Pichardo 1997).

These expectations can be tested by predicting the probability of support for the four human security goals from a range of background and socio-economic characteristics. Table 2 reports the results of an ordinary least squares regression analysis, using a range of independent variables to predict the probably of prioritising each of the human security goals. The coefficients are standardised regression coefficients which show the relative weight of each variable within the particular equation. The results partially confirm the expectations about the importance of age. Younger people are consistently

Table 2. The social bases of attitudes towards human security

	Standardised regression coefficients			
	Health	Environment	Economy	National
<i>Social background</i>				
Gender (male)	-0.043	-0.132**	-0.055*	-0.076**
Age (years)	0.133**	0.041	-0.048	0.194**
Urban resident	0.026	0.059*	-0.054*	-0.041
<i>Socio-economic status</i>				
Tertiary education	0.009	-0.011	-0.158**	-0.151**
Labour force participant	0.002	-0.011	0.093**	-0.044
<i>Occupation (manual worker)</i>				
Non-manual worker	-0.020	0.069**	-0.107**	-0.062*
Knowledge worker	0.015	0.019	0.002	-0.021
Supervisor	-0.023	0.056*	0.048	0.062
Trade union member	0.104**	0.072**	-0.044	-0.017
Family income (thousands)	-0.087**	-0.110**	0.003	-0.047
Frequent church attendance	-0.031	-0.068**	0.053	0.049*
Adjusted R-square	0.035	0.043	0.051	0.123

**statistically significant at $p < 0.01$, * $p < 0.05$.

Note: Standardised regression coefficients predicting the probability of support for different aspects of human security scales (see Table 1 for details of scales). All independent variables are scored 0 or 1, except for age (years), family income (thousands of Australian dollars) and church attendance (from 0, ‘never attends’, to 6, ‘attends once a week or more’). Occupation, supervisor and trade union membership are for head of household. $N = 1873$.

Source: Australian Election Study (McAllister *et al.* 2007).

less likely to endorse national security, as we would expect, but there is no significant effect for health and well-being, and environmental security, net of other things. Possessing a university education is also less likely to lead to support for the two physical security goals—economic and national security—but again has no significance in shaping views of the two lifestyle goals.

The results in Table 2 also show a range of other patterns linking human security priorities with social background and socio-economic status. Women are generally more likely than men to rate the four goals as being important, net of other things, with the largest effect occurring for environmental security. Manual workers are more likely to be concerned about economic and national security than either non-manual workers or farmers, while lower family income and trade union membership lead to more concern about health and well-being and environmental security. City residents are also more likely to place a higher priority on the environment, as are our less-frequent church attenders, confirming the importance of secularisation in new social movements (Kriesi 1989). Overall, the results lend only partial support to the various permutations of the value theory; as predicted, age and education are important, but not consistently so. To the extent that there is a clear pattern, it suggests that economic position may play a greater role than social background in determining which of the four human security goals are given most emphasis.

While the four dimensions of human security are clearly identified by the public, they have relatively shallow roots in the social structure, contrary to our expectations. This implies that if there is change in support for the different aspects of human security, it will not come about as a result of social structural change. A more direct cause of change in the four dimensions is likely to be particular events, coupled with changes within the broader society. Within that framework, politics has a major role to play, and in the next section we examine the political consequences of human security for the mass public.

The political consequences of human security

What are the consequences of the new human security paradigm for politics? In general, parties of the left espouse collectivist solutions to social problems, and stress social equality and economic interventionism, while parties of the right espouse market solutions, individual responsibility and small government. In practice, of course, many of these distinctions have become blurred as the major parties have moved to the centre ground in search of votes, and the precise interpretation and emphasis of the terms ‘left’ and ‘right’ varies greatly between countries and over time (for a review, see Bobbio 1993). Nevertheless, numerous studies show that the simple left–right dichotomy still dominates party competition and voter perceptions to some degree in most of the advanced democracies (for a review, see Klingemann *et al.* 1994). Moreover, there is empirical evidence that the party orientation of a government on the left–right

continuum does influence public policy, particularly towards social policies such as welfare expenditure (see Hibbs 1992; Hicks *et al.* 1989).

Based on the left–right dichotomy, we would expect a left orientation to be more closely aligned with the lifestyle aspects of human security—health and the environment—and the right to be more aligned with physical security—national and economic security. This hypothesis is tested in Table 3, which predicts the voter’s placement on a left–right scale scored from 0–10, from the four human security dimensions, together with controls for social background and socio-economic status. The figures are standardised regression coefficients which show the relative weight of the various variables in predicting left–right placement. The hypothesis is supported by the evidence, and there is a strong and consistent relationship between self-placement on the left and a greater emphasis on health and the environment, and conversely a relationship between placement on the right and a greater emphasis on national and economic security.

It is worth stressing that our measures of human security reflect the emphasis that the respondent placed on each of them, rather than the direction of the

Table 3. Human security and ideology

	Standardised regression coefficients Left–right
<i>Human security</i>	
Health	–0.146**
Environment	–0.159**
Economy	0.134**
National	0.203**
<i>Social background</i>	
Gender (male)	0.029
Age (years)	0.130**
Urban resident	0.026
<i>Socio-economic status</i>	
Tertiary education	–0.037
Labour force participant	–0.044
<i>Occupation (manual worker)</i>	
Non-manual worker	0.021
Knowledge worker	–0.057*
Supervisor	0.019
Trade union member	–0.056
Family income (thousands)	0.061
Frequent church attendance	0.096**
Adjusted R-square	0.160

** statistically significant at $p < 0.01$, * $p < 0.05$.

Note: Standardised regression coefficients predicting left–right self-placement, scored from 0 (left) to 10 (right) (see Table 1 for details of scales and Table 2 for details of social background and socio-economic status variables). $N = 1873$.

Source: Australian Election Study (McAllister *et al.* 2007).

respondent's policy preferences. Bearing this in mind, the magnitude of the effects in Table 3 is therefore strong support for our hypothesis and underpins the link between the new human security paradigm and ideology, particularly since the equation also controls for a wide range of other potentially confounding factors. Compared to human security, the effects for social background and socio-economic status on ideology are relatively minor. The only two variables of significance are age and religiosity, with older respondents and frequent church attenders being more likely to place themselves on the right, while younger, secular respondents are more likely to place themselves on the left.

The results for ideology are therefore clear, but how far did human security priorities influence the vote for the three major parties—Labor, the Liberal–National Coalition and the Greens—in the 2007 election? Table 4 addresses this question by showing the results of a multinomial logistic regression analysis predicting the three sets of contrasts between the parties. In each of the equations, the four aspects of human security are by far the most important predictors of the vote, most notably in distinguishing Coalition from Green voters, where human security as a whole is nearly three times more important than all of the social background and socio-economic status variables combined. In terms of the individual human security items, the environment is most important in distinguishing Green voters from those of the other two major parties, with Green voters regarding it as much more important, as we would expect. Health and well-being is the main predictor distinguishing Labor from Coalition voters, with Labor voters regarding it as much more of a priority, followed by national security, with Coalition voters placing more emphasis on this. Overall, then, all aspects of human security were a major influence in shaping the party vote in the 2007 election.

In contrast to human security, none of the measures of social background or socio-economic status are consistently important in predicting party support across the three equations. Tertiary education is important in two of the three equations, in distinguishing Green voters from voters of the other two major parties, reflecting a common pattern in environmental political groups (Norris 2002; Tranter 1996). Similarly, trade union membership is important in distinguishing Coalition voters from voters of the other two parties. In general, however, the results are notable for the absence of any consistently significant effects for social background or socio-economic status, particularly with regard to occupation, age, income or religion—some of which might have been thought would be important in shaping the party vote.

The public's views about human security are, therefore, strongly related to politics—both in terms of political ideology and in shaping the vote for individual political parties. The importance that human security has for politics stands in direct contrast to the weak relationship between human security and social structure described in the previous section. This finding implies that parties can have a direct role in shaping which aspects of human security to

Table 4. Human security priorities and the party vote

	Labor versus Liberal–National		Labor versus Green		Liberal–National versus Green	
	Estimates	Standard error	Estimates	Standard error	Estimates	Standard error
<i>Human security</i>						
Health	0.377**	(0.041)	0.215**	(0.061)	−0.162**	(0.062)
Environment	0.172**	(0.031)	−0.309**	(0.065)	−0.481**	(0.067)
Economy	−0.105**	(0.025)	0.072*	(0.036)	0.177**	(0.040)
National	−0.191**	(0.031)	0.120*	(0.049)	0.310**	(0.053)
<i>Social background</i>						
Gender (male)	0.087	(0.139)	0.026	(0.229)	−0.061	(0.243)
Age (years)	−0.015	(0.005)	0.008	(0.008)	0.024**	(0.009)
Urban resident	0.333	(0.156)	−0.071	(0.234)	−0.405	(0.252)
<i>Socio-economic status</i>						
Tertiary education	0.131	(0.174)	−0.836**	(0.257)	−0.966**	(0.275)
Labour force participant	0.079	(0.171)	0.031	(0.284)	−0.048	(0.300)
<i>Occupation (manual worker)</i>						
Non-manual worker	−0.379*	(0.154)	−0.537*	(0.279)	−0.158	(0.294)
Knowledge worker	0.345	(0.342)	0.382	(0.416)	0.037	(0.486)
Supervisor	−0.121	(0.145)	0.250	(0.233)	0.371	(0.248)
Trade union member	1.058**	(0.170)	0.247	(0.252)	−0.811**	(0.283)
Family income (thousands)	−0.007	(0.002)	0.000	(0.003)	0.007*	(0.003)
Frequent church attendance	−0.428*	(0.199)	0.257	(0.356)	0.685	(0.368)
Intercept	−1.216		1.588		2.804	
Nagelkerke R-square			0.374			

**statistically significant at $p < 0.01$, * $p < 0.05$.

Note: Multinomial logistic regression analysis showing parameter estimates and standard errors predicting the probability of the party vote (see Table 1 for details of scales and Table 2 for details of social background and socio-economic status variables). $N = 1699$.

Source: Australian Election Study (McAllister *et al.* 2007).

mobilise support around, in order to maximise their electoral advantage over the competition. In the longer term, it also implies an advantage for parties of the left, so long as lifestyle concerns become more important than those of physical security. If parties of the right wish to maintain their electoral competitiveness, they will need to encompass lifestyle concerns more effectively.

Conclusion

The findings presented here show that, in line with the United Nations' new security paradigm, the Australian public sees four clear aspects to its security—health, the environment, the economy and defence. Moreover, lifestyle issues concerning health and environmental security are more significant concerns than the traditional ones of defence and the economy. Not least, the findings show that these four dimensions to human security have very distinct party political consequences, with those on the left emphasising lifestyle security and those on the right physical security. The human security paradigm is clearly understood by the public and has real and significant political and electoral consequences. But are these findings simply representative of a worldwide shift in cultural values among a new generation of voters, rather than a more fundamental change?

Our evidence suggests that the change is a more fundamental one. Inglehart (2008) has shown that major cultural changes are occurring through an intergenerational value shift linked with younger birth cohorts who have grown up with higher levels of security than those of older birth cohorts. Our findings show some evidence for this hypothesis, with age predicting public attitudes towards health and well-being and national security. However, rising levels of security among the younger age cohort are not positively associated with environmental security. One reason for this may be that the younger age cohorts have faced rising economic and job insecurity in line with global trends towards neo-liberalism. At the same time, it is possible that a greater proportion of the older cohorts may now be concerned about the environment as a security issue for future generations. Their concern, then, is intergenerational security, rather than security for themselves.

For political parties, the human security paradigm has very clear electoral implications. One of the main reasons why Labor won the 2007 Australian federal election was because it emphasised environmental and health security in order to gain electoral advantage over the Liberal–National Coalition. The Labor leader, Kevin Rudd, signalled this change in his acceptance speech by indicating that he wanted to transcend the traditional political conflicts between business and the unions, and between the economy and the environment. The strategy of moving Labor into the centre ground achieved widespread popularity for both himself and his party. To remain competitive, the Liberal–National

Coalition must adapt to the new human security paradigm and mobilise support around lifestyle human security concerns.

Party adaptation is not an easy process. Katz and Mair (1995) observe a number of factors which constrain the process of party adaptation, notably growing popular distrust of political parties, weakening party attachments and declining party membership, all of which restrict the ability of parties to change their policy profile. However, Katz and Mair note that parties now have access to increased resources and personnel, which contribute to an enhanced and more powerful public profile (Katz and Mair 1995; Mair 1995, 2008). With this in mind, the Coalition could utilise its resources and personnel to focus on a significant departure from its previous policies. Peter Mair (2008) observes that a decline in collective identities based on sociocultural and socio-economic structures within Western electorates means that there is little remaining on which parties can build stable alignments. Mobilising political support around human security issues rather than relying on traditional alignments may represent the future of party competition.

Notes

1. There is considerable research in Northern Ireland about the effects of terrorism on public opinion. For a review, see Hayes and McAllister (2001).
2. For example, there were various attacks on Indian diplomats and interests by Sikhs in the late 1970s; in 1980 the Turkish consul and his bodyguard were assassinated by Armenians; and there have also been various attacks against Israeli diplomats and interests. The main terrorist act on Australian soil was the February 1977 bomb outside the Hilton Hotel in Sydney during the regional Commonwealth Heads of State Meeting, which killed three people.
3. The survey also asked the respondents to identify their first and second most important issues, from the list of 14 issues. Preliminary analysis showed that this approach was less effective in identifying four distinct factors, and for that reason the approach used in Table 1 was used.
4. The three items that are not included are the Iraq War, unemployment and the treatment of Aborigines. Based on the coefficient results, these items were not found to belong to the underlying dimensions. We recognise that these are significant human security issues. However, it is possible that the question wording and interpretation of the questions could explain why these variables did not belong to the factors.
5. The scales were constructed by first coding missing values to the mean, dividing each item by its respective standard deviation (to ensure that no one item dominated the scale), and then combining the items. The resulting scale was rescored from 0–10.
6. In terms of the countries that the public sees as a possible threat to Australia, Indonesia is by far the most important. In the 2007 AES, 28 percent of the respondents saw Indonesia as a potential security threat, followed by 10 percent who mentioned China (see McAllister 2008).
7. A second-order factor analysis of the four scales produces this two-factor solution. The correlation between the two physical security scales is 0.364 and between the two lifestyle scales is 0.455.
8. All of the items used to form the scales in Table 1 were not consistently available across the surveys. In summary, the scales were represented by those items which were consistently available: namely, the environment, defence and national security, immigration, education, health, taxation and interest rates.

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