Introduction: Transforming Security and Development in an Unequal World

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Abstract Security is a contested concept, which means very different things to different people. It bears the heavy historical imprint of the existing state system and of global capitalism. However this *IDS Bulletin* contends that it is essential that the development community understands and engages with security issues, for violent conflict and insecurity can no longer be treated as exogenous shocks disturbing the smooth course of development; but rather they should be seen as intrinsic to development itself. In the twenty-first century, the dominant state-based narratives of security are no longer credible and need to be rethought, especially from the perspective of the poor, vulnerable and dispossessed. This article and this *IDS Bulletin* as a whole are an attempt to sketch out a multilevel framework for the governance of (in)security, taking human and citizen security as its starting point, and addressing the gender, class, ethnic, religious, etc. inequalities built into the dominant narratives of security.

Wide gaps have opened between a global vision of a more prosperous and secure post-Cold War world and the dismal realities of violent conflict and chronic poverty experienced by a significant proportion of the world's population. These gaps reflect failures of understanding and conflicts of interest, as well as resource constraints and poor implementation. Security, like development, is all too often seen as something the North delivers through its policy interventions and aid programmes, rather than as the product of changes in the developing South, reflecting the priorities and interests of those most at risk.

This issue of the *IDS Bulletin* aims to redress this imbalance. It brings together articles presented at the inaugural Colloquium of the Global Consortium on Security Transformation (GCST) held at Kandalama, Sri Lanka in September 2007. The Consortium aims to transform existing state-centred security paradigms by rethinking security from the point of view of poor and vulnerable people and communities in the developing South.

Security is a new and indeed rather suspect concept for development practitioners. They have good reason for caution, for security is a highly contested idea, meaning very different things to different people (Luckham 2007). It first arose from the theory and practice of state sovereignty and inter-state relations in Western Europe and North America. It was (and still remains) preoccupied with the security of states within a state system dominated by a few large powers. Decolonisation embedded security within post-colonial statehood but it became confused with the security of regimes, and the privatisation of state power in the service of elite wealth accumulation. National security was deployed as a doctrinal fig-leaf for authoritarian regimes, which prioritised state secrecy and resisted accountability to citizens. Aid and military alliances cemented peripheral states into the security architecture of the Cold War with profound effects on their state structures, power relations and development.

Yet, security is not and should not be the sole prerogative of the state. Even Hobbes, whose *Leviathan*, written in the seventeenth century at the conclusion of the English Civil War, is widely seen as an apologia for the all-powerful sovereign state, grounded the latter upon a social contract with its citizens: the state guarantees the safety of citizens; and they in turn deliver unconditional

loyalty to the state. The great Islamic historian Ibn Khaldun also defined the state in relation to the people it governed. Max Weber's definition of the state in terms of its monopoly of *legitimate* violence conveys much the same message. For him, as for Hobbes, the bedrock of the state's power is its legitimacy, along with its capacity to assure the safety and security of its citizens.

The most important reason why the development community should engage with security issues is that they are far too important to be left to security specialists alone. Military and security spending have immense opportunity costs, diverting resources from development.[1] War and insecurity are major causes of poverty and human misery in their own right, tending to generate 'development in reverse' (World Bank 2003). Coercion underpins the system of power and profit driving global capital accumulation and international development. States assure the political stability required for development to take place. Hence, when they fracture or 'fail' the first priority of state reconstruction is ending political violence and restoring minimum conditions of security.

The relationships between security and development were highlighted during the Cold War by the Brandt Commission (Brandt Report 1980), *North–South: A Programme for Survival* and by the Palme Commission (Palme Report 1982) *Common Security: A Programme for Disarmament*. But they had little policy impact in an international context dominated by the confrontation between capitalist and socialist blocs. Development analysis and practice mostly turned a blind eye to war and insecurity, or treated them as exogenous shocks, which might disrupt or delay development, but were not intrinsic to it.

The end of the Cold War and the 'Third Wave' of democratic transitions raised hopes of a new era of peace, democracy and prosperity, which were dashed almost as soon as they were voiced. There was no durable peace dividend to shift resources from military spending to development. New sources of insecurity replaced the old, trapping many poor countries in cycles of conflict and poverty. Transitions to democracy displaced authoritarian regimes, only to spawn new forms of disenfranchisement. Major powers flirted with the multilateral vision of a more equitable and rule-based global order, only to fall back on tired imperial patterns characterised by displays of military force and the 'war on terror'. Globalisation brought limited progress towards a more open and equitable international economic system, but at the same time created new markets in illicit commodities (including drugs) and privatised security. While some developing countries became more competitive in the global economy, others sank deeper into poverty, violence and insecurity.

Nevertheless, there is an apparent international commitment to engage with the sources of insecurity. Both the UN Report on *A More Secure World* (UN 2004) and its follow-up *In Larger Freedom* (UN 2005) affirmed the 'indivisibility of security, economic development and human freedom' in the words of the former. International interventions in violent conflicts have become more frequent and more robust. They not only aim to hold combatants apart, as in 'first generation' peacekeeping, but also to prevent and end violent conflict, build peace and reconstruct 'fragile' states. The priorities of aid programmes include good governance, peacebuilding and post-conflict reconstruction alongside economic development and poverty reduction. Donors, international financial institutions (IFIs) and non-governmental organisations (NGOs) all directly engage with security issues, for instance under the rubrics of 'Disarmament, Development and Reintegration' (DDR) of ex-combatants, 'Security Sector Reform' (SSR) and 'Security, Safety and Access to Justice' (SSAJ) programmes.

Yet, whether in reality vulnerable people have become more secure, human suffering has been reduced, or personal freedoms have increased, is hotly disputed. Critics argue that the 'new humanitarianism' has been cut to the cloth of corporate and global power interests. Development has been 'securitised' (Duffield 2001; Willett 2005) and subordinated to Western anti-terrorist and security agendas; without substantially modifying security priorities to foster development and poverty reduction. Major global actors talk the talk of the international community's 'responsibility to protect' vulnerable people failed by their own states in countries like Zimbabwe or Burma (ICISS 2001), whilst failing to deliver on their humanitarian commitments, or manipulating them to pursue hegemonic agendas as in Iraq or Afghanistan. Global corporations affirm principles of

corporate responsibility, whilst many of their activities continue to inflame resource wars and privatise security provision.

Rethinking security demands innovative yet rigorous empirical analysis of the sources of insecurity in a world divided by profound inequality and ongoing conflict. At the same time, it should identify the spaces which exist for change, in order to empower as well as protect those most at risk. This issue of the *IDS Bulletin* is a first step towards such an analysis.

1 Whose security? Rethinking security from below

The challenge posed to contributors to this *IDS Bulletin* was to rethink security from below, i.e. from the point of view of the most vulnerable, excluded and insecure. As Abello Colak and Pearce describe (in this *IDS Bulletin*), a new language for talking about security has emerged since the end of the Cold War, centred around two key concepts, namely '*human security*' and (especially in the Latin American context) '*citizen security*'. The former draws on the vision of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights in seeing security as an entitlement of all human beings, including both 'freedom from fear' and 'freedom from want' (Commission on Human Security 2003). Citizen security is understood more narrowly as an entitlement of citizenship claimed from the state. Both emphasise that the state should protect vulnerable people from violence and insecurity, whatever its source (including the state itself). Both connect to another key claim, that states (and by extension the international community) have a '*responsibility to protect*' people and communities from extreme violence, insecurity and human rights abuses (ICISS 2001). They also imply a further idea explored in this *IDS Bulletin*, that *security is a public good*.

Human (and citizen) security allows a powerful critique of state security and the dominance of force in international relations. Yet it has faced extensive criticism (summarised and partly rebutted by Jolly and Basu Ray 2007): for cramming all forms of human vulnerability into a single concept, blunting its analytical edge and policy impact; for glossing over relationships of power and interest; and for legitimising international intervention in 'fragile' or 'failing' states (see Woodward, this *IDS Bulletin*).

Our concern, however, is slightly different. Whose security and from which threats are we talking about? Human security (and less so citizen security) posits a flattened world of individuated human beings facing generic threats to their life, freedom and dignity, who are in need of protection. But as contributors to this *IDS Bulletin* demonstrate, insecure and excluded people perceive security in very different ways from the dominant narratives and indeed from each other – be these women who have experienced extreme violence and rape in Liberia (Gbowee); 'garment girls' in Sri Lanka (de Mel); *campesinos* and rural schoolteachers in Peru using *pishtacos* (evil spirits) as a metaphor for the dangers of the external world (Wilson); or urban residents of Commuma 3 in Medellin, Colombia, coping with mafia and criminal violence (Abello Colak and Pearce).

The narrative of human security, in sum, should be grounded more firmly in the lived experience of people who are insecure, as well as the political, social and economic realities of countries in the global South. This is essential for four main reasons:

First, because security itself is unequally distributed, reinforced by discriminations between rich and poor countries, among social classes, against women and minorities, and spatially between regions or between slums and suburbs, etc. In this *IDS Bulletin*, Chillier and Varela suggest that the police act as 'border guards' against the 'dangerous classes', trapping the 'torturable poor' in conditions of violence and insecurity. De Mel describes how the exploitation of 'garment girls' in Sri Lanka and their sexual submission to 'military boys' is reinforced by a militarised state as well as an export economy dependent on women's labour.

Second, to recognise the agency of those who suffer insecurity, violence and poverty and the many different ways they struggle not just to cope, but also to assert their rights and speak truth to power. This *IDS Bulletin* provides several examples: Gbowee describes how women activists and refugees barricaded the Liberian peace talks to shame leaders of the armed factions into reaching a viable peace agreement. Hattotuwa contributes a fascinating analysis of the ways new electronic media counterbalance an increasingly repressive Sri Lankan state, using *swabhasha* (vernacular) blogs, text messages and photos taken on mobile phones to disseminate information, document

rights abuses and respond to emergencies, including the *tsunami*. Tariq argues that *Jirga* and *Arbakai* (traditional justice and community policing institutions) remain legitimate and surprisingly effective in south-east Afghanistan, at least partially immune to the violence and chaos surrounding them.

Third, to ensure that security from below is grounded in sound empirical understanding rather than over-romanticised perceptions of grassroots institutions and initiatives. Not everything that transpires at grassroots or in (un)civil society is benign or conducive to the security, wellbeing and empowerment of the poor and oppressed. Traditional institutions may offer stability, but also reinforce discriminations on the basis of religion, minority status or gender. The only effective protection on offer in zones of conflict or urban slums may be that provided by warlords, militias, paramilitaries, religious extremists, or criminal mafias – but it comes at a heavy price for vulnerable people. For example in Peru, *Sendero Luminoso* purported to challenge the state and landlord interests on behalf of excluded Quechua-speaking peasants, but ended up subjecting them to a reign of terror.

Fourth, because the poor may see the state itself as complicit in the insecurity visited upon them: whether by incorporating traditional and grassroots organisations in its own webs of patronage; by subcontracting violence to non-state militias (as in Sudan); by directly planning, perpetrating or inciting mass violence as in the Rwandan genocide (McLean Hilker 2009, forthcoming); or via the complex symbiosis between state police and criminal gangs found in cities like São Paulo, Medellin, Johannesburg or Mumbai. Survey data in Latin American countries (summarised by Fuentes, in this *IDS Bulletin*) suggest that working class respondents are more likely than members of the middle class to support *mano dura* (iron fist) policies towards crime over human and citizen rights.

In sum, there are many vantage points from which to perceive security from below, and not all of these sit comfortably with human rights and human security agendas as currently defined. It is argued here that a *new conception of security from below should complement not substitute for security as a public good,* i.e. it should be based upon voice within not exit from the public arena. Abello

Colak and Pearce argue that security provision should be informed by shared norms and shared values; it should reflect the real concerns of vulnerable people; and it should also be respectful of human and citizen rights. The concept of citizen security arguably articulates these concerns more precisely than human security, linking security to active citizenship, human rights and democratic governance.

2 The gendering of (in)security
Human security, as Chenoy (this *IDS Bulletin*) argues, has tended to be gender-blind. Yet conceptions, practices and experiences of security and insecurity are deeply gendered. In all modern states military and security institutions embed masculinities at the heart of political power. De Mel's deconstruction of the 'military turn' of the Sri Lankan state is especially interesting, showing how militarisation has interacted with the subordination of women in the capitalist international division of labour.

Women are widely seen as being most at risk from domestic, criminal and political violence, including the use of rape as an instrument of war, as both Gbowee and Chenoy describe. Yet, although the majority of perpetrators are men, in some contexts women too play key roles in the promotion and perpetration of violence (for example female Tamil Tigers in Sri Lanka, female Hindu militants in India, women fundraisers for the Rwandan Patriotic Front, as well as female genocide perpetrators). Equally, although women often suffer disproportionately from insecurity, marginalised men – especially young men, as in Palestine – are often the direct targets of violence.

Neither the emergence of the field of 'gender security', nor the highlighting of violence against women as a human rights issue, nor declaratory frameworks like UNSCR 1325 on Women, Peace and Security have seriously challenged the prevailing gender inequalities in security decision-making. It is important to ensure that women are better represented; that they play an active part in peace processes as in Liberia; that they exert real influence in the day-to-day democratic control of security institutions; and that they challenge and reshape the dominant security discourses. As Chenoy contends, these are not arguments to dispense with the concepts of human and citizen security; but rather to write

new narratives within them, which recognise the specific inequities faced by women, as well as their agency in struggles for peace and justice.

3 Identity-based violence and the securitisation of identities

Security interconnects in complex ways with how nations, groups and individuals imagine themselves. In recent years, there has been an apparent global increase in 'identity-based' violence – violence that appears to be perpetrated by and targets individuals on the basis of ethnic, religious, political or other identities. Wilson argues, however, that it is hard to conceive of violence that is not in one form or another identity-based, since victims are normally singled out as dangerous, unworthy of respect or insignificant (mere 'collateral damage' from the point of view of those using force).

Analysis of identity-based conflicts has tended to be dominated by a now rather tired debate between those who see them as rooted on the one hand in 'primordial' cultural differences, 'ancient enmities' or insurmountable 'clashes of civilizations' such as between Islam and the West (e.g. Huntington 1996)[2] and on the other hand, those who argue that cultural values are simply instrumentalised for the purpose of struggles over land, resources and political power.

Both perspectives are challenged by McLean Hilker (2009, forthcoming) in an IDS Working Paper, which complements this *IDS Bulletin*, and by Al-Sayyid here, in the context of the Arab world. McLean Hilker contends that neither approach does justice to the complex social and political causes of identity-based violence, although both have consequences for policy. The first 'primordialist' approach tends to prioritise compromises, which institutionalise the differences among identity groups, like the Dayton Accord in Bosnia and the Taef Accord in Lebanon, both of which have to a large extent frozen rather than addressed underlying conflicts. The second approach tends to be reductionist, failing to ask why ethnic, religious and other identities have symbolic and ideological resonance, and why they form a powerful basis for mobilising groups for collective action, including violence. Elements of both approaches are combined in Stewart's (2008) concept of 'horizontal inequalities', i.e. economic, social and political inequalities between culturally defined groups. However, it is important to recognise that, in practice, vertical inequalities also tend to be expressed as cultural hierarchies, like the marginalisation of the 'Quechua-speaking many' in Peru, described by Wilson in this *IDS Bulletin*. The key issue here is to understand, in different contexts, how exclusion and insecurity are structured around markers of identity and then become politicised to the point of violence.

In the Arab world, as Al-Sayyid shows, the interconnections between identities and violence are not straightforward. In some countries, like Morocco, Syria and Jordan, the main question indeed is why salient identity differences have *not* generated serious political violence. In others, like Sudan, regional, religious and ethnic divides act as mutually reinforcing conflict-multipliers. Sectarian divisions within the same religion have also spawned violence as in Iraq and Lebanon, where competing factions within each religion forge alliances across the religious divide. In Algeria on the other hand, struggles over the control and nature of the state, rather than between identity groups, have driven protracted violence. Al-Sayyid argues here that identities formed around membership of political movements like Ba'ath, the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) or Hamas have been just as important as cultural identities in mobilising people politically for violence; interestingly he classifies mainstream Islamist movements like the Muslim Brotherhoods as essentially political rather than identity based.

States are by no means innocent bystanders in the dramas of identity politics. They tend to imagine themselves through overarching narratives about their history and identity, like the traditional symbols of Sinhala nationhood invoked by the Sri Lankan state and military (as described by de Mel), which marginalise the country's Tamil-speaking and other minorities. States and their security establishments often perceive challenges to the dominant narratives as being charged with security threats. Enloe (1980) has argued that security elites tend to visualise security through cognitive maps, which identify which groups can and cannot be trusted: for example the widespread use of ethnic, etc. profiling by police. The 'war on terrorism' (itself an ideological construct) has politicised identities still further, re-categorising minority protests and political religion as dangerous to international

order; and blurring the boundaries between dissidence, crime and terrorism, as Fuentes (in this *IDS Bulletin*) suggests. Yet as Al-Sayyid insists in the Arab context, the appropriate response to politicised religious or other identities may not be to target them as threats, but to accommodate them as far as possible within mainstream democratic politics, so that they do not become radicalised into political violence.

4 The real politics of security reform
The starting point of this *IDS Bulletin* is that security is a precious entitlement of citizens, not a gift from an often errant, repressive or absent state. At the same time, transforming security requires substantial change in the security institutions responsible for delivering security (the armed forces, police, intelligence agencies, paramilitary formations, etc.) to ensure they meet the needs of citizens – and at the very minimum do not become agents of insecurity in their own right. Given the central role of these institutions in maintaining state power and controlling political and criminal violence, this is an essentially political task.

It is also an extremely difficult and contested task. It tends to be complicated by severe risks of policy paralysis or regression – especially in contexts of violent conflict as in West Africa (Olanisakin) or Sri Lanka (Bastian); where there are deep legacies of authoritarian rule as in the Arab world (Kodmani and Chartouni-Dubarry); and even where new forms of 'uncivil democracy' have arisen from democratisation, as in Latin America (Fuentes).

Much of the policy discussion has been dominated by donor policy instruments like SSR, SSAJ and (in post-conflict contexts) DDR of ex-combatants – all drawing upon models of 'best practice' evolved on the basis of (largely[3]) donor experience in transitional and post-conflict countries. Contributors to this *IDS Bulletin* differ in their assessments of the usefulness of such models. But all agree that reforms will fail if they are not rooted in the history and experience of particular regional and national contexts.

Moreover, they argue that new approaches to security require informed understanding (a) of the real politics of change within contested political spaces and (b) of how security institutions themselves function as bureaucratic

constituencies able to block reform, turn it to their advantage or (in best case scenarios) lend it their professional authority and support. Fuentes, for example, describes how in Latin America rights-based approaches to citizen security have often run into opposition from powerful pro-order political coalitions allying the police and armed forces with populist politicians. Such coalitions not only enjoy formidable advantages in resources and organisation compared with human rights groups but they can also count on considerable popular support, notably among the urban working class, demonstrating the complexity of security reform even in electoral democracies.

This complexity is further illustrated in the case of Sri Lanka, where Bastian argues that the problems are not purely political, but also rooted in the political economy of development. His analysis of the interconnections between state coercion, the shift towards a neoliberal economy and the civil war waged against Tamil insurgents is reinforced by de Mel's account of the exploitative relationships between the 'military boys' of the armed forces and the 'garment girls' of the export sector. Moreover, electoral competition has reinforced the exclusion of the country's minorities, despite changes in the electoral system to improve their representation; it has frustrated SSR initiatives; and played a major part in derailing the peace process. Spaces for dissent still exist in the new media and elsewhere, but their main focus is exposing human rights abuses and containing the drift toward authoritarianism – rather than reform of exclusionary state and security institutions.

In the Arab region, as Kodmani and Chartouni-Dubarry (this *IDS Bulletin*) contend, the space for change is even more constrained due to the region's long history of authoritarian governance, politically powerful (and secretive) security institutions and massive external intervention, most recently as the epicentre of the 'war on terror'. Neither the security environment nor the politics of the region are conducive to civilian oversight, transparency and accountability of military and security institutions; and external promotion of reform is viewed with understandable suspicion. Kodmani and Chartouni-Dubarry suggest here that the best strategy is an indirect one, building on the activities of human rights and civil society groups

to expose abuses and corruption in security agencies; and exploiting the limited openings available in countries like Morocco and Jordan, which are taking the first tentative steps towards political reform.

5 Privatisation of security: between state and market

Tilly (1992) asserts that coercion and capital have been interlinked and in tension with each other ever since the emergence of the modern state. Weapons have been a staple of international trade for centuries; and the military–industrial complex is a long established feature of global capitalism. At the same time, as argued in this *IDS Bulletin* by Isima, the relationship between the two is being transformed in fundamental ways by globalisation, which is subjecting the state and the public domain to the requirements of global markets. The global marketplace for force (Avant 2005) now covers military and security services as well as weapons. Neoliberal economics is being introduced in the security sector, reshaping the relationships between the latter and civilian institutions in a great variety of ways as both de Mel and Bastian (this *IDS Bulletin*) show in the case of Sri Lanka. Private is displacing state security provision to the point where many states are losing their monopolies of violence to a very diverse range of 'non-state actors': private security firms, mercenaries, militias, self-defence forces, vigilantes and even criminal mafias.

Security privatisation raises many challenges for development. First, it poses, in an acute form, an issue, which has become central in other areas of development policy. Can and should public goods like security, water or health be delivered by the private sector? Does this distort priorities and undermine the entire conception of security as a public good as well as undermine the development of the social contract between the state and its citizens? Or can security be 'co-produced' by the state and private sectors in ways that ensure there is still public control over the use of force as well as accountability to citizens?

A related issue is whether security privatisation reinforces inequalities between the secure rich and the torturable poor, adding to the vulnerability of those unable to pay for protection. There are no simple answers, especially in countries where the capacity of the public sector to provide even basic justice and

security cannot be assumed. Where patrimonial states merely protect elite interests, trample on the rights of the poor and marginalised, or are simply absent from significant parts of national territory, citizens may have little alternative but to find other ways of assuring their own safety.

But the Janus face of privatised security can be privatised *in*security. Recent analysis of the sources of violent conflict in the developing world has shown that the violence is often market-driven, with participants responding to economic incentives, such as the contraction of employment opportunities for young men or access to 'lootable' or high-profit resources like conflict diamonds and drugs (World Bank 2003). Of course privatised violence is only part of the story and conflicts have multiple roots. Yet, fundamental issues are raised about the capacity of states to deliver security even in countries considered to be stable democracies. In India, for example, turf wars between criminal mafias in Mumbai (alongside grievances concerning Kashmir and politicised religion) were a major factor in the November 2008 terrorist assault on the city, whose security impacts reverberated far beyond Mumbai itself.

Where privatised insecurity is embedded throughout the entire polity, the implications may be still more deadly. In Afghanistan, as described by Tariq, the drug economy has entrenched the grip of warlords over the state; it has fuelled corruption, frustrating meaningful reform in state security institutions; and it has financed Taliban military operations against government and NATO forces. At the same time, Tariq is careful to distinguish between the privatised insecurity of the warlords and the security and justice institutions of local communities (*Jirga* and *Arbakai*), which offer an alternative public sphere to that of the discredited state. That is, the privatisation of security is not the same as informal security provision by non-state community or local institutions. The latter (though not without its own problems) does not raise the same issues concerning the appropriation of security by private interests.

6 Multilevel governance of security in a globalised world

Security (and peace) is a global as well as a national public good. It has large externalities along with diffuse benefits, which are in principle

shared globally (Kaul *et al.* 1999: xix–xx). And it requires collective action between and within states. At the same time, many of the major security challenges facing the world today are not military in nature and increasingly spill across national boundaries. Existing state-based international and regional security architectures face significant challenges in managing problems arising from trans-border flows of weapons, combatants and refugees; transnational criminal activities; environmental degradation; increasing pressures on water and other shared resources; and (currently) coping with the fallout from global financial crisis. As we have seen, these architectures are challenged as well by the view that security is an entitlement of citizens, and more widely of all human beings. Today, security is spoken of by many voices and is defined in diverse ways by different social actors connected globally across national and regional boundaries.

But considered from below, the dominant narratives of security are often disempowering, and dependent on decisions and social forces over which those most affected have next to no control. The insecurities facing a displaced widow in Liberia or Eastern DRC could be traced back in many directions: via the linkages between illegal mining of diamonds, timber or coltan to global consumer markets; via the violence perpetrated by militias armed with AK47s to neighbouring states acting as conduits and international small arms markets; via the flawed and inadequate efforts of international peacekeepers and NGOs struggling to restore a semblance of order and deliver relief to decisions made in the UN and by Western governments.

Ladders of (in)security is a useful metaphor for the multiple interconnections[4] across national boundaries and spanning North and South. These ladders do not bridge neutral spaces. They span vast (but shifting) asymmetries in power and wealth, giving rise to different discursive constructions of security. Decisions taken in international agencies, governments and corporate boardrooms in the North reverberate throughout the global South. Yet vulnerable people affected by these decisions have next to no ability to influence them, nor to hold those responsible accountable.[5]

Moreover, when the ladders of insecurity cross in the reverse direction in the form of refugee

influx, terrorism or piracy, they tend to be depicted by Northern policymakers and media as threats arising from chaos in the developing world (IPPR 2008). To use a simple illustration, for Somali fishermen coping with war, famine and overfishing by foreign trawler fleets, piracy is a livelihood strategy, albeit one which now supports an entire so-called 'criminal' economy. But foreign shipping interests, regional states and Western powers regard it (with some justification) as a rising security threat.

Yet one should not assume in advance that Southern attempts to reverse cycles of insecurity are doomed to failure, even in apparently unfavourable conditions of regional insecurity, governance breakdown and trans-border conflict. This is the conclusion of Olonisakin's analysis of civil society activism in West Africa. Almost in spite of themselves, West African states have initiated a series of initiatives designed to stem existing conflicts in the region, prevent their spread, control the flow of small arms and implement elements of a human security agenda – in part because of successful lobbying by civil society groups of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) and other regional organisations. This also illustrates the potential of multilevel coalitions for change. Civil society groups that had been unable to make a significant impact on security governance in their own national contexts were able to increase their leverage by cooperating across national boundaries and working with regional bureaucratic constituencies.

To maximise the impact of such *multilevel change coalitions*, it is crucial to understand how global and regional security hierarchies are constructed, their strengths and contradictions and where they are open to influence and challenge. In an IDS Working Paper published in conjunction with this *IDS Bulletin*, Bagayoko re-evaluates the argument that humanitarian and development issues are increasingly 'securitised'. She suggests that security policymaking in the North tends in reality to be far from homogeneous, reflecting a cacophony of divergent policy discourses, each following their own policy logics. In the complex conflicts of countries like the Democratic Republic of Congo, Kosovo, Liberia or Afghanistan, military forces, aid agencies, humanitarian organisations and their local counterparts work alongside each other but

sometimes at cross-purposes because of their inherently conflicting methods and objectives. The stereotyping of all Northern actors as complicit in an overarching imperial presence oversimplifies a far more complex reality. It is crucial for Southern decision-makers and policy activists to understand the contradictions of Northern policymaking in order to have any chance of influencing or developing alternatives to it.

Woodward explores the asymmetric relationships between coercion and capital at the global level in her analysis of the USA's efforts to convert its military dominance into durable hegemony following the end of the Cold War. Under President George W. Bush the USA conflated its global responsibilities as a superpower with a neoliberal economic agenda and a narrow vision of US national interests, to the ultimate detriment of all three. However, the re-categorisation of the developing South, rather than the communist East, as the main perceived source of security threats had started even before the end of the Cold War. Multilateral as well as unilateral approaches have configured security hierarchies around the major alliance systems and economic blocs, notably NATO and the European Union (EU), prioritising the interests of the larger powers and of corporate capital. Although in principle the UN epitomises the idea of security as a global public good, it is pitifully under-resourced relative to the expectations placed upon it. Its own governance arrangements build disparities in military power and wealth into the Security Council system, disenfranchising even larger Southern states (excepting China). It is hardly surprising that the UN's promotion of human security and its efforts to create a mandate for humanitarian intervention through the international 'responsibility to protect' should sometimes awaken the suspicion of Southern governments.

The limits of security constructed around US and Western hegemony and presupposing overwhelming military force have been cruelly exposed in the disastrous interventions in Iraq and Afghanistan. In the long run, structural changes in the global political economy – and in particular the emergence of alternative centres of economic accumulation and global influence, such as China and India – are likely to make the existing security architecture seem even more outdated. A more plural international system, Woodward argues, would facilitate new political coalitions across North and South and better reflect Southern security concerns.

Nevertheless, one should not assume that such changes would necessarily address the rights and needs of the insecure and the dispossessed. It is entirely possible that more, not less, emphasis might be placed on state security and sovereignty, reflecting the suspicion, if not hostility, of some Southern governments towards current formulations of human rights, human security and the 'responsibility to protect'. But at least human security would no longer be seen as a blessing to be conferred on a supplicant South by a liberal interventionist North. The responsibility would be firmly in the hands of the citizens of Southern states to assert their rights as citizens and as human beings.

This *IDS Bulletin* provides inspiring examples of how active citizens, civil society groups, media and social movements have mobilised to challenge accepted definitions of security and to work for the rights of the vulnerable and oppressed. But the issue remains of how such often-isolated efforts can be aggregated to construct an embryonic global public able to ensure security is truly treated as a public good rather than managed as if it were an asset of powerful states and global capital.

Notes

* I wish to thank Lyndsay McLean Hilker for her insightful comments on more than one version of this introduction.
1 The relationships between military spending and development include growth-stimulating as well as growth-depressing impacts – although the latter tend to predominate in poorer developing economies.

2 Mamdani (2005) and Sen (2006) are among many who contest the stereotyping of Islam as a source of violence.
3 The theory and practice of SSR, DDR, etc. have to a large extent been donor-driven. Yet the ground was prepared by initiatives in the South (including those of networks of civil society activists, security practitioners and researchers constructed by some of the GCST's own

partners). Donor paradigms have drawn heavily on Southern 'success stories', notably South Africa's defence transformation process.

4 Some economists use the term 'value chains' to characterise global–local economic interconnections. But in a security context, the same metaphor ('security chains') might have been open to misunderstanding.

5 The idea of international accountability is complex, as Grant and Keohane (2005) argue, and it seldom involves accountability to those at grassroots level most affected by the decisions of international agencies, donor countries, INGOs or international firms.

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