

**What is human about security?
Reflections on human security as a paradigm for anthropology**

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abstract

In spite of the early (1947) protests of the AAA Executive Committee against the Universal Declaration of Human Rights as ethnocentric and predicated on Western notions of the autonomous individual, most subsequent anthropological approaches to (the study of) human rights and human security take notions of human subjectivity and human agency vested in individuals for granted. But as authoritative and legitimizing discourses, human rights and human security are instances of a power/knowledge nexus that 'produce' subjectivities and culturally constitute forms and expressions of human agency.¹ Even if productive, as lenses to analyze human behavior and as paradigms for understanding society we therefore need to be cautious about the blindfolds that such frames could impose on us, by assuming particular forms of agency and subjectivity and excluding the possibility of other forms.

¹ These (rather loose) reflections are largely based on my inaugural lecture in Copenhagen, which explores the effects of human rights discourse on religious practice, discipline and hence subjectivity.