How Should National Security and Human Security Relate to Each Other?

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Introduction

The concept of 'human security', developed in the 1994 *Human Development Report*, in spite of its communicative effectiveness, has been criticised for presenting a lack of policy relevance due to its too flexible definition. Many critics have underlined the need to define human security in a narrower way, focusing on violent threats to individuals, in order to address economic, environmental, health, food and political issues separately. This essay adopts this narrow definition of human security for analytical purposes, but it proposes to move beyond the 'narrow-broad approach' debate and to focus on the identity of the potential security providers instead. The central question – who should provide security to individuals in this new theoretical framework – has been often neglected by advocates of the concept. This oversight has relegated the notion of human security to the moral and legal justification of the use of humanitarian intervention in some of the most troubled areas in the world. The state is often regarded in the human security perspective as just one of the actors, or even part of the problem itself. On the contrary, it should be considered the central security provider: its stability and legitimacy are the main sources of protection for its citizens, from any kind of threats. The strengthening of national authorities should be a central strategy to ensure the protection of the people. In order to make a state strong enough to guarantee security to its citizens, its legitimacy through democratic, but flexible, means is an important precondition.

The claim of this essay is that the idea of 'state' or 'national' security is too often misinterpreted as solely the defence of states' borders from external threats. On the contrary, given the changing nature of today's dangers, it has to do primarily with the protection of its citizens and the rule of law and, therefore, it is about human security. In the first part of the essay, I will introduce the idea of human security, describing how its advocacy is often affected by an anti-statist, neo-liberal bias. This prejudice prevents human security's advocates from grasping the state's domestic role as a long-term security provider and restrains them from prioritising state and democracy building upon the vague 'responsibility to protect'. The second part seeks to explain how the role of state has been misconceived in the human security discourse. While its responsibility as an international actor has been strongly underlined, its role as a domestic security provider has been defined in a negative way: when the state fails to provide security to its citizens, the international community will intervene in its place. The third section clarifies why the national level should be prioritised. Statistically, citizens of states with weak institutions are more affected by violent threats. Theoretically, the state is still the system in which representativeness and legitimacy take place, also thanks to its flexibility and capability to adapt to different contexts. The fourth part evaluates the African situation as one in which the concepts of national security and human security seem to be incompatible for the strong ethnic, tribal and religious hindrances to state authority. This example will be used for two related reasons. First, it will be used to describe states' legitimacy, and consequently legitimacy of the use of force, as a flexible concept, that can be adapted to those countries where there is no strong national identity. Second, it will be used to explain that state security is not only about inter-state wars, but has a domestic dimension that is most important in the provision of human security. Finally, I will draw some conclusions, summarising why human and state security coincide.

The concept of Human Security and the Anti-Statist Bias

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The idea that people should be protected from violent threats has deep roots in the 20th century. Its origins can be traced to the activity of Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) such as the International Committee of the Red Cross (Krause, 2007:2). However, the use of the term 'human security' was first defined in the 1994 United Nations Development Programme's (UNDP) *Human Development Report.* This document gives a broad definition of human security, describing it as the condition of safety from seven categories of threats, divided into: economic security, food security, health security, environmental security, personal security, community security and political security, and composed of the two elements of 'freedom from fear and freedom from want' (UNDP, 1994:24-25). The definition stems from the idea that 'the concept of security has for too long been interpreted narrowly', for 'it has been related more to nation-states than to people' (UNDP, 1994:22).

Many scholars have eagerly adopted this new perspective on security issues as a challenge to the state-centric framework that was thought to have 'endangered people and ignored the real threats to individuals' (McCormack, 2011:99). Thus, it has rapidly gained central stage in foreign policy discourse (King and Murray, 2001-2002: 585). Some scholars have criticised the UNDP's definition of human security for supporting a too broad approach. They have proposed a 'narrow' one, focused on 'freedom from fear' and related to physical threats and military menaces (Liotta and Owen, 2006:42).

The idea of human security has surely proved its usefulness during the last two decades. It did so in many ways: according to Paris, it represented a 'rallying cry', able to unite diverse states, agencies and NGOs in a coalition that 'chalked up significant accomplishments, including the signing of an antipersonnel land mines convention and the (…) creation of an international criminal court' (2001:88, omitted 'imminent'). However, this new perspective is strongly weakened by its incapacity to define who should provide human security to individuals and how it should be practically done. In a world where states are still the main security providers, the advocates of human security are affected by a common 'anti-statist bias' (Chappuis, 2011:109), more broadly related to neo-liberal culture (Olukoshi, 1999:460). This bias is due to the duality of the role of the state in the 20th century, which at times 'has become a source of threats to its own people' (CHS, 2003:2). Furthermore, for those who support the shift to the individual as the referent object of security, the traditional principles of non-intervention, sovereign immunity and state equality appear anachronistic in the face of new security threats (McCormack, 2011:99).

A new framework of global security emerges from this vision: a world where those states committed to the promotion of human rights and democratic values bear the 'Responsibility to Protect' (ICISS, 2001) people around the world when their governments fail to do so. This prospect, though less 'anachronistic', has so far proved little ability in giving long-term peace and stability to the countries that have undergone real or alleged humanitarian interventions, and it has failed to define a working institutional system inside the UN framework (see Boot, 2000). The problem is not the idea of deeming the defence of human rights more important than state sovereignty, since the latter should be consider instrumental in achieving the good of citizens. Rather, the problem is located in the risk of conceiving state sovereignty and, therefore, state security, as something ontologically opposed to human security. The notion of state-centric security itself is often considered, in the human security literature, as 'focused primarily on the safety of states from military aggression' (UNTFHS, 2009:6). This definition enables the possibility of overlooking the role of the state as a domestic security provider, holder of the monopoly force, legitimated by the democratic consent of the citizens. Logically speaking, such vision of the role of the state would give prominence to the short-sighted and temporary use of military interventions in humanitarian crisis zones, rather than long-term operations of state building, because it neglects the role of the state in providing 'domestic' security.

Surely, human security advocates present a variety of different positions regarding the role of the state. Chappuis defines a 'spectrum' of different positions, at the 'radical end' of which we can find those authors who see the failure of most developmental and security efforts around the world as a consequence of the state-centric mainstream vision (2011:109). From this viewpoint, human-centric security is viewed in normative, emancipatory, terms (McCormack, 2011:100). This strand of human security studies sees the sub-national and supra-national actors as those that would be more likely provide security to individuals. According to Chappuis, from this perspective, 'taking human security seriously would require nothing less than a total refit of world order that would do away with the state as the essential unit of analysis in world affairs' (2011:109). However, a middle ground between this radical position and a realist, state-centric vision of security is available. The 'neo-liberal', mainstream, position described before is

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undoubtedly more balanced; however, as was already discussed, it is still unable to give to the state the main conceptual and practical responsibility of providing security to its citizens. The next section will briefly analyse how, in spite of the formal acceptance of the centrality of state, human security mainstream studies have misconceived its role.

Human Security and the Role of the State as a Security Provider: The Misconceived 'External' and 'Global' Perspectives

The importance of state power in the mainstream human security framework has been underlined in almost every paper concerning the argument. Human security has been said to 'complement (…) state security' (CHS, 2003: 2, omitted 's') when 'state security', a term that is normally preferred to 'national security', is intended as the protection of 'the state—its boundaries, people, institutions and values—from external attacks' (CHS, 2003:5). The need to integrate this vision of 'state security' in light of the idea of 'human security', was also dictated by the fact that only a minority of wars today are inter-state wars that require traditional security means (HIPTCC, 2004:11). On the contrary, a growing number of threats come from new kinds of wars that take shape within societies or across states and do not fit well in a conventional warfare framework (Cheeseman, 2005:75). The domestic relevance of state security is thus overlooked.

The impression is that, beyond a formal acceptance of the authority of the state on its territory as a basic pre-condition for the safety of its citizens, the concept of sovereignty itself is reshaped in a way that allows a trans-national or global management of security issues through military, or non-military, humanitarian interventions. The 2001 report of the International Commission on Intervention and State Sovereignty, *The Responsibility to Protect*, best represents this tendency, for it explicitly connects human security and the role of states as security providers (ICISS, 2001:15). In linking state sovereignty with the protection of citizens, it introduces the idea of 'responsibility' (ICISS, 2001:XI) of the state towards the citizens. This concept is later developed: it entails a shift in state sovereignty from the Westphalian 'sovereignty as control', based on states' equality and non-intervention, to 'sovereignty as responsibility', expressed both internally, towards citizens, and externally, towards the international community and the United Nations (ICISS, 2001: 12-13). In this model, when a state fails in its responsibility to protect its citizens, the international community should intervene, firstly according to the Chapter VII of the UN Charter (ICISS, 2001:16). As McCormack perceptively notes, this new concept of sovereignty, becomes 'no longer something that is an assumed property of a state, rather it is something that must derive from the state's treatment of its own citizens' (2011, 107).

This turn has two consequences: it designs new hierarchies between strong states, that start to act on behalf of third world countries' citizens, and weak states, which are submitted to the control and possible intervention of the international community (McCormack, 2011:108); it redefines the tasks of states, of which the international community is made, prioritising their role as security providers in a global, rather than domestic, sense. Sovereignty, meant as the capability and will of a state to protect its own citizens, instead of being the conceptual priority of the international community to achieve long-term stability in the most troubled areas of the world, becomes an instrumental and contingent factor. In fact, sovereignty is easily replaced by the idea that strongest states should provide short-term security solutions when security issues in weak states arise. The idea of national security itself is here diminished, for it is only meant as the attention of states to external threats rather than the ability to provide a secure life to citizens within their territory (see ICISS, 2011:15). The next section will argue, on the contrary, that 'national' security provided by the state in a domestic sense is not only compatible with the protection of people, but it is the best way to achieve long term stability in weak countries. Therefore, it should be theoretically and practically prioritised in the human security framework.

Why the State?

The centrality of the state level has, above all, a practical rationale: so far, there are no reliable alternatives that could substitute the authority of the state and its organizational role (Chappuis, 2011:109) (Deng, 1995:249). Besides this pragmatic motivation, there are at least two sets of reasons. The first one has a theoretical basis but practical outcomes. It is connected with the idea that in the state organization lays the current framework of democratic

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representation and legitimacy through which citizens exercise control over institutions. Among these institutions, there are those which manage the 'monopoly of the legitimate use of physical force' (Weber, 1919:1) and, therefore, the security of citizens. The claim that the state should be responsible of the protection of its citizens is expressed in *The Responsibility to Protect* (2001:15). Nonetheless, this responsibility is ultimately meant as a 'content of good international citizenship.'(2001:8). This overlooks the relation that 'responsibility' should have with a national and domestic concept of security, for it is strictly linked with the acquisition of internal legitimacy and representativeness by state institutions themselves (Krause, 2007:11). A state that protects its citizens can more easily be perceived as legitimate, and a state that in considered legitimate by its citizens will find it less problematic to address domestic security issues. The concept of representativeness is, after all, a flexible one, that can be widely adapted to the local context. While in western countries it has often found place in the federal or regional, de-centralized, organization of the state, in countries like those in sub-Saharan Africa, legitimacy could be more easily achieved through grassroots-based methods to represent local identities, with a different 'design' compared with that of western liberal democracies (Luckham, in Luckham, Goetz and Kaldor, 2003:42).

The second set of reasons has a practical rationale. First, weak states are one of the main reasons for instability, conflicts and threats to individuals (ODI, 2009:1). In addition, there is evidence that most violence suffered by people in the last decade comes from non-state actors (HSRP, 2012:204), partially challenging, therefore, the image of the state as a threat to its citizens. A document that adequately emphasizes the connection between weak institutions and human security is the 2004 report of the UN High-level Panel on Threats, Challenges and Change: *A more secure world: Our shared responsibility.* The report supports how important it is to 'prevent or reverse the erosion of State capacity, which is crucial for meeting almost every class of threat.'(HIPTCC, 2004:3). The idea of 'state capacity' is here directly connected with the management of security issues like internal wars (2004:11), organized crime (2004:54), terrorism, and with the general preservation of law and order (2004:47).

The connection between 'national' or 'state' security in its domestic meaning and the provision of 'narrow' human security can be easily understood. An important work on the subject is Englehart's piece of research *State Capacity, State Failure, and Human Rights*. Englehart shows data that demonstrate a clear and positive connection between the strength of state institutions and the respect of human rights in over 140 countries (2009:166-167). In investigating whether the state is primarily a source of threat to its citizens or a security provider, Englehart provides evidence for this second option. The author illustrates that human right abuses have a tendency to happen in weak states rather than in institutionally strong ones, thus challenging the common assumption in human rights' studies that the state is the first abuser (2009:177). The fragile institutional capacity of the state as a threat to human security is strictly connected with the possible emergence of non-state actors within the territory where it should exert its sovereignty, as well as with the weakening of the boundaries of the country, which can create connections between internal and external threats (UNTFHS, 2009:28). An example of weak boundaries can be found in the first civil war in Congo in 1996-1997, in which the ineffectiveness of states' borders allowed a 'conflict contagion from Rwanda and Burundi' (Taras and Ganguly, 2009:218).

This connection between human security and state security should, therefore, lead to the prioritisation of state building and state stabilization (Siegle, 2011:1) as viable, long-term, approaches in those states that lack the capacity to protect their citizens. State building is a complex process, and requires more than the simple construction of an institutional apparatus. In order to foster legitimacy, which is a fundamental force of stability, particularly in poor countries (Siegle, 2011:2-3), it is necessary to create strong linkages between state and society (ODI, 2009:2). In the next section, the claim of the existence of close connections between human security and state security will be problematized. This will be done by taking into account the example of the continent that is usually described as the most hard to fit into the traditional logic of a state security: Africa.

Africa: State Security and Legitimacy as Flexible Concepts

In Africa exist some of the areas of the world that constitute the biggest challenges to human security. The nature of the threats, from a narrow perspective, is the most various one, and present ethnic, religious, political and economic causes. Some trends and features are usually underlined, among them the fact that armed conflict in Africa cannot normally be included in a 'Westphalian' scheme of analysis because they don't fit in the idea of wars between states

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or between a population and an oppressing regime (Hentz, 2010:632). Rather, these conflicts are primarily 'wars across states' (Hentz, 2010:633).

In discussing who should provide security in African countries, the 2003 report of the Commission on Human Security, *Human Security Now*, asserts that national security has surely a fundamental role, but it is not enough, because 'individuals also require protection from the arbitrary power of the state '(CHS, 2003:3). This is theoretically unexceptionable, but as Hentz points out: 'While between 2002 and 2006 Africa had 42 per cent of the world's fatalities from organized violence, it had 83 per cent of not-state fatalities, that is, deaths where the state is not the main actor' (Sundberg, in Hentz, 2010:641). The perspective expressed in the report might be included in the already cited tendency of assuming that the state is normally the first abuser of human rights or in a general anti-statist bias. More importantly, the partial denial of this prejudice should suggest that the strengthening of state institutions in Africa could have generally positive effects on human security. But how could it be possible to build or stabilize the state authority in countries where, instead of national identities, there is ethno-sectional fragmentation? (Sklar, 1999:170).

This partly depends on how we conceive the state. States are no longer unitary and monolithic institutions and, besides a classical reliance on national identities as the basis of their consensus, they have found many different ways to adapt to different contexts. In its contemporary and multifaceted meaning, the 'state' can be defined as 'the bone structure of the body politic or the set of administrative institutions that claim a legitimate command over a bounded territory.' (Bratton and Chang, 2006:1060). While the management of the monopoly of force may need a strong centralization in weak and conflict-torn states, its underlying legitimacy in a Weberian sense can find a variety of forms of decentralized and context-specific representation of the population on a local, ethnic or religious basis (Luckham, Goetz and Kaldor, 2003:42). State-building or state stabilization, as a way to construct a source of human security, should be supported by democratization. This is important because of both the evident connection between legitimacy through representativeness and the democratic system, and the positive correlation between the degree of one's country democracy and its stability (Bratton and Chang, 2006:1070).

In weak states, the establishment of state authority and, therefore, a framework of state security, has to cope with the presence of informal, local, powers that are normally more trusted than the central power (Menocal, 2011:1726). Thus, it needs to acquire legitimacy through 'the decentralization of government authority, the mobilization of civil society, and the establishment of rules governing the relationship between citizens and state.'(Bratton and Chang, 2006:1063). The example of African countries is useful for the purpose of this essay, because it helps to call into question the notion of 'state' or 'national' security as normally perceived by most advocates of a human security perspective. It also suggests that the concept of the state, especially in the achievement of legitimacy to back up its role as security provider, should be flexible, which can find ways to express its representativeness even where there is no clear national basis. The nature of threats changes over time and space, while the state remains inevitably the main security provider. Therefore, rather than demonizing the concept of state security, the perception of its content and of its role should change and move towards its historically equally important (see Krause, 2007:7-8) domestic meaning, concerning the provision of law and order.

Conclusions

This essay has attempted to define how human and national security should relate to each other. I have reached the conclusion that their conceptual opposition exists only if, driven by an anti-statist bias, either we consider 'national' or 'state' security as only the protection of states from external threats or, considering 'domestic' state security, we look at it as part of the problem, because it comes from a virtually repressive institution. Firstly, I explained the content of this anti-statist bias and the idea of the shift in the referent object of security from the state to individuals as the practical and moral basis of the human security framework. I pointed out that this creates the unsolved problem of defining who should provide security. In the second section I explained how the prioritisation of the international accountability of the state, rather than its domestic form, creates inequalities between strong and weak states and fosters the short-sighted use of humanitarian interventions instead of long term involvement in state building processes. Afterwards I focused on why the state level should be prioritised in order to achieve the security of individuals. I provided three different but equally important sets of reasons: one related to the lack of alternatives; the

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second related to the role of the state as the main representative institution and legitimate expression of people's needs; and the third concerning the positive relation between state strength and human security. Finally, I used the example of African countries to explain how the idea of 'domestic' state security can be adapted, with a flexible use of legitimization mechanisms, also to those countries that lack a national identity.

The conclusion is that, to the extent that the security and the stability of state institutions are the main guarantees for the safety of citizens, human security, rather than 'complementing' state security (CHS, 2003:2), coincides with the latter. Therefore, human security is '*unavoidably and inextricably* about the state' (Krause, 2007:6), because the protection of human rights can only be provided 'by democratic states with the authority and the monopoly of force to sustain such norms' (Weiss, 2004:138). Where the state lacks the capacity to protect its citizens, the international community can hardly provide long-term solutions without helping to reconstruct or strengthen its institutions (Weiss, 2004:138). This is because, so far, the role of the state as a security provider cannot be replaced.

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