



## Intervening for human security

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# 1. Intervening for human security

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It is out of solidarity that [we] establish deliberately and, as it were, dispassionately a community of interest with the oppressed and exploited – Hannah Arendt, 1963

In the final analysis, human security is a child who did not die, a disease that did not spread, a job that was not cut, an ethnic tension that did not explode in violence, a dissident who was not silenced – UNDP, 1994

## TOWARDS A TRANSFORMATIVE VISION OF SECURITY

In *On Revolution*, Hannah Arendt insisted on the distinction between ‘solidarity’ and ‘pity’: solidarity is “a principle that can inspire and guide action”, whereas pity “keeps its sentimental distance” and has “greater capacity for cruelty than cruelty itself” (Arendt 1963: 84–85). In a Western world laden with a “loquacity of pity”, Arendt reminds us that it is the more truthful and courageous path of solidarity that we must “establish deliberately”, if our intentions are to forge a “community of interest with the oppressed and exploited” (Arendt 1963: 81, 84). This book is about the biggest humanitarian crisis on the borders of Europe since the Second World War. It is about its origins, its consequences, and its clinical regimes of population management in which refugees “do not count as rights-bearing subjects, nor even as recognizably human” (Hyndman and Giles 2017: 1). Guided by the concept of ‘human security’, the book’s core concern involves strategizing for a ‘politics of solidarity’, and not merely a ‘politics of pity’ so frequently the impoverished response of the West to the “distant suffering” of Others (Boltanski 1999: xv, 3).

In 1994, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) announced ‘human security’ as the most important global development goal as the twenty-first century approached. In the foreword to its Human Development Report (HDR) that year, the then UNDP Administrator and UN Special Coordinator for Economic and Social Affairs, James Gustave Speth, declared that in seeking to “redefine humanity’s development agenda”, the UN must lead a response to what he termed “the new compulsions of human security” (UNDP 1994: iii). The UN’s vision heralded a ‘people-centred development’ and centrally involved setting out a ‘human security’ agenda for future inter-

ventions. It was security defined by “development, not arms”, and its chief concern was “human life and dignity” (UNDP 1994: iii, 1, 22).

In the UNDP’s first Human Development Report in 1990, it had argued that “people cannot be reduced to a single dimension as economic creatures” but rather that they should be “at the centre of all development” in securing “long life, knowledge, political freedom, personal security, community participation and guaranteed human rights” (UNDP 1990: iii). Some thirty Human Development Reports later, the world and our understanding of security has changed. The global picture is not all negative: “almost all countries” worldwide improved their human development index (HDI) between 1990 and 2012 (UNDP 2013: 12); yet such statistics mask the period’s escalation of internal and regional conflicts and expansion of Western interventionary violence, especially in the Middle East and Central Asia. They occlude too the combined consequences: shattered human geographies and forced displacements of people. This trend, moreover, has undeniably accelerated in the post-Arab Spring period, and can be seen in all its horrors in the Mediterranean refugee crisis.

The Mediterranean refugee crisis is one of the most shocking exposures of the consequences of continued cyclical violence in our world today. It presents states across the European Union with a common challenge: how to intervene responsibly and collaboratively in mitigation and support. At its heart, the concept of human security challenges the basic premise of envisioning intervention primarily militarily, and enacting security responses exclusively from the perspective of the state.<sup>1</sup> As Dorothy Estrada-Tanck (2016: 1) notes, long-established concepts of national security, oriented militarily and focused on the territorial state, are “unfit to analyse and address factors of threat, risk or sudden change in the daily lives of people – many of them transnational or not involving force” (Estrada-Tanck 2016: 1). At the end of the Cold War, we saw a lessening of zero-sum-game calculations of national security based upon physical force. In their stead, the world of international relations witnessed a burgeoning of a belief that cooperation and interventions other than military force were not only possible but vital. As Siew Mun Tang (2015: 41) outlines, this saw security practice “broadened and expanded”, with ‘non-traditional security’ coming into the mainstream and encompassing a “diverse range of security domains” addressing “the well-being and safety of societies”. The key human security shift involved a move from the ‘state’ as the primary referent object of security to the ‘individual’: it was about “sensitizing policy-makers and politicians to the needs of the ‘little people’ and local communities” (Tang 2015: 51).

The post-Cold War moves towards non-traditional security measures in the 1990s were curtailed and re-evaluated at the outset of the new century in the aftermath of the 9/11 attacks in the United States. The attacks rehabilitated and renewed the hegemony of military security, but the US military’s subsequent

failures at state building and humanitarian intervention in Afghanistan and Iraq accentuated once again the need to rethink security grand strategy (Morrissey 2017). Lorraine Elliott observes the consequent terrain of debate:

In the face of asymmetric and networked non-state threats, intra-state conflict and state failure, and extremes of wealth, poverty and disadvantage, academics and policymakers alike were impelled to re-examine what it meant to be secure. (2012: 2)

As Elliott reasons, our contemporary world's non-traditional security challenges require "sensitivity to multiple and interlocking types of insecurity" (2012: 9). She laments, however, the enduring primacy of the traditional adversarial model of state-centred security, along with its core failings:

First, it runs the risk of militarising non-traditional insecurities, drawing attention away from the underlying causes. Second, it pays insufficient attention to the ways in which various forms of non-traditional insecurities – such as environmental degradation – might be amenable to cooperation rather than confrontation. Third, it restricts who is able to contribute to the 'security' discourse and precludes ideas and concepts that do not have states as the key structures or agents. (Elliott 2015: 14)

Human security directly challenges these fundamental shortcomings and seeks to progressively transcend them in terms of both vision and policy, to secure a world that "can never be at peace unless *people* have security in their daily lives" (UNDP 1994: 1).<sup>2</sup>

Prominent in the UNDP's re-envisioning of security in 1994 was the immediate post-Cold War consciousness of triumphant liberalism and goal of "capturing the peace dividend":

For too long, the concept of security has been shaped by the potential for conflict between states. For too long, security has been equated with the threats to a country's borders. For too long, nations have sought arms to protect their security. (UNDP 1994: 3, 47)

The 1994 HDR sought to frame an interconnected, global sense of human security, "relevant to people everywhere, in rich nations and in poor", and involving a focus on pan-state insecurities configured centrally around people: "to address the growing challenge of human security, a new development paradigm is needed that puts people at the centre of development" (UNDP 1994: 3, 4). The report went on to outline seven key elements – economic security, food security, health security, environmental security, personal security, community security, and political security – and underscore "two main aspects":

[Human security] means, first, safety from such chronic threats as hunger, disease and repression. And second, it means protection from sudden and hurtful disruptions

in the patterns of daily life – whether in homes, in jobs or in communities. (UNDP 1994: 23)

In the UN's subsequent major statement on human security in 2003, *Human Security Now*, Amartya Sen and his co-writers at the UN's Commission on Human Security (convened in 2001) linked the concept to “several kinds of freedoms – such as freedom from want and freedom from fear” (Commission on Human Security 2003: 10). They set out how we can “protect the basic freedoms people need” and how we can “enhance people's capabilities to act on their own behalf” by supporting both ‘protection strategies’ and ‘empowerment strategies’ initiated by “states, international agencies, NGOs and the private sector” to “enable people to develop their resilience to difficult conditions” (Commission on Human Security 2003: 10).<sup>3</sup> For the commission, human security was ultimately about creating integrated political, socio-economic and environmental systems that “together give people the building blocks of survival, livelihood and dignity” (Commission on Human Security 2003: 4).

## ENACTING HUMAN SECURITY

In the UNDP's 1994 HDR, the envisioning of a broad set of human security goals is done with a view to involving as many state and non-state stakeholders as possible (Paris 2001).<sup>4</sup> Shaun Breslin and George Christou point to the consequent variegated policy take-up, highlighting in particular the “localisation” of the concept to “suit local political preferences and priorities” (Breslin and Christou 2015: 6). They underline too the obdurate hegemonic position of traditional state security concerns, the hard security issues of borders, bombs, bullets and war, whose importance were rejuvenated under the auspices of the global war on terror launched in 2001 (cf. Goucha and Crowley 2008; Peou 2014). Furthermore, Western states have been especially active since the turn of the century in expanding interventionary roles for their militaries, drawing upon humanitarian and human security discourse and a wider interventionary toolkit, despite how imprecise and tenuous the ‘humanitarian’ technologies of occupation are (Morrison Taw 2012). As Franklyn Lisk et al. (2015: 25, 27) observe, although human security has “evolved as a holistic development-oriented acuity”, its “human development rights” agenda has increasingly been incorporated into a development–security nexus in which it is seen as integral to “economic stability and prosperity” (cf. Nef 1999; Duffield 2001). This trend has been replicated in military circles via the emergence of what Coleen Bell and Brad Evans (2010: 364) call a “post-interventionary logic” of security, focused on reconstruction and stabilization. As I have shown for the US military, however, military-led ‘stability

operations' are about *economic security* and are neither directed nor primarily resourced towards human security concerns (Morrissey 2015).

An additional challenge for human security lies in how its seven elements parsed out in the 1994 HDR have been taken up in distinctly different capacities, with some being prioritized more than others. While political security, community security and personal security have been overtaken conceptually and in practice by the more recent security discourse of 'Responsibility to Protect' (R2P), the other four identified components of human security have been substantially drawn upon and developed. As Breslin and Christou (2015: 8) detail, "food security, health security, environmental security and economic security have not only become firm parts of debate and discussion, but also significant policy areas that have had considerable time, effort and money devoted to resolving". They concede, however, that the operations of even these four elements have had their limiting prioritizations, and the danger therein is that broader concerns become marginalized. As Lorraine Elliott (2012, 2015) has illustrated, the focus on climate change, for instance, in terms of environmental security has come to sideline a range of wider human security issues and thereby limit integrated approaches to environmental precarity and linked human insecurity (see also Mason and Zeitoun 2013).

There is an inherent problem in the compartmentalization of human security. Extracting out separate aspects of human security can equate to "established bureaucratic and disciplinary convenience" but, more often than not, this is unhelpful, as Des Gasper and Oscar Gómez (2015: 100) persuade:

Many important threats arise out of the interconnections between different aspects and forces in particular situations, so that much of the value-added from human security analysis comes [...] from functioning as a boundary concept to transcend those divisions, flexibly.

Gasper and Gómez contend that a holistically orientated human security perspective can advance two critical sensibilities in responding to insecurity: (1) "the perception of an intensively interconnected global system which we share"; and (2) "the ability to think sensitively about how other people live their lives" (2015: 112). They go on to underline how a substantial body of feminist work on human security has demonstrated the value of not shrinking its concerns "into one component", but rather "promoting people's security" through a "holistic consideration of their lives" (Gasper and Gómez 2015: 106; see also Hoogensen and Stuvoy 2006; Truong et al. 2006; Wibben 2011; Tripp et al. 2013; Gasper and Sinatti 2016). In this sense, the 'elasticity' of the concept of human security is, in both concept and practice, an enabling attribute in responding to security needs in 'context-sensitive' ways. Human

security, in other words, can avoid the “vices of in-silo securitization” and offer instead flexible, workable policies:

A human security agenda calls not for a permanent scanning and analysis of everything, nor for a permanent fixed focus on one pre-set part of life, but an alternation between periodic wide scanning followed by intensive focus on the insecurities identified as most pressing in the particular time and location. (Gasper and Gómez 2015: 113)

As Gasper and Gómez (2015: 112–113) conclude, “engaging with real human-environmental (‘socio-ecological’) systems requires using less fixed pre-set divisions”, precisely because prescriptive measures in dealing with security problems have demonstrably failed, and failed repeatedly.

## LAW, HUMAN SECURITY AND THE ENABLING OF HUMAN RIGHTS

In seeking to transcend the failures of prescriptive securitization, the central challenge for human security lies in enacting locally attuned and integrated efforts on the ground, and ascribing responsibility to that end. Lisk et al. (2015: 33) note how “little attention is being paid to accountability for health and human security”, for instance, referencing the limitations of the World Health Organization (WHO) – in terms of both responsibility and accountability – for enforcing “rules on member state adoption of pandemic preparedness guidelines”. This critique of the global governance capacity of the WHO has sadly an acute relevance in the context of our current COVID-19 pandemic, and it begs the question of how best to oversee a human security agenda in practice. What is the most enabling strategy, what are the most effective mechanisms, and how can we ensure binding circuits of responsibility and accountability?<sup>5</sup>

For the UN, mobilizing the law is the key to ensuring responsibility and accountability in the enactment of human security. For the UN Commission on Human Security, “respecting human rights” is “at the core of protecting human security” – it cites the legally binding conventions of the 1948 Universal Declaration on Human Rights and 1993 Vienna Declaration of Human Rights to envisage human security and human rights as “mutually reinforcing”:

Human security helps identify the rights at stake in a particular situation. And human rights help answer the question: How should human security be promoted? The notion of duties and obligations complements the recognition of the ethical and political importance of human security. (Commission on Human Security 2003: 10)

In a meta-legal capacity, human security has built upon “existing legal international obligations” to include “central elements” of its agenda in “legal

instruments” of policy (Estrada-Tanck 2016: 3). Linking the law constitutively with the effectual delivery of human security, Estrada-Tanck proposes a “human security-human rights synergy” framework for both “analysis and action”, convincingly showing how human security can be given a “precise normative grounding” through “human rights law” (2016: 9; see also Sané 2008). Although for some (see, for example, Howard-Hassmann 2012), there is a danger of human security diluting or undermining human rights, Estrada-Tanck sees both as complementary and envisages the use of legal instruments as a “very real and tangible path” that can be pursued:

the interaction between human security and human rights holds promise for more expansive and integrated legal interpretations that result in increased protection for persons and groups in their everyday lives, especially those in conditions of vulnerability. (2016: 251)

Human security, in other words, can act as the conduit to both envisioning and enacting human rights.

In providing an overarching vision for “broadening security concerns related to specific human rights”, and as a tool in tackling “issues of structural vulnerability in an interrelated and contextualised manner”, human security has enormous potential (Estrada-Tanck 2016: 251). As Estrada-Tanck’s work makes clear, it can “act as the bridge between different collective or societal conditions that threaten individual (or group) human rights”, and human rights in turn “can inform and deliver a more precise and operational conception of human security” (2016: 253, 254; see also Gasper and Gómez 2015). In such an envisioning, human security can become a focal “heuristic tool” for the state in identifying circumstances in which it is “compelled to take additional measures regarding concrete human rights as foreseen in normative instruments, standards and indicators” (Estrada-Tanck 2016: 254).

## ENDURING CHALLENGES

For many, human security remains “something to be achieved, rather than something just to be discussed” (Elliott 2015: 19). For Lorraine Elliott, the limited impact of human security thinking in the realm of environmental security over the last 20 years, for example, is due to two issues: (1) the selective and partial mobilization of human security by those in positions of power; and (2) the enduring ontology of traditional statist conceptualizations of security (Elliott 2015; cf. Bilgin 2002, Liotta 2002). Both issues are intimately connected, and combine in efforts to convince national publics everywhere that prioritized unilateral, state-centric responses to new and emerging threats are necessary and in their interests. We have witnessed this repeatedly in the



wake of the 9/11 attacks on the United States. The invocation of emergency governmental powers has become normative, and this has facilitated the recurring deployment of discourses of risk management to deal rapidly and (ostensibly) exceptionally with non-traditional security threats (Buzan and Wæver 2003; Agamben 2005; Mythen and Walklate 2006; Aradau and Van Munster 2007; Hyndman 2007; Neocleous 2008). This trend has been seen acutely in state-centred efforts across Europe to secure borders against refugees as the Mediterranean crisis unfolded. At the very point in recent European history when a collective, cooperative human security vision was never more required, governments across the continent, and particularly at its borders with North Africa and the Middle East, activated instead the old ‘hard’ statist security responses of walls, military policing and camps. The European Border and Coast Guard Agency, established in late 2015 in response to the growing number of migrants attempting to enter Europe, is an illustrative exemplar of this trend. The new agency extended the role and remit of the previously created Frontex in policing migrant flows in the Mediterranean, and centrally was tasked with implementing a technocratic security function (Giannetto 2019; Wærp 2019). Its *securitarian* rather than *humanitarian* *modus operandi* mirrors a crisis discursively produced and understood more as a *security crisis* for the EU than as a *humanitarian crisis* compelling EU support.

Broader state-centred mechanisms of biopolitical population management across the EU are propelled by deep-rooted Othering discourses of fear and threat, and mirror reductive racial and religious categorizations. They betray an impoverished security thinking and strategy – ethically, intellectually, and in terms of effective policy. The focus on ‘risk’ is key, as it legitimates the so-called exceptional management of ‘subjects’ who are not citizens and therefore not deserving of our care. Their vulnerabilities are not recognized, acknowledged or indeed even visible. Instead, these subjects are typically presented as a threat and the *source* of insecurities, rather than their *consequence* further serving to reinforce the appropriateness of governmental measures to manage such threats, and typically in a manner that is out of sight and out of mind. It is the invisibility of such governmental regimes of security that render articulating and insisting upon human geography, human rights and human security so difficult. There is no doubt that there is a major discursive battle to be fought to render visible precarity, and to supplant a story of vulnerability and empathy in the place of narratives of threat and risk (Butler 2020). This is what a human security analysis and deconstruction of statist policies can do, with a view to calling out the core ethical and human rights interests and concomitantly producing an alternative discourse of security that is participatory and people-centred (Aradau 2004; Axworthy 2004). Such a goal involves an old postcolonial concern, of course: enabling the subaltern, the marginalized, to speak.

As Lorraine Elliott (2015: 20) notes, a human security approach should always mean that “those who are least able to ‘speak’ their insecurities” be “not further marginalised or overlooked”. It involves a politics that is “invested with an explicitly normative focus on those who are most marginalised from institutional decision-making – the poor, women, children, the elderly, migrants, indigenous peoples and others who are socially marginalised through discrimination and prejudice” (Elliott 2012: 11–12).<sup>6</sup> Building and advancing such a politics of solidarity requires both illuminating the counter-productiveness of poorly informed, abstracted security measures, and proactively incorporating community voices in locally scaled security strategies (which are also, of course, in the interests of the state).<sup>7</sup> Here is Elliott again:

To enhance human security, social resilience strategies and institutions need to be inclusive and transparent. They need to be engaged with, aware of and responsive to the vulnerabilities and security needs of local communities. They need to involve actors who are not usually included in more traditional modes of security – non-governmental organisations, civil society, local governments, development agencies and a range of other regional and international organisations. (2015: 21)

For Elliott, attending to and integrating the local is fundamental to achieving a genuinely human security endgame, which, as Breslin and Christou (2015: 3) note, requires a necessary “diversion of resources and instruments of global governance”. Seen in this way, security is ultimately about what we invest in, in terms of interventionary instruments and towards what end. If the objective is not driven by traditional geopolitical and geoeconomic calculation, and if it is not about protecting elite and embedded interests, then interventionary policies of human security can gather real traction. In the discursive battle for what is the interventionary endgame, rendering visible and insisting upon the most precarious of human geographies is key. It then becomes a question of resourcing and enabling designated supportive mechanisms to respond – collaboratively, adaptively and effectively. Human security, in other words, is not only a useful *concept* in envisioning interventionism; it can be activated successfully as an *interventionary strategy*. And in building human security policy as effective strategy, it seems especially important to learn from the Global South, where human security initiatives have been much more supported over the last 25 years, however imperfectly (Morrissey 2019). Mathew Davies, Lorraine Elliott and others have documented, for instance, the regional cooperation efforts of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) in dealing with a range of security and human rights concerns through a human security lens (Elliott 2012; Caballero-Anthony 2015; Davies 2017, 2018).

## THE MEDITERRANEAN REFUGEE CRISIS

For anyone who still had faith in the European Union as a partnership for peace, an experiment in post-national democracy and an abode of human rights, 2015 was a sobering year. (Feher 2016)

Returning to the European context, the challenge of responding to the precarity of human lives caught up in the Mediterranean refugee crisis raises huge questions for the EU. Some have noted the failure of (re)humanizing refugees, who are persistently seen as a desperate, ragged and frequently less-than-human ‘Other’ to be pitied (Düvell 2019) – that is if they are ‘seen’ at all. Refugees are “largely invisible” in the Global North and “cease to be constituted as liberal democratic subjects”, as Jennifer Hyndman and Wenona Giles (2017: 1) have shown. Their concern is to “decenter prevailing state-centric and global North accounts” of refugees by questioning the dominant, top-down security language of “policy and technical fixes” deployed commonly in their clinical management (Hyndman and Giles 2017: 1). In the face of hegemonic, top-down *statist* securitization, academics and activists have a critical role to play in underlining a range of issues that are focal in *human* securitization efforts. These include advancing cultural, ethical and political perspectives on core questions of migration, asylum and biopolitics (Hyndman 2008; Estrada-Tanck 2013; Gasper and Sinatti 2016; Gill 2018; Morrissey 2018). There is an urgent need, in particular, to historicize the crisis, precisely because the central challenges faced by the EU today require insight from the underlying cultural attitudes, conditioned by history, which can help us understand and transform the present. Fundamental philosophical questions regarding the European ‘Self’, external ‘Other’, and discourses of fear and rejection are crucial in this task. Reminders of the dangers of fascism and false, reductive notions of cultural purity are key too, and there is a recurring necessity to repeatedly refuse and challenge the way in which the media and political parties negatively portray migration and its effects.<sup>8</sup> History, in other words, needs to be seen as a vital resource of human experience that we must learn from, not simply by documenting the dangers and weaknesses in our European political and cultural heritages, but by highlighting and championing the progressive strengths and capacities in our traditions too (Blanco-Sia-Lopez 2019; Kalantzi 2019).

Hyndman and Giles (2017: 6) ask if “existing frames of inquiry and scholarship” are in fact “perpetrating the problem of extended exile”. Their question is important. Current European Commission research funding on the migration crisis in the EU is dominated by technocratic understandings of security and population management. Calls are frequently instrumental, replete with simplified ‘security solution’ objectives promising ‘efficiencies’, and betray a pre-

sentist orientation that is bereft of geopolitical context. The current refugee crisis in Europe has everything to do with prior Western interventionism over the last half century or more on the borders of Europe, in the Middle East and North Africa. The effects of the last 20 years of pragmatic geopolitics are especially evident. Long-term refugees are frequently a direct consequence, and it is imperative that we analyse the geopolitics of their displacement. Learning from these legacies, and critically thinking through how to avoid them in the future, has perhaps never been more urgent.

This book concerns itself with many of these questions. By invoking in the title the idea of a ‘haven’, a place of safety or refuge, the haven in mind is not just one from the Mediterranean waters that have taken the lives of so many victims of the ongoing conflict in Syria and across the Middle East and North Africa; it also signals a different conceiving of Western interventionism. Prompted by a sense of academic responsibility to respond empathetically and constructively to the conflict-ridden and precarious geographies of our contemporary world, the book seeks to advance the idea of ‘human securitization’ and goal of ‘intervening for human security’. Western interventionism has long been guided by military and economic definitions of security, involving repeated and frequently counter-productive practices of military violence. On the contrary, this book offers an alternative envisioning of human security, and calls for investment in interventions of a different kind: in protecting human rights; in offering humanitarian assistance; in safeguarding civil society; in supporting rebuilding programmes; in sharing governmental expertise; and in enabling security mechanisms that are ultimately human-centred.

The book is based upon an Irish Research Council-funded project, *Haven*, which critically examined the Mediterranean refugee crisis (Morrissey 2016). It had two principal aims: to develop a collaborative body of research to address the root causes of the crisis and offer an alternative envisioning of Western interventionism via the UN concept of human security; and to initiate a series of public events where these critical perspectives could be disseminated to relevant stakeholders and more broadly in the public sphere. This was achieved by three core initiatives: the hosting of an international symposium, comprising a broad range of academic, governmental, NGO and refugee voices; the directing of dedicated Masters-level research, supported by NGO partners; and finally through the publication of this edited volume. As envisioned by the Irish Research Council, it is imperative that we “harness the knowledge and expertise of both our researchers and NGOs” in addressing global challenges (Dóchas 2015). My hope with this book is that it can offer an important contribution to this vision for collaborative research and knowledge dissemination. It charts various potential impacts of informed, critical knowledge in and with the public sphere on the subject of the Mediterranean crisis, and, in challenging how Western interventionism has dominantly but

ineffectively been driven by macro-level geopolitical and military visions, it advocates instead a holistic human security approach that seeks to deliver a more sustainable future for all.

Arts, humanities and social science scholars can play a vital role in theorizing more humane and empathetic readings of the Mediterranean crisis. They can also advance much-needed nuanced and historically and geographically sensitive accounts that resist the allure of simplified responsive logics of walls, borders and separations of ‘us’ and ‘them’ (Brown 2010). This must be done with an eye for engaged public scholarship, especially in a time of post-truth politics. A key challenge lies in calling for a research vision that aims to bring together scholars, policy makers, activists and (crucially) refugees themselves, to creatively consider how to respond to one of the most pivotal ‘societal challenges’ for the EU since its formation.

The above concerns are engaged in key ways in the various chapters throughout this volume. All reflect on the kind of ‘crisis’ we are facing: is it just a crisis of war and displacement, or is it also a crisis of policy in response, and ultimately a crisis of vision in the kind of security we all want and need? Colleagues consider vital transnational questions of security and responsibility in the EU in thinking through how we can productively conceptualize a more interconnected vision of populations and population management. To this end, historicizing the European story of biopolitical governmentalities is crucial, as various contributions make clear. One of the most pressing challenges identified by many is how do we supplant a prevailing narrative of external threat and risk with a story of shared precarity and human empathy? The UN’s concept of human security and its emphasis on legally binding human rights law challenges governments across the EU to take responsibility for, and think cooperatively about, a more collective and sustainable sense of security. Attending to the concept compels us to think differently about security, and, crucially, to vigorously contest how its parameters are discursively framed.

## CONCLUSION: USING THE LANGUAGE OF SECURITY TO TRANSFORM OUR WORLD

What are the analytical benefits of using the security vocabulary when addressing issues of human well-being? And to what extent can a security framing of these issues be useful in the normative and political sense? (Richardson and Nunes 2015: 70)

Human security as a concept is not without its limitations. Although it has made “significant inroads in informing the discourse and language of security”, its success in practice is less clear-cut (Caballero-Anthony 2015: 66; cf. Chandler 2008; Christie 2010). It has gained considerably more purchase in

the Global South over the last 25 years,<sup>9</sup> and some elements more than others have been prioritized by states and inter-state regional bodies during that time. Commentators have pointed to the policy incoherencies of the original 1994 envisioning (Liotta 2004; Uvin 2004); some have questioned how it is different from the R2P agenda that emerged post-Rwanda (Evans and Sahnoun 2001; Hassan 2015); while others have asked if it is just another (neo)liberal agenda to impose and extend a Western global order (Acharya 2001; Duffield 2007). Despite the above shortcomings, human security has contributed importantly to the broadening of how humanitarian intervention is understood and how it needs to be resourced; and the concept has undoubtedly further solidified operational shifts in thinking about security (Commission on Human Security 2003; Altman et al. 2012; Martin and Owen 2014). As Breslin and Christou (2015: 9) observe, its agenda over the last 25 years has progressed a more people-centred approach to security, an envisioning that is being adopted increasingly on the ground in spaces of intervention all over the world – by “individuals, NGOs, governments and international organisations to promote the security of individuals”. From my own field-based teaching in Bosnia and Herzegovina over the last decade,<sup>10</sup> I can attest to how a more locally attuned, human-centred approach to security can have real, positive and empowering impacts in communities – giving ground truth to a vision of human security first conceived while the country lay in the throes of war and ethnic cleansing.

In referencing human security’s call for activating international and humanitarian law, we need to be cognizant of the increasingly selective use of the law by Western governments in recent years – in terms of both military and humanitarian interventions (Morrissey 2015). The functioning legalities of the EU–Turkey refugee agreement from 2016 is especially instructive on this point (Memişoğlu 2019). In interrogating the “procedures for registering, assessing, protecting and managing refugees” in Turkey today, Loyd, Ehrkamp and Secor have divulged how they are “caught in a prolonged limbo, during which they are subject to layers of bureaucracy, repeated interviews and ongoing demands to prove their deservingness” – and, crucially, that all of this takes place “within the international humanitarian logic that governs their access to care and resettlement” (Loyd et al. 2018: 377, 386). Recognizing this is important in efforts to critically ‘re-couple’ fundamental freedoms in EU human mobility policy-making with security concerns, a task that Cristina Blanco-Sia-Lopez sees as requiring a grassroots community-building project that seeks to counteract the erosion of democracy in the EU more broadly (2019).

In progressively mobilizing the language of security for a more democratic and integrated EU, the concept of human security is indispensable, and particularly so for the issue of migration. A human security vision can effectively frame the complexities of attaining a more cooperative, just and sustainable migration policy, and a human security politics can collaboratively build

an integrated strategy to invest in such a vital broader global development goal. As Ben Richardson and João Nunes note, relinquishing the language of security to governments and elite interests renders its instrumental usage uncontested, allowing “powerful actors to deploy the concept with greater latitude and for self-interested purposes” (2015: 71).<sup>11</sup> Deploying the term ‘human security’ or ‘human securitization’ not only challenges reductive, statist conceptualizations of security, it also uses a political vocabulary that can gather traction in successfully articulating alternative envisionings and practices.<sup>12</sup> To this end, engaging in the discursive contestation for a security agenda is about setting out the parameters of the interventionary challenge – describing the problem, in other words, with a view to shaping the response. Securitization always centrally involves “shaping what the problem is deemed to be” (Richardson and Nunes 2015: 81). It is also about silencing (Gasper and Sinatti 2016). Recognizing this compels us to formulate and communicate coherent and persuasive narratives about shared precarity, interlinked risk and cooperative security responses for all. We cannot abandon the lexicon of security to those that will continue to deploy its discursive and political power to determine top-down, abstracted security measures, which have habitually proven to be ineffectual or, worse, counter-productive. We need to recognize the “constitutive force” of security’s vocabulary in setting the policy agenda and therein disseminating “emancipatory ideas and practices”, which Richardson and Nunes (2015: 81–82) have shown is possible for food security in contemporary Brazil, for instance. Their objective to transcend the danger of security being “co-opted and instrumentalised”, by instead documenting its considerable potential for “emancipatory politics” vis-à-vis food, is important and has wider implications (Richardson and Nunes 2015: 82). The logic of security can be utilized to compellingly present a diversity of issues concerning human well-being. Alaa Murabit, for example, founder of the inspirational *Voice of Libyan Women*, defined the pressing needs of security in Libya thus: “security means education, completing school, equal opportunity, fair and equal employment” (Murabit 2016). In Murabit’s narrative lies a keen awareness of the import of *defining* security, of setting out its prioritized agenda, and of shifting focus and resources in tandem.

A key starting point in thinking critically about the EU’s contemporary security crisis is to insist upon its contextualization – in terms of geopolitics, in terms of political economy, and in terms of the structural violence of both. As Hyndman and Giles (2017: xv) lay bare, coupled with devastating prior military interventions overseas, Western countries have increasingly produced “aggressive and exclusionary border regimes” at home, which may not directly cause “protracted exile” but “tacitly reproduce it through preclusion, deportation and return” (Hyndman and Giles 2017: xv). We must refuse lazy separations of immigration issues from the social, economic and geopolitical

order that was integral in their production, and we must recognize the broad human geography of all those disadvantaged and marginalized by the structural inequalities of contemporary neoliberal capitalism. As Saskia Sassen (2012: 121) notes, our world is now witness to “sharp differentiations in life chances and privileges” and this affects “citizens”, “legal immigrants” and “irregular immigrants” alike. We must not “obscure the fact that the source of [their] impoverishment and losses is a larger political economy”, because this absence of reasoning is precisely what leads to “heightened nationalisms and virulent anti-immigrant sentiment” (Sassen 2012: 121).

Human security, as both a discourse and interventionary strategy, can aid us in considering complicated and interrelated questions of political economy, migration and humanitarian responsibility – and it is not simply a ‘responsibility to protect’ a precarious ‘Other’. Discourses of protection are typically focused on an external ‘them’, who are different from ‘us’. Conceiving an interventionary strategy inspired by a human security vision instead recognizes a collective, interconnected and shared precarity – a broader ‘us’, a less bounded ‘Self’, in a globalized world. A human security approach to issues such as migration can instructively conceptualize the intricacies and overlaps of the challenges faced, but it can also build a politics of solidarity in proffering integrated solutions that call out the failure of top-down, technocratic governmentality and herald instead the success of bottom-up, people-centred interventions. This is the vision of human security envisaged by the UNDP 25 years ago. It is a vision relevant to people everywhere, and its support and resourcing is vital in addressing the most profound human challenges of our time.

## NOTES

1. The 1994 HDR puts it thus: “The concept of security has for too long been interpreted narrowly: as security of territory from external aggression, or as protection of national interests in foreign policy or as global security from the threat of a nuclear holocaust. It has been related more to nation-states than to people” (UNDP 1994: 22).
2. Lorraine Elliott has presented an excellent genealogy of human security, documenting its discursive antecedents in the Brandt Commission reports of 1980 and 1983, its dedicated envisioning in the UNDP’s 1994 HDR and Commission on Human Security’s 2003 report, and its various policy formulations in hundreds of legal agreements, treaties and protocols over the last 25 years. She points to the 1993 UNDP HDR as paving the way for a “concerted focus on human security” by calling for participatory inputs into “security for whom, from what and by what means?” (Elliott 2015: 13). The 1994 HDR solidified these concerns via a cogent critique of traditional state-centred security framings of borders and confrontation, and a simultaneous invocation of a necessary rethinking of security in a more people-centred manner.



3. The commission's vision re-conceptualized security in three major ways: (1) it solidified the conceptual departure from traditional, state-centred and military-framed definitions of security to one people-centred and more locally adapted; (2) it highlighted the multiple, interrelated threats that cut across societies and thus the requirement of seeing issues of security, development and human rights in unison; and (3) it promoted a cooperative and integrated approach to human security within and across nations (Commission on Human Security 2003; cf. UN Trust Fund for Human Security 2009).
4. Wesley Widmaier and Luke Glanville (2015: 368) underline the benefits of "norm ambiguity" in terms of interventionary policy, arguing that "too little ambiguity can undermine the consensus, flexibility, and adjustment necessary to incremental change"; they chart, for example, the "contributions of ambiguity to the incremental construction of R2P [Responsibility to Protect] across the Rwanda, Iraq, and Libya crises".
5. Leila Giannetto has recently asked this question in the specific context of Frontex, the European Border and Coast Guard Agency. She concludes that despite Frontex being "under scrutiny for 13 years" there remains a "clear need for an enforceable judicial accountability" (Giannetto 2019).
6. Such an endeavour is further advanced by recognizing the challenge of voices from the Global South not only informing policy but also the Anglocentric academy. As Dorothy Estrada-Tanck (2016: 14) notes, in "none of the English language literature on human security" is there a reference to the 1995 Framework Convention on Democratic Security in Central America, which is "one of the only international treaties specifically including State positive obligations attached to 'human security'".
7. For many commentators, the successful operation and integrated scaling of human security efforts remains "first and foremost the responsibility of the state", as Siew Mun Tang (2015: 46) argues: "[a]lthough human security advocates a paradigmatic shift to conceptualize security from a state-centric model to a people-based approach, the state retains its centrality in [...] provision" (see also Caballero-Anthony 2015).
8. The migration crisis in Europe has arguably not been centrally in the public eye due to the effects of the crisis being concentrated in countries such as Greece, Hungary, Italy and Turkey, but the coverage that does occur is frequently de-contextualized and often sensationalist (Düvell 2019). It also fails to underline some of the most important critiques such as the absence of a coordinated and integrated EU-wide management of the crisis.
9. As Mely Caballero-Anthony (2015) shows, regions such as Southeast Asia, for instance, have activated the concept in both "academic and policy communities"; she points to the success of ASEAN in international cooperation efforts to deal with a range of security concerns through a human security lens (see also Elliott 2012).
10. I am Programme Director of the MA in Environment, Society and Development at NUI Galway, which involves a 'Field-Based Learning' module that takes place annually in Bosnia and Herzegovina, where students work on the ground on development projects with the UNDP and a range of other NGOs (see Morrissey et al. 2013).
11. Richardson and Nunes forcefully refute the idea that "security has an inherent logic which denies progressive politics", and instead appraise it as a "contested terrain" that is "open to the spread of emancipatory ideas and practices" (2015:

- 70, 82). Lorraine Elliott (2012: 12) too has underlined the import of retaining the “tactical attractions of the language of security” in calling for the protection and support of the most precarious “lives, livelihoods”, “lands and homes”.
12. There is a danger of overstating the dichotomy between ‘statist’ and ‘human’ security agendas. As David Chandler (2008: 427–428) notes, the idea of two separate “paradigms” is “exaggerated”. Chandler’s point is evidenced, for instance, by how militaries throughout the world have increasingly drawn upon humanitarian security discourse for stability operations and reconstruction efforts (Morrissey 2015). An additional challenge in security studies is to not present ‘human security’ as something inherently *opposed* to security measures and negatively oriented towards ‘de-securitization’ or ‘counter-securitization’. Lorraine Elliott’s (2012) use of the term ‘human securitization’ seems a progressive pathway forward.

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