Appendix 2C. The human security approach to direct and structural violence

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I. Introduction

In *SIPRI Yearbook 2007* Elisabeth Sköns argues that there is a clear disconnection between the intended objective of security provision and its current focus on the prevention of collective violence, which leads to much human death and suffering.[1] In the same edition of the Yearbook, Michael Brzoska calls for the traditional categories of collective violence and armed conflict to be augmented.[2] This appendix builds on their arguments. In exploring the causes and consequences of violence and insecurity, consideration must also be given to those threats that are the main causes of death and injury of humans and affect the stability of a society—many of which do not fit into either the category of armed conflict or that of collective violence. Many such threats are the consequence of 'structural violence'. A human security approach can encompass these threats and direct violence for both analysis and mitigation.

If individuals and communities feel secure and protected from the threats that emanate from direct and structural violence—that is, if their basic human security is guaranteed—then human suffering on an individual level and conflict and violence on communal, regional and international levels can be significantly reduced.[3] In contrast, violation of the basic human needs of individuals and communities leads to human suffering and social and communal deterioration, and therefore to more violence in its direct and structural manifestations. This, in turn, perpetuates the frustration of human needs.[4] Breaking this cyclical relationship hinges on the ability to reduce or avoid violence and thus provide human security.

Section II of this appendix defines 'direct' and 'structural' violence and explores the utility of the human security concept in addressing both. Section III identifies armed violence as a unique catalyst of both types of violence. Section IV suggests how to design human security-driven threat and mitigation analyses that help identify and respond to both direct and structural violence more appropriately and effectively. The conclusions are presented in section V.

[1] Sköns, E., 'Analysing risks to human lives', *SIPRI Yearbook 2007: Armaments, Disarmament and International Security* (Oxford University Press: Oxford, 2007), p. 243.

[2] Brzoska, M., 'Collective violence beyond the standard definition of armed conflict', *SIPRI Yearbook 2007* (note 1), pp. 94–106.

[3] Specific examples of structural violence include e.g. civilian grievances as a result of economic blockades or the discriminatory practices of global trade regimes; unequal access to political power, resources, health care, education, or legal standing causing significantly higher risk for people from particular segments of society to suffer and prematurely die from communicable and non-communicable diseases or extreme poverty; and institutionalized race segregation (e.g. apartheid in South Africa), which can kill slowly by preventing people from meeting their basic needs.

[4] Burton, J. (ed.), *Conflict: Human Needs Theory* (St. Martin's Press: New York, 1990).

II. Human security provision as a response to direct and structural violence in society

Defining direct and structural violence

Johan Galtung refers to 'the type of violence where there is an actor that commits the violence as *personal* or *direct*, and to violence where there is no such actor as *structural* or *indirect*'.[5]

> In both cases individuals may be killed or mutilated, hit or hurt in both senses of these words, and manipulated by means of stick or carrot strategies. But whereas in the first case these consequences can be traced back to concrete persons as actors, in the second case this is no longer meaningful. There may not be any person who directly harms another person in the structure. The violence is built into the structure and shows up as unequal power and consequently as unequal life chances.[6]

According to Galtung, both direct and structural violence can be expressed through physical and psychological violence, whether directed at specific objects or not, with acts that are intended or unintended, and expressed in manifest or latent terms. Direct and structural violence are interdependent forces and, although direct violence tends to be more visible and easily perceived, 'there is no reason to assume that structural violence amounts to less suffering than personal [direct] violence'.[7] As a particular expression of direct violence, armed violence causes damage and promotes conditions for structural violence. It also weakens a society's capacity to resist or adapt to other life-threatening harm. Thus, armed violence and its debilitating direct and structural effects threaten peace—both negative peace, which is characterized by the absence of direct violence, and positive peace, which is characterized by the absence of structural violence.[8]

Galtung's differentiation between direct and structural violence is not an undisputed approach, but it makes sense in the context of human security analysis. If human security generally means 'the security of people—their physical safety, their economic well-being, respect for their dignity and worth as human beings, and the protection of their human rights and fundamental freedoms',[9] then threats experienced by individuals and communities that are part of specific social, cultural, economic and political communities are not limited to direct armed violence. Such threats may be overt expressions of violence committed by specific and identifiable actors or covert expressions of violence inherent in the disadvantaged position of individuals and communities in a social, political or economic system that is upheld by power structures beyond their control. Without violence there is greater potential to provide and meet at least basic human needs, and to develop possibilities to satisfy needs that determine not only survival but also well-being and quality of life. Galtung seems to have sensed the need to give greater consideration to the structural aspects

[5] Galtung, J., 'Violence, peace, and peace research', *Journal of Peace Research*, vol. 6, no. 3 (1969), p. 170 (emphasis in original).

[6] Galtung (note 5), pp. 170–71.

[7] Galtung (note 5), p. 173; on the interrelationship between direct and structural violence see pp. 177–83.

[8] Galtung (note 5), p. 183.

[9] International Commission on Intervention and State Sovereignty, *The Responsibility to Protect* (International Development Research Centre: Ottawa, 2001), p. 15, para. 2.21.

and sources of violence and to shift exclusive (or primary) focus, particularly by governments, from the prevention of direct violence to the prevention of structural violence. Whether done voluntarily due to a sense of national and international responsibility or forced by others promoting such norms, such a shift would lower violence and increase human security.

Galtung argues that 'there is no reason to believe that the future will not bring us richer concepts and more forms of social action that combine absence of personal violence with [the] fight against social injustice [i.e. negative and positive peace] once sufficient activity is put into research and practice'.[10] This appendix suggests that human security may well be the concept that offers this opportunity. Focusing on the impact that both types of violence have on the human security of individuals and communities, without prejudicing one over the other in terms of strategic, political or economic significance, allows a more effective focus on the basic needs of individuals, compared to the security needs of states as expressed in more traditional national security thinking. This approach responds to one of the original components of the human security concept: that national and international political and security structures should consider human security equally important to national security. At this juncture, the human security concept is able to advance the distinctions between direct and structural violence and between negative and positive peace. In combination with a heightened sense of (or a moral and legal call for) responsibility by human security providers—those who govern individuals and communities, the referent objects of human security—both accountability and responsibility for the prevention of human insecurity might eventually enter the theory and practice of international law and custom.

The contribution of human security in responding to direct and structural violence is discussed below, following a brief outline of the concept.

The human security concept

The concept of human security is much debated and has been given varying definitions by scholars and governments alike.[11] For the purpose of this appendix 'human security threats' are identified as those that threaten the lives of individuals and communities through both direct and structural violence. This approach is manageable both in research and in practice. Although it covers threats posed by both direct and structural violence, the approach applies an impact threshold requiring violence

[10] Galtung (note 5), p. 186.

[11] See e.g. UN Development Programme, *Human Development Report 1994* (Oxford University Press: Oxford, 1994); Commission on Human Security, *Human Security Now* (Commission on Human Security: New York, 2003), <http://www.humansecurity-chs.org/finalreport/index.html>; Thakur, R., 'From national to human security', eds S. Harris and A. Mack, *Asia–Pacific Security: The Economics–Politics Nexus* (Allen & Unwin: St Leonards, 1997), pp. 53–54; and International Commission on Intervention and State Sovereignty (note 9), p. 15, para 2.21. On human security as a foreign policy tool see Debiel, T. and Werthes, S. (eds), *Human Security on Foreign Policy Agendas: Changes, Concepts and Cases*, INEF Report 80/2006 (Institute for Development and Peace: Duisburg, 2006). See also Oberleitner, G., 'Human security: a challenge to international law?', *Global Governance*, vol. 11, no. 2 (2005), pp. 185–203; Human Security Centre, *Human Security Report 2005: War and Peace in the 21st Century* (Oxford University Press: New York, 2005); and International Commission on Intervention and State Sovereignty (note 9), p. xii. See also Glasius, M. and Kaldor, M. (eds), *A Human Security Doctrine for Europe: Project, Principles, Possibilities* (Routledge: London, 2005); Kaldor, M., 'What is human security?', eds D. Held et al., *Debating Globalization* (Polity Press: Cambridge, 2005), pp. 175–90; and Kaldor, M., *Human Security: Reflections on Globalization and Intervention* (Polity Press: Cambridge, 2007).

to be life threatening to individuals and communities. The mere avoidance of direct and structural violence does not satisfy the full range of requirements for positive peace, broad human security provision and the satisfaction of the complete hierarchy of human needs.[12] It does, however, offer a manageable definition that links population security with national security, structural violence with direct violence, and accountability for human insecurity with responsibility for the provision of human security.

III. Violence and human insecurity

From the literature cited above, three main streams of thought define the source, meaning and impact of human insecurity. Broad definitions focus on 'freedom from fear' and 'freedom from want'; narrow definitions focus on the impact of direct, armed violence. The approach suggested in this appendix focuses on a combination of direct and structural violence in so far as they threaten the lives of individuals and communities. If the rationale for such an approach is pursued further, at least two critical questions arise. First, why does direct violence still figure so prominently in human security and insecurity analysis when its contribution to the overall numbers of people killed as a result of preventable violence is comparably low? Second, why work with structural violence, where the origins of threats are already difficult to trace and the responsibility for their occurrence, impact and alleviation are even more difficult to assign? Instead, focus could be placed separately on direct, armed violence on the one hand and various other forms of harm on the other. As is argued below, opting for direct and structural violence as interdependent core variables in human security analysis and provision offers opportunities to address the most crucial threats to populations and to prepare the grounds for the most effective mitigation mechanisms.

Direct violence as a catalyst of human insecurity

Among the causes of insecurity, armed violence is a factor of unique significance because it: (*a*) causes human insecurity and prevents the adequate provision of human security through its debilitating direct and indirect effects; (*b*) acts as an accelerator of human insecurity, with knock-on effects that increase the negative impact of existing levels of violence and harm; and (*c*) is often the articulation of underlying, protracted and unresolved structural violence and thus an indicator of societal and political instability. Armed violence is a highly visible pointer to the long overdue necessity of addressing structural violence and its manifestations.

In order to assess the impact of armed violence on prevailing stress levels and human insecurity potential, the type of armed violence must be determined (e.g. state-based or non-state violence). Furthermore, the existing and potential—increasing or decreasing—levels of armed violence must be ascertained in addition to its internal and external costs. (Internal costs include the probable number of victims of violence, infrastructural damage, and political, economic and social costs. External costs include, among others, impact on regional peace and stability through conflict spill-over or refugee movements.) The psychological effects of armed violence (such as

[12] Maslow, A. H., 'A theory of human motivation', *Psychological Review*, vol. 50 (1943), pp. 370–96.

fear and terror) on populations and on opinion and decision makers are also significant, with definite yet difficult to estimate implications for peace and stability. If the 11 September 2001 attacks on the United States were an attempt to destabilize the political, economic, social and cultural foundations of Western civilization, they may at least have shaken those foundations. The attacks created a sense of fear and terror that was powerful enough to persuade political decision makers and populations in numerous (primarily) Western societies to significantly limit some long-held and protected values and norms (such as civil freedoms) in an effort to deter future terrorist activity of a similar kind. The structural and direct violence emanating from the 'global war on terrorism', triggered by the September 2001 attacks on (presumed) Western stability and security, turned out to be significant threats to human security in countries such as Afghanistan, Iraq and Pakistan, and to the civil rights and freedoms of Western societies.[13]

Although the 2004 Indian Ocean tsunami did not cause major political or social breakdown in any of the affected countries, armed violence that results in far fewer victims can easily have this effect. Depending on the impact on the society where it occurs, armed violence can be considered an 'extraordinary disaster' causing infrastructural, political, economic, psychological, environmental and socio-cultural damage. Environmental crises cause localized destruction (which can be repaired) and instability (which can usually be corrected fairly quickly), while an armed crisis can easily cause significant irreparable inter-communal damage and instability, affecting political and social relations for years or decades to come.[14] Thus, armed violence can trigger protracted structural violence with extraordinary long-term consequences. In a 2007 study, the International Action Network on Small Arms (IANSA), Oxfam and Saferworld estimate the economic cost of armed conflict to Africa's development.

> On average, armed conflict shrinks an African nation's economy by 15 per cent, and this is probably a conservative estimate. . . . There are the obvious direct costs of armed violence—medical costs, military expenditure, the destruction of infrastructure, and the care for displaced people—which divert money from more productive uses. The indirect costs from lost opportunities are even higher. Economic activity falters or grinds to a halt. Income from valuable natural resources ends up lining individual pockets rather than benefiting the country. The country suffers from inflation, debt, and reduced investment, while people suffer from unemployment, lack of public services, and trauma.[15]

Preventing the outbreak of armed violence, or at least curtailing its scope and duration, is an important contribution to the combating of the unwieldy spread of structural and direct violence with compounded human security consequences. One of the first major attempts to address direct violence from the human security perspective emerged from the debate on the responsibility to prevent and mitigate grave vio-

[13] For an interesting study of the costs of the conflict in Iraq to the USA, Iraq and the world see Bennis, P. et al., *A Failed 'Transition': The Mounting Costs of the Iraq War* (Institute for Policy Studies and Foreign Policy in Focus: Washington, DC, Sep. 2004). The study reports and estimates the costs to the USA (human, security, economic and social costs); to Iraq (human, security, economic, social, human rights and sovereignty costs); and to the world (human costs, the costs of disregarding international law and undermining the UN as well as global security and disarmament, the costs of US-led ad hoc military coalitions, the costs to the global economy and global environmental costs).

[14] See e.g. Pouligny, B. et al. (eds), *After Mass Crime: Rebuilding States and Communities* (United Nations University Press: Tokyo, 2007).

[15] Hillier, D., 'Africa's missing billions: international arms flows and the cost of conflict', Briefing Paper 107 (IANSA, Oxfam, and Saferworld: Oxford, Oct. 2007).

lations of human security in the form of genocide, ethnic cleansing and other mass atrocities. This debate led to the United Nations General Assembly's endorsement of the 'responsibility to protect' concept at the 2005 UN World Summit, the establishment of the Global Centre for the Responsibility to Protect in New York and the creation of the position of a Special Advisor on the Responsibility to Protect in December 2007 to work closely with the office of the UN Secretary-General's Special Representative for the Prevention of Genocide and Mass Atrocities.[16]

Structural violence and human insecurity

Structural violence can be expressed in various ways. One such way is as suffering by all or part of society as a consequence of local, national and international exploitive and unjust political, economic and social systems and structures that prevent people from meeting their basic needs. Structural violence impinges on the basic survival needs of individuals and communities and is thus a source of human insecurity. Many effects of structural violence are devastating in human terms as well as destabilizing in political terms. Economically or politically marginalized populations that suffer from structural violence may breed extremist violence (insurgency or terrorism). In this case structural violence feeds direct violence. Structural violence matters in terms of its immediate impact on human security and its correlation with increasing direct violence.

In *SIPRI Yearbook 2007*, Elisabeth Sköns appears to state the obvious when she notes that 'If the ultimate objective of security is to save human beings from preventable premature death and disability, then the appropriate security policy would focus on prevention instruments and risk reduction strategies for their causes.' The point is well taken since the occurrence and scope of armed violence—and directly related casualties—are often used to inform general analyses of trends in peace and conflict worldwide. The *Human Security Report 2005* is an example of such thinking, although it is widely criticized for this approach.[17] Sköns further asserts that 'While collective violence causes a great many premature deaths and disabilities, other types of injury cause an even greater number.'[18] She cites relevant statistics prepared by the World Health Organization, according to which worldwide 17 million people died of communicable diseases in 2005, while 184 000 deaths occurred as a result of collective violence. (Although the latter figure is a highly uncertain estimate, it nevertheless captures the relative magnitude of such causes of death.) Thus, approximately 100 times more individuals died of preventable diseases than perished as a result of direct collective violence. The data cited by Sköns also show that almost five times as many individuals committed suicide and three times as many were killed in interpersonal violence than those who fell victim to collective violence.[19] However, in the light of those figures, an important caveat, which is likely to increase the reported levels of indirect victims of armed violence, should be considered. Recent Uppsala Conflict

[16] The responsibility to protect concept focuses on states' obligations to protect their populations and those of other states against genocide and other large-scale atrocities. United Nations, 'World Summit Outcome', UN General Assembly Resolution 60/1, 24 Oct. 2005, <http://www.un.org/summit2005 documents.html>, paras 138 and 139. On the Global Centre for the Responsibility to Protect see <http:// www.globalcentrer2p.org/>.

[17] Human Security Centre (note 11).

[18] Sköns (note 1), p. 243.

[19] Sköns (note 1), p. 250.

Data Program (UCDP) data suggest that the promising decline in the number of state-based conflicts that began in the 1990s has ceased, and the annual number of such conflicts has remained constant at 32 for three years (2004–2006).[20] The annual totals for 'major armed conflicts', as defined by the UCDP and SIPRI, have also remained relatively stable in the past three years (at 14–15 conflicts in 2005–2007). Furthermore, since 2004, all of the major armed conflicts recorded have been intrastate conflicts.[21]

While it is likely that damage from armed violence contributes greatly to years or decades of post-violence suffering, from a human security perspective deadly harm that is not caused by armed violence deserves at least as much attention. There is a need to rethink security analysis and provision by moving from analysing 'conflict potential', which focuses on direct violence, to 'human insecurity potential', which focuses on both direct and structural violence and its mitigation.

Structural violence matters in the analysis of both violence and possible mitigation efforts. It is both a source and a result of direct violence. Structural violence manifests itself in marginalization and repression, and in the intentional and the unintentional creation of obstacles to the development or maintenance of individual and community-based strategies for managing harm. Based on the human security and human needs perspectives, both direct and structural violence are unacceptable burdens on human development and social justice and order—whether they are committed intentionally or not. The prevailing preoccupation in many quarters with the prevention of primarily direct violence (and of the outbreak of violent conflict or its recurrence in the post-conflict reconstruction phase) should give way to a more thorough focus on the detection and mitigation of structural violence. The latter is the source of great human suffering and societal tension, with the potential to destabilize societies to the point where armed violence becomes unavoidable.

IV. The human security approach as an analytical framework to address violence

Alleviating, mitigating and coping with direct and structural violence are essential requirements for sustainable and positive peace—and for assuring that fragile post-conflict societies in particular do not relapse into collective violence. The priorities and responsibilities for preventive and restorative engagement need to be clarified. The human security approach to structural and direct violence is a method to assist in identifying such priorities and responsibilities. It selects threats in a specific geographic context with a focus on the needs of the affected population, identifies sources of direct and structural violence and develops and communicates mitigation strategies to the actors in charge of human security provision.

A number of issues are thus necessary components of a framework for effective human insecurity mitigation: (*a*) population- and context-specific threat and violence identification and analysis; (*b*) threat-, context- and actor-specific designs of preventive and response measures; (*c*) targeted prevention of direct and structural violence through multi-actor strategies; and (*d*) monitoring and assessment of threat levels and of the implementation of mitigation and adaptation measures. Particular attention

[20] Harbom, L. and Wallensteen, P., 'Armed conflict, 1989–2006', *Journal of Peace Research*, vol. 44, no. 5 (2007), p. 623.

[21] For more detail see appendix 2A.

must be paid to the role of armed violence and its potential for escalating existing and creating new waves of direct and structural violence; and to the sources and impacts of structural violence. Using this framework as the basis for human security threats will help identify priority threats and entry points for effective preventive measures. However, the response side of this equation will remain a challenge, although not a difficult one. Desirable outcomes include: (*a*) observable and measurable reduction of direct and structural violence and threat levels; (*b*) decreasing vulnerability to direct violence and other life-threatening harm; (*c*) increasing levels of human security; (*d*) the reduced likelihood of conflict; and (*e*) improvements in social and political stability.[22]

Such a systematic approach to the analysis of violence is particularly relevant in the presence of structural violence, which is not always easy to recognize and where the identification of responsible causes and actors are a challenge at best. In Galtung's words, 'Personal violence represents change and dynamism—not only ripples on waves, but waves on otherwise tranquil waters. Structural violence is silent, it does not show—it is essentially static, it *is* the tranquil waters.'[23]

The human security approach is concerned with the needs of, and threats affecting, individuals and communities, and violence has to be analysed and mitigated primarily at the levels of their social, political and economic interactions. Thus, a human security approach to identifying and alleviating direct and structural violence must be able to identify sources of, and remedies to, violence that are realistically attributable to affected individuals and communities. Analysis of the sources of human insecurity and of the responsibilities for human security provision has to be undertaken in the context in which such analysis delivers relevant information to identify accountabilities and responsibilities, and where remedial or preventive strategies become feasible. In many instances, this will result in a multi-tiered approach to human security analysis and provision. Both direct and structural violence can be traced back to local, national, regional and international sources (i.e. structures and actors). Responsibilities for action lie with different actors at each of those levels. Sometimes remedial or preventive strategies can be pursued at all levels from the local to the global (with the greatest potential for effective and sustainable human security provision), while most often less ambitious (and possibly less effective) strategies will have to focus on measures at those levels where actors, structures and processes are most agreeable towards cooperation in the reduction of violence. For instance, financial or ideological support for an insurgency from local populations and external governments may be targeted at either or both of those levels. Global structural inequalities (such or globalization pressures or unfair trade patterns) might be identified as sources of structural violence at the local level, but would need to be addressed at the international level.

[22] This approach was developed by the present author in the context of the research project 'Operationalizing human security for livelihood protection: analysis, monitoring and mitigation of existential threats by and for local communities', jointly sponsored by swisspeace (HUSEC) and the National Center of Competence in Research (NCCR) North–South: Research Partnerships for Mitigating Syndromes of Global Change, <http://www.swisspeace.ch/typo3/en/peace-conflict-research/human-security/index.html>.

[23] Galtung (note 5), p. 173.

V. Conclusions

As discussed in the previous section, the human security concept implies that the provision of human security requirements is largely the responsibility of states. Many states need to rethink and refocus their security policies and systems in order to provide effective human security for their population and—in cooperation with other states and coordinated by intergovernmental organizations—assist or encourage states that lack the necessary capacities to follow suit. The 'responsibility to protect' concept seems a suitable response to these calls for the provision of universal human security. Yet it is for this very reason that scepticism prevails about the legality of a new norm that considers human security as an innate right and the provision of human security as the responsibility of states. Such expectations seem to be at odds with states' rights to sovereignty and non-intervention. Protagonists of the concept point out that their work—and the accompanying evolving global norm—applies only to direct violence and, in that context, the extreme action of military intervention under the responsibility to protect concept is concerned only with the most grievous crimes: mass atrocities and genocide. However, the basic assumptions of the concept justifying measures short of military intervention are applicable to direct violence in more general terms and to structural violence 'committed' by national and international cultural, social, economic and political structures—a major paradigm shift in international norms and values.

Depending on one's reading of *The Responsibility to Protect*,[24] there seems to have been a struggle within the International Commission on Intervention and State Sovereignty over the inclusion of some types of violence at the expense of other similarly destructive yet politically and legally less practicable ones. The responsibility to protect concept focuses on conflict and violence prevention and on post-conflict and post-violence rebuilding as the main tools of international responsibility towards disadvantaged and threatened populations worldwide. Direct violence short of mass atrocities and structural violence are gradually being recognized as viable and legitimate justifications for triggering international concern and pressure on states that are not able or willing to meet their populations' human security needs.

Using existing means and instruments to address state-based conflicts and—although more challenging—other forms of collective violence might be easier, less expensive and under current international law more likely to occur. From a human security perspective, such an approach reflects concerns mainly with the impact that tensions or crises have on national, regional and international order and stability. The fate and survival of affected populations are not primary considerations despite the destructive impact of both direct and structural violence on the stability and fabric of societies and their political systems. Moreover, such narrow approaches to addressing collective violence ignore opportunities to become involved in dealing with major suffering that is short of direct violence, and in checking its escalation to armed violence. Focusing threat analysis and mitigation on an approach that applies human security to identifying and reducing direct and structural violence offers promising opportunities for creating the normative, legal and eventually political conditions for the consolidation of positive and sustainable peace in threatened societies.

[24] International Commission on Intervention and State Sovereignty (note 9).