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‘Thinking about Sustainable Security: Metaphors, Paradoxes and Ironies’

Adam Crawford

Security as a concept is especially susceptible to textual and figurative analysis as its meaning lies more in its usage than as something that can be defined in a philosophically pure or analytically contained way. Buzan, Wæver and de Wilde note: ‘The meaning [of security] lies not in what people consciously think the concept means but in how they implicitly use it in some ways and not others’ (1998: 24). Security has symbolic salience and a self-referential quality but also a lived reality. In what follows, I wish to explore the concept of security through the use of various tropes, notably metaphors and analogies. My concern is not to pin down the essence of ‘security’ and display it in a decontextualized, ahistorical and reified box where its contours, coating and demarcations can be endlessly scrutinised, admired and critically reviewed, but rather to explore the terrain, topography, tropography and habitat that sustain it and over which it ranges. Extending this ecological metaphor, I go on to question the extent to which security practices are, or might be rendered, sustainable.

Metaphors are ‘master tropes’ that describe a subject by asserting that it resembles, on some point of comparison, another otherwise unrelated object (Manning, 2012). Thus conceived, metaphors can serve as analytic devices that allow us to think about one thing in terms of another. They can be useful ways of highlighting the salience and illustrating distinctive features of a subject of investigation. They bring to our attention certain characteristics without ever fully capturing all of the qualities of the phenomenon itself. As used here, the metaphors deployed are designed to allow us to bring into sharp focus particular facets and properties of security (as well as the practices, technologies and mentalities to which they give rise) in order, to help clarify the internal dimensions of what has otherwise been described as a ‘vague and ambiguous’ concept (Waldron, 2010: 111; Gearty, 2013: 1). Rather like Claude Monet’s series of paintings of Rouen Cathedral, metaphors allow us to see the same object from differing perspectives, in different lights and under various conditions. Metaphoric thinking allows us to hold a multiplicity of points of view and, in so doing, to see the object – security – as partaking of distinctive qualities that should prick our awareness and inform our thinking. Nevertheless, metaphors have their limitations. They provide resemblance, but they do not provide explanations. Furthermore, metaphors (especially where pushed too far) can introduce confusion.

In keeping with the theme of this book, the chapter will seek to contribute to a positive notion of security. It will do so by endeavouring to reclaim a reflexive conception of security from the growing and somewhat dystopian (and utopian) ‘anti-security’ critique (Neocleous and Rigakos, 2011), whilst acknowledging the dangers and malign societal impacts of which this body of literature sagely warns us. In its place, a conception of security as distinctly social, tied to notions of justice and legitimacy that is attentive to its temporal implications and distributive consequences will be advanced. It sets out from the premise that an underpinning of security is an essential prerequisite for a stable economy and vibrant communal life, as well as for inter-subjective well-being and human flourishing. This socially sustainable foundation necessitates that governments, businesses and societies can better predict, prevent and mitigate threats to security but also requires the capacity of societies, communities and individuals to adapt and live confidently with risk. The chapter seeks to

bring a greater focus to the ethical dimensions of security (across time and space) and the societal consequences of security practices as a framework which can be used to enable and empower public policy and social interactions rather than simply hinder them. It underscores the importance of ethical and cultural considerations in understanding insecurities and public attitudes to security concerns. Hence, the chapter begins to sketch out the normative conditions under which security policies and practices might become socially sustainable, in that they are legitimate and just, in ways that avoid generating malign social consequences and the erosion of other societal values or ethical principles.

The chapter is organised in two parts. The first outlines a number of metaphoric interpretations of security in contemporary discourse to highlight its ambivalent and ironic qualities. Particular attention is given to security's evolving quality and social character as well as to its temporal and distributive dimensions. The purpose is to highlight the aggrandising and future oriented ramifications of securitising practices. The second section briefly explores the implications of the preceding discussions for how we might conceive of a conception of 'sustainable security' as a progressive notion.¹

I. Security as Metaphor

Liquid Security

Both literally and figuratively, security is on the move. As contemporary threats and challenges to social order have become more complex and interconnected, so too, the concept of security is no longer static but fluid; influenced by the interplay between a range of factors, fields and forces. Understanding the shifting meaning of security is closely connected to an appreciation of the evolving dynamics of and influences over its antonym – 'insecurity' (Crawford, 2002; 2010). Insecurities change and mutate, new threats emerge and perceptions as to what measures are 'appropriate' in responding to these developments shift. Social values, ethical principles, cultural norms and political sensibilities – which mediate security demands and responses – are subject to continuous challenge and change. Practices for dealing with security also evolve, as new technologies are fashioned and innovations spawned. In various forms, security is in perpetual motion. Security can thus be said to have a temporal and evolving dimension (to which we return later).

Borrowing from Bauman, Lucia Zedner (2006) develops the notion of 'liquid security'; highlighting its fluid, transient and dispersed character. This is exemplified both in security's (more recent) escape from the fixed and solid shackles which tied it to state-formation, nationhood and identity, and in the growing operation of the private security industry. The modern state was to be built on claiming and accumulating the legitimate monopoly of physical force. Consequently, both conceptually and *de facto*, the activities of non-state - commercial and civil society - institutions became side-lined. As Shearing (2006) has argued, state-centred thinking came to dominate the social sciences, subsequently blinding much analysis from understanding the governing capacities of diverse forms of non-state policing,

¹ The latter section of this chapter develops upon some initial ideas outlined in a brief unpublished paper in which the notion of 'sustainable security' is advanced as the basis of a research agenda (Crawford and Hutchinson, 2013). I am grateful to Steven Hutchinson for some of the discussions and insights that informed that paper.

security provision and 'private government'. Security, thus, came to be seen not only as allied with the protection of state interests but also as a product of state activities.

However, recent decades have seen the exposure and erosion of the foundational 'myth' that the sovereign state is capable of delivering security and controlling crime within its territorial boundaries and in fact whether it ever did so (Garland, 2001: 110). The resultant predicament for modern governments has been that recognition of their limited capacities to guarantee order and security - in the face of largely uncontrollable global flows of capital, goods, people and risks, as well as the stubborn influence of local social ordering for people's safety - has politically high costs, given that political authority is so intrinsically tied to the state's claim to being the effective provider of security. The interconnected nature of contemporary security risk and threats - extending beyond national territories - has both reinforced the limited competency of the nation-state alone to control the flows of crime and blurred the distinctions between external and internal security, as well as the roles of the institutions fashioned to ensure them - namely the Army and Police. In a 'liquid' modern world, borders and boundaries (both physical and conceptual) have become increasingly permeable (Bauman, 2000). Global and local insecurities routinely inform and interact with each other. It is now widely recognised that, on the one hand, policing and security measures designed to prevent and manage international threats demand local intelligence and responses whilst, on the other hand, the experience and salience of neighbourhood safety is informed and influenced by international trends, conflicts and developments. Insecurities may have their origins in injustices and conflicts experienced both locally and/or far away, in other parts of the globe. Consequently, both the production and mitigation of new risks is said now to lie beyond the control of the traditional nation-state, such that national policies and state-centred political frameworks, on their own, are not capable of governing security without substantial international co-operation and the involvement of private, voluntary and community level organisations. Some commentators highlight a 'de-nationalisation' of security, whereby networks of transnational elites increasingly define security threats and responses to them (Bigo, 2013). But as Aas (2011) astutely notes, trans-border connections and transnational flows do not necessarily undermine, 'hollow out' or weaken nations but may be ways of achieving the goals of the national and result in transformations in various aspects of sovereignty or statehood. Rather, the global, national and local are increasingly enmeshed and integrated in ways that challenge conceptual categories and political suppositions.

The spiralling costs associated with state provided security have also increasingly questioned traditional assumptions about the umbilical cord tying security with nation-states. The challenge to European welfare states presented by the fiscal crisis of the 1970s and the onset of neo-liberalism has reconfigured risks - some of which were contained through forms of social insurance. As a result, risk and the responsibility for managing it has become increasingly 'individualised' (Beck and Beck-Gernsheim, 2001) and privatised. In recent years, a multiplicity of actors has become enlisted in the provision of security. The result is recognition on the part of businesses, retailers, designers, town planners, municipal authorities and citizens that they have a responsibility for security and the prevention of crime risks (Crawford, 1997). This has prompted shared responsibilities and increasing partnerships between public, private and voluntary and community organisations. Today, security can no longer (if ever it could) be reduced to the purposive strategies of governments in their quests to defend themselves and their citizens' explicit interests.

The Social Life of Security

As anthropologists and urbanists have long noted, systems of security and order have a fundamental social basis in tacit and mutual mechanisms of social control and networks of mundane voluntary standards (Jacobs, 1961). 'Real security', Molotch asserts, 'comes from the assemblage of artifacts, habits, and procedures which mostly are already there' (2012: 217). Authorities, notably police and security services, 'are better at reproducing order than producing it' (Hills, 2009: 208). The danger is that in the quest for security and the urge to create apparent order, formal authorities ignore and efface existing systems of mundane order and socially produced security. Ultimately, security is a shared and collectively generated condition (Loader, 1997).

Security is distinctly social in that not only are objective insecurities socially produced, but so too subjective experiences of feeling secure are socially conditioned. Perceptions of (in)security are the subject of broad influences that are not directly connected to security practices. Moreover, security practices themselves may generate insecurities. Hence, attaining security as an end goal is illusive and insatiable, as absolute security is both unattainable and a sociological *non sequitur*. Collective security is more than the sum of private endeavours. Furthermore, individual security, to some considerable degree, is dependent upon the security of others as well as general human sociability. We rely on other people for our own security. Hence, the Commission on Human Security (2003: 2) noted: 'The security of one person, one community, one nation rests on the decisions of many others – sometimes fortuitously, sometimes precariously'. Likewise, our security measures have social consequences for others. As Loader and Walker (2007: 161) persuasively argue: 'there is a tendency for the quality of security... to be enhanced in the case of any particular individual when the security of those with whom that individual shares a social environment is also reasonably attended to'. In this regard, the very concept of 'private security' may be a contradiction in terms as security is 'implicated in the very process of constituting the "social" or the "public"' (p. 162).

Crucially, 'private' security *qua* market commodity fosters the inequitable distribution of (in)security, as those who can afford security insulate themselves from unsafe 'others', in safety enclosures and secure enclaves. Whilst some groups and places experience a surfeit of policing and security, others suffer a security deficit. Access to enhanced security through the market is primarily determined by wealth as well as the financial and organisational capacity of groups and businesses to form security 'clubs'. A central paradox of security in a market society is that there is often an inverse relationship between provision and need. In this context, security can become a 'positional good' defined by wealth, access to protective services and membership of secure enclosures. Ironically, however, such investments in security do not necessarily resolve existential security dilemmas of individuals or groups (the 'anxious secure'), as objective safety can - and frequently does - coexist with pervasive subjective insecurity. Those citizens that shelter themselves in gated communities, for example, do not necessarily experience feeling safer as a result, as they are reminded of the insecurities that lie beyond the gates (Low, 2004).

In this regard, security as a 'club good' or 'parochial collective good', by its very nature, is infused with a complex mix of dynamics of exclusion, combined with circuits of inclusion (Crawford, 2006). Security clubs can result in the progressive 'exclusion of bad risks and the

grouping together of narrower risk pools', in a way that 'reinforces the residential segregation of rich and poor achieved through "voting with the feet"' (Jordan, 1996: 68). Social withdrawal through investments in private or parochial security, not only reduce social attachments to others but can prompt pressures to opt out of contribution to local or municipal security provision. After all, why pay twice? Where residents are able to purchase security themselves, they may prefer to withdraw from contributing to its public provision. Such 'civic disengagement' may reduce the quality of the public sphere and services provided therein. Public security in this scenario becomes a second-tier form of provision of last resort, more geared to coercive law enforcement and the residual policing of those left behind. Whilst private security practices sometimes have benefits that are consistent with broader social values and the interests of wider constituencies, at other times they adversely impinge on the public realm and serve to undermine social cohesion (Crawford, 2011). Hence, the inequitable distribution of security in favour of affluent areas and individuals should challenge governments and civil society organisations to think creatively about how to respond to the security deficit experienced in some of the poorer parts of societies; and hence how to mitigate, where possible, excessive inequalities in security distribution.

Security as Coloniser

In its movement, the concept of security also enlarges, invades and engulfs; driven by internal dynamics and external forces, like processes of ecological succession. In so doing, security changes the conditions of the environment into which it moves; it transforms the landscape. Through its analytical forays, security has become an increasingly important strategic concept through which diverse areas of economic and social life are thought about and governed. It has become an organising idea and lexicon central to the exercise of authority across numerous domains and, as such, is used to legitimise interventions that have other rationales, motivations and impulses. Consequently, traditional policy domains are now '*governed through (in)security*' - in much the same way that Jonathan Simon (2007) argues contemporary societies increasingly '*govern through crime*' (cf Gagnon, 2010). To paraphrase Simon (p. 4-5), the '*technologies, discourses and metaphors*' of security '*have become more visible feature of all kinds of institutions, where they can easily gravitate into new opportunities for governance*'. The concept of security has not only colonised social policies – such as housing, health, education and employment/workfare (so evident in the realms of tackling anti-social behaviour) - but its promiscuity has extended farther afield. From human well-being to global conflict, environmental survival and natural resources, the technologies, discourses and metaphors associated with security have become increasingly eminent features of contemporary institutions and governing bodies. We now talk of '*food security*' as a way of framing (and, to a degree, in place of) issues of food scarcity, shortage and sustainability as well as inequalities of food production, supply and distribution.² Security '*talk*' has become simultaneously more promiscuous, more significant and increasingly consequential.

² For example, the European Commission's latest research and development framework, Horizon 2020, casts '*food security*' as one of its six key '*societal challenges*' alongside '*energy security*' and '*secure societies*' see: http://ec.europa.eu/research/horizon2020/index_en.cfm. Likewise, the UK government announced a Global Food Security Programme – see: <http://www.foodsecurity.ac.uk/>.

This aggrandising quality of security alerts us to the possible adverse consequences of 'securitisation'; understood as the processes through which groups of people construct something as a 'security threat' and the very real consequences of conceiving issues through the lens of 'security'. There are well-founded fears that the high degree of influence accorded to 'security' as an organising concept in the construction of societal relations may result in public policies, their direction and funding, being redefined in terms of their implications for (in)security and social (dis)order. A potential consequence is that fundamental public issues can become marginalised, except in so far as they are defined in terms of their security qualities. Other priorities may come to be viewed as no longer vital public issues in themselves. Rather, their importance is seen to derive from the belief that they lead to insecurity, crime and disorder. That they may do so is no reason not to assert their value in their own right. Security thus conceived can be corrosive of other public goods.

It is precisely this quality that scholars of 'securitisation theory' have highlighted (Buzan *et al.*, 1998; Stritzel, 2007; McDonald, 2008). They have sought to demonstrate how by uttering the word 'security', an issue is presented as posing an existential threat to a designated object or group. In seeking resources, media, public or government attention, certain threats, risk or harms can be socially constructed as sufficiently salient to warrant security-responses. Hence, security is understood as an illocutionary *speech act*. Such linguistic acts entail performing an action that creates new realities. By simply evoking 'security' something is being done and something demands to be done. As Wæver (2004) notes:

'It is not interesting as a sign referring to something more real: it is the utterance itself that is the act. By saying the words, something is done (like giving a promise, betting, naming a ship). It is by labelling something a security issue that it becomes one.' (p. 13)

By voicing security, things that might ordinarily be politically untenable become not only thinkable but acceptable, including the introduction of extraordinary or exceptional new legislative powers or special measures. Security, thus viewed, is the result of a move that takes politics beyond the established rules of the game and frames the issue as above 'normal politics'. The issue is then moved out of the sphere of normal politics into the realm of emergency politics, where it can be dealt with swiftly and without the normal (democratic) rules and regulations of policy-making. Its implied mode of extraordinary politics, by necessity, both institutionalises fast-track decision-making ('process') and produces categories of enemy others ('outcome') (Aradau, 2004). This is what Buzan *et al.* (1998) term 'the securitising move'. Importantly, they underscore that securitisation only fully occurs 'when the audience accepts it as such' (p. 25). It is important, therefore, to understand the processes through which a shared understanding is constructed of what is to be considered and collectively responded to as a threat. This highlights the fact that securitisation efforts may be contested, resisted and incomplete. Consequential securitisation, then, is 'the intersubjective establishment of an existential threat with a saliency sufficient to have substantial political effects' (Wæver, 2004: 8). For Aradau (2004), security is necessarily a negative concept as it is predicated on its production of the friend/enemy dichotomy, in that it constitutes and delineates bodies of 'us' and 'them'.

Securitisation scholars have tended to highlight the implications for formal politics of 'securitising moves' with less regard to the wider cultural and social consequences of

evoking security and viewing resources, services and activities through a security lens. In contrast to this prioritisation of formal (state) politics, there is a need to recognise and address individual, 'everyday' security concerns and to move beyond the discursive level to the lived realities of security practices of multiple actors within distinct and specific contexts as well as the values that inform these practices. The illocutionary speech act largely denies a meaningful role for the audience as it is not dependent upon the speech act's acceptance by the relevant audience (Blazacq 2005). It is not simply language that has securitising force but the manner in which security as a concept is mobilised, institutionalised and has effects in and through security practices, their reception and impacts. There is a tendency within securitisation scholarship to give prominence to actors with formal powers to securitise – to name problems as security issues – at the expense of other actors who are too often conceived as passive recipients of securitising processes. Consequently, less attention has been accorded to the manner in which lay sensibilities and informal processes influence, propel or work against securitising tendencies.

The implications and outcomes of securitisation have almost exclusively been interpreted in a negative light as undermining democracy, destabilising political values, circumventing legal principles and eroding social relations. This has led some to lament 'farewell to democracy and the advent of a securitized globalized world' (Bigo, 2008: 10). Thus understood, securitisation represents failure; failure to address the issue within 'normal bounds' (Buzan *et al.*, 1998: 29). The optimal ambition, therefore, is desecuritisation. Less regard has been given to how security – as a social good – is productive and is produced; by whom and in accordance with what values. Likewise, insufficient attention has been accorded to 'everyday security'; how it is lived, managed and fashioned in ways that enable rather than simply constrain. Moreover, securitisation processes have tended to be construed as overly deterministic, unilinear and totalising in their effects, with less consideration for the unintended consequences that attend to securitising moves.

The Double-Edged Quality of Security

Conversely, I contend that one of the pivotal dynamics of security is its double-edged, paradoxical and precarious nature. It is both a necessary precondition for sociability and a constraint upon it. As such, it has both positive and negative attributes; in the sense of security as a protection from harms, threats and risks ('*security from*' - its negative shield-like quality) and security as fostering the conditions that empower people to engage in certain pursuits ('*security to*' – its enabling, foundational quality). Hoogensen and colleagues (2009: 3) elaborate:

'Security is achieved when individuals and/or multiple actors have the freedom to identify risks and threats to their well-being and values (negative security), the opportunity to articulate these threats to other actors, and the capacity to determine ways to end, mitigate or adapt to those risks and threats either individually or in concert with other actors (positive security).'

Yet, there are evident dangers implicit in the quest for positive notions of security and explicit in Hoogensen's (2012) work in constructing unhelpful and overly-solid binaries: negative/positive; bad/good; constraining/enabling; violent/non-violent; state/individual; securitising/emancipatory; and so on. Rather, these ambiguous qualities of security need to be understood as porous, interacting and interconnected in ways that produce ambivalence

and ironies. These paradoxical facets of security inform and are illustrated by two analogies that we now turn to consider.

1. *Security as Ambulance*

In deploying security as a discursive lens for framing all sorts of policy debates, the danger is that security takes on the analogous quality of *an ambulance*: imparting urgency, impending consequences and the suspension of erstwhile norms – the usual ‘rules of the game’. Huysmans (2004: 332) remarks on how securitisation institutionalises ‘speed’ against the relative slowness of normal politics: ‘Calls for speed not only question the viability of deliberation and a contest of opinion; they also support strengthening executive-centred government, and suppress dissent’. Just as the accepted norms are suspended for the perceived higher good of saving lives as the ambulance rushes to its destination, so too, the values and principles (both procedural and substantive) of everyday life are routinely suspended in the name of ‘security’. The associated mobilisation of political and economic resources can lead to the trumping of other values, the stifling of debate and the side-lining of counter-veiling interests. ‘Rather than debate and deliberation, securitisation calls for *silence and speed*’ (Roe, 2012: 252, emphasis in original). So too, the noise from the ambulance’s siren drowns out other sounds or voices. This ‘securitisation’ of social life can thus be thought of as a consequential condition in which issues and problems are depoliticised and alternative ways of framing and responding to problems of order are set aside or suspended (Wæver, 1995). In the process, it is not just the realm of politics that is refigured; so too is the wider moral and cultural order.

The pursuit of security thus can become a justification for what Ericson (2007: 27) terms ‘counter-law’, whereby: ‘New laws are enacted and new uses of existing law are invented to erode or eliminate traditional principles, standards, and procedures of criminal law that get in the way of pre-empting imagined sources of harm’. In this light, ‘the counter-law of security is designed to trump law that seeks to protect citizens from excesses of security’ (p. 163). Under certain circumstances, therefore, security becomes less a public good and more a corrosive toxin that eats away at social and ethical norms and values of a society; resulting in the perverse reality of *‘too much security’* (Zedner, 2003). Whilst deliberate inaction in the face of evidence of possible serious risks and irreversible harm is understandably hazardous, so too over-reaction and too great an emphasis on security can at times present greater dangers, particularly where this generates unintended securitising consequences and results in the consumption of resources that might have been deployed in more socially beneficial endeavours.

This use of law to enhance securitisation has been particularly prominent in the post-9/11 context of counter-terrorism reforms, where the threat of terrorist violence has been used to erode traditional legal rights and side-step due process (Zender, 2007). Since 9/11, the scope and substance of the criminal law – notably in Anglo-American jurisdictions – has undergone significant change (Ashworth and Zedner, 2012). The quest for security has prompted new offences of inchoate and pre-inchoate liability, as well as a wider preventive focus of criminalization. However, it would be wrong to suggest that 9/11 was the sole catalyst provoking this seismic shift. A preventive logic was well entrenched and forms of counter-law had already established a secure footing prior to the events of 9/11. In the UK, for instance, the Crime and Disorder Act of 1998 ushered a decidedly preventive focus of

criminalisation, as well as the introduction of novel hybrid civil/criminal preventive orders in the form of the ASBO.³ As a result, a new category of behaviours defined loosely as ‘anti-social’ became the subject of pre-emptive criminalisation (Crawford, 2009). In elaborating his ‘counter-law’ thesis, Ericson (2007: 159-67) draws upon the ASBO as an archetypal example of the manner in which ‘substantive laws are reformed and reinterpreted within a precautionary logic’ (p. 25). Contemporary security threats from terrorist violence, through ‘ordinary’ crime to acts of disorder and anti-social behaviour, undoubtedly present real and pressing challenges for governments, businesses and citizens alike. But there are evident dangers that in the way in which we both interpret risks and respond to them, we may end up undermining some of the core values and principles of justice, whilst simultaneously erode relations of social trust and mutual toleration.

But the ambulance also captures a dimension that is often lost among securitisation scholars, namely the positive possibilities of security. The suspension of normal politics through processes that combine silence and speed only produce morally unacceptable outcomes if we value democratic decision-making above everything else. It also presupposes that ‘normal politics’ conforms to certain democratic and deliberative ideals, which, in practice, are often absent. The ambulance reminds us that silence and speed – and the suspension of ‘normal rules’ – in certain circumstances may be morally appropriate. Pursuing this line of thinking, Floyd (2010: 4) contends: ‘If, for instance, we value the reduction of human wretchedness in the world above all else, then the suspension of ordinary politics is morally permissible, provided that human beings are the beneficiaries of security policies, and not power holders and elites’. The key, therefore, is to identify the conditions under which *proportionate* ‘speed’ and *parsimonious* ‘silence’ become morally justifiable. Nonetheless, the enduring cautionary concern is that the ambulance increasingly comes to take the form of juggernaut, as security develops its own momentum and direction of travel.

2. *Security as Foundational Building Blocks*

The earlier discussed evolving and promiscuous quality of security is also aptly captured in the increasingly in vogue, yet capacious, notion of ‘human security’. This broadens the focus of security concerns to encompass a wide-range of interconnected facets of human development and fundamental rights that enhance and protect the ‘vital core’ of individual freedoms and fulfilment. In so doing, it underscores the foundational human condition and essence of security. Human security is understood as a condition that results from an effective political, economic, social, cultural and natural environment (Alkire, 2003: 3). It is protective in the sense that it seeks to safeguard the rights and freedoms that pertain to survival, livelihood and basic dignity. As well as encompassing a diverse range of threats and harms, it centres security on people not states (Axworthy, 2001). It reinforces the break from state-centric assumptions about the state as the primary referent for security. Instead, human security places individuals centre stage and attributes to them universal qualities that demand protection. It asserts that people matter as much as states and, in the process,

³ The hybrid and preventive regulatory model introduced by the ASBO was adapted and transplanted to other realms such as the terrorism-inspired ‘control order’ (Prevention of Terrorism Act 2005), the alcohol-related ‘drinking banning order’ (Violent Crime Reduction Act 2006) and the organised crime-associated ‘serious crime prevention order’ (Serious Crime Act 2007).

revises our understanding of state sovereignty constrained by the rights of individuals. Kofi Annan (1999) has alluded to the notion of 'individual sovereignty' to capture this transformation. As such, human security is both individualistic and explicitly universalistic in its aspirations. It embeds security in common values rather than national interests. As a consequence, it introduces the language of morals and values into a discourse that otherwise largely relies on (state) interests. It creates obligations and responsibilities; to invest and provide, as well as to prevent and protect. Furthermore, it incorporates diverse actors and organisations – notably civil society institutions - into the fold of both security providers and the producers of insecurity.

The United Nations has done much to endorse and foster the concept of human security (UNDP, 1994), which has also found its way into EU policy debates (Albrecht *et al.*, 2007). Proponents have used the concept to generate a wider public debate focused on addressing the 'security gap' experienced by many around the world, notably those living in poverty and disadvantage. In many senses, human security has emerged as a practice in search of a theory. For some, the notion of human security is directly linked to humanitarian intervention and the idea of a global civil society (Kaldor, 2007). From this perspective, it has been closely associated with the development of the 'responsibility to protect' and the work of the Canadian Government sponsored International Commission on Intervention and State Sovereignty (2001).

By shifting attention from the causes of insecurity to the prerequisites of peaceful co-existence and development, human security is considered to be less 'defensive' in character and productive of more creative concerns for capacity building and enhancing human dignity. From this perspective, security is seen as analogous to the foundational building blocks on which the architecture of human capabilities and community cohesion are constructed. The Commission on Human Security (2003: 4) defines human security as:

'protecting the vital core of all human lives in ways that enhance human freedoms and human fulfilment'... [It] means protecting fundamental freedoms - freedoms that are the essence of life. It means protecting people from critical (severe) and pervasive (widespread) threats and situations. It means using processes that build on people's strengths and aspirations. It means creating political, social, environmental, economic, military and cultural systems that together give people the building blocks of survival, livelihood and dignity.'

Thus conceived, security is an essential prerequisite for liberty and informs the constitution of fundamental freedoms (Gearty, 2013). It represents the foundations upon which good governance, individual fulfilment, collective well-being and the commonweal are grounded. Annan (2000) elaborated this in declaring: 'Freedom from want, freedom from fear and the freedom of future generations to inherit a healthy natural environment - these are the interrelated building blocks of human, and therefore national, security'. Reflecting the expanding range of human security, he subsequently added a fourth freedom; 'freedom to live in dignity' by promoting the rule of law, human rights and democracy (Annan, 2005). Importantly, he sought to root human dignity in both freedom via human rights and security, thus tying together *liberty in and through security*. Accordingly, human security underscores the inter-linkages between security, development and human rights as well as the universality and interdependence of a set of freedoms that are fundamental to human life. Not only are freedom from want and freedom to live in dignity tied inextricably to freedom from fear as interconnected foundational building blocks of human flourishing, but

so too, poverty, inequality, environmental degradation and a lack of dignity are seen as harbingers of future insecurities and conflicts. As such, human security also demands an integrated approach to these interconnected elements.

Whilst the breadth of human security as a concept has been useful in licensing and justifying wide-ranging policies of intervention and the deployment of diverse strategies in support of humanitarian protection and democracy promotion, it has also been characterised by some as 'conceptually sloppy', 'too warm and fuzzy' and vague to the point that specific security policies are left without much guidance or direction (Khon, 2001; Martin and Owen, 2010). For Newman (2004: 358), this leaves human security as 'a normatively attractive but analytically weak concept'. Troublingly, the pervasiveness of human security as a term ushers, in its wake, processes of securitisation. New threats and new actors are drawn into the vortex of 'governing through security'. Matters as all-embracing and subjective as well-being, dignity, respect and human development (Nussbaum, 2011), all become caught up in the logic of securitisation. Conversely, this highlights the possibility that the more capacious security becomes, the more it may come to be diluted of its negative securitising dynamics and implications. To do so, however, necessitates attention to ethical principles with which to assess the normative acceptability of specific security practices under particular conditions, given their likely consequences.

Furthermore, from this perspective, security and justice – likewise human security and human rights - are viewed as complementary and mutually reinforcing foundations. Little attention is accorded to the ambiguous and tense relation between the two. For some, human security is a vehicle for advancing and rallying slogan for promoting a human rights agenda. However, human rights and human security are not the same. The former provides a normative framework with entitlements and obligations that focus on the correlative duties of other parties, while the latter operates at the level of politics as a policy tool. If used interchangeably or confused, human security may dilute the legal character of human rights, such that: 'the precision and legality of the human rights framework could suffer if too closely allied with the ambiguity and mere rhetorical appeal of human security' (Petrasek, 2004: 59). Oberleitner (2005) conjures up the wonderfully evocative image of the relationship between human rights and human security as 'porcupines in love'; close yet problematic! He warns against the dangers of securitising human rights in ways that erode their indivisible quality and universality; allowing for a 'pick and choose' approach on the grounds of the value of given rights for security (Alkire, 2003: 39). Human security recognises that some human rights conflict with one another and that in real-life situations of limited resources or in the face of political will some prioritisation is needed. However, this may invite governments to avoid human rights obligations under the pretext of protecting human security. Accordingly, this could have the effect of diluting human rights or trumping them with superior human security claims. Reconstructing human rights as human security accentuates the prospect that security is taken to be the desired end.

One emblematic example of where security as ambulance and security as foundation collide is the mobilisation of the right to security as a foundational right (Shue, 1996) or type of 'super human right' (Taylor, 2004). Proponents of a 'right to security' frequently draw justification through reference to discourses of human security whereby security is seen as a

fundamental human right – for some ‘the basic right on which all others are based’.⁴ Whilst human rights may frequently be used to limit the excesses of security, the nature of the relationship between human rights, security and justice cannot be depicted simply within a framework in which human rights serve as a limit on the coercive reach of the criminal law and state institutions or act as a counterweight to criminalisation and securitisation. As Lazarus (2007) has shown, assertions of the right to security can imply, and have been increasingly exploited politically to presage, greater powers of surveillance, increased police authority, wider use of pre-trial detention and pre-emptive measures aimed at risk prevention. Attempts to cast the right to security as a meta-right, and subsequently to re-order the priority of rights, thus, run the risk that rights themselves will become securitised (Lazarus, 2011). Rather than justice and rights to liberty being conceived as pathways to security, they may come to be seen as products of security. From this perspective, security becomes the precondition for the enjoyment of any right. The danger here, however, is that we may become preoccupied with the quest for security as the precondition to liberty to the extent that we end up with enhanced security but with scant liberty.

II. Sustainable Security

This prompts consideration of the nature of the vexed relation between security and liberty. More often than not, the metaphor that is conjured up in contemporary policy debate about the security-liberty relation is the image of balance. Recently, the notion of ‘striking a new balance between security and liberty’ implies the notion of trade-offs. As Waldron (2010: 22) notes, frequently when the balance metaphor is invoked it is deployed by those who wish to take up a new position on the issue with regard to the pre-eminence of security and a change in attitudes to civil liberties. Talk of (re-)balancing evokes the idea of finely grained calculations of weights and measures that can be objectively assessed and calibrated (i.e. Home Office, 2006). It presupposes that liberty and security are ‘eternal values’, that they are easily differentiable, quasi-quantifiable and homogeneous (Bigo, 2010: 398). By contrast, security and liberty are better understood as incommensurate goods in which no simple equilibrium can be struck, but where their relationship demands open deliberation and contestation in relation to other social values, norms and goals.

In the language of balance, *intra*-personal trade-offs are often confused with *inter*-personal trade-offs (Waldron 2010: 12). *Intra*-personal trade-offs are where individuals accept certain constraints on their own liberty in order to render themselves (and possibly others) more safe and secure; where each of us bears the costs of security whilst simultaneously each of us reaps the benefits. By contrast, *inter*-personal trade-offs – more problematically – occur where we sacrifice not our own liberty but the liberty of others in order that the rest of us may be (or feel) more safe. Such trade-offs highlight the distributive qualities of security measures, whereby the burdens of security may fall unevenly across the population. Many of the contemporary changes advocated to enhance security, actually protect the security of some whilst overlooking or actively undermining the security of others. They have adverse implications for and impacts on marginal and marginalised groups within societies; those upon whom dominant groups project their fears and anxieties.

⁴ As articulated in May 2007 by the then Home Secretary, John Reid, in a speech delivered in Venice to ministers of the six largest EU nations – see http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/uk_politics/6648849.stm

Hence, in confronting the distributive mix of security and liberty, we need to reflect upon the questions: 'whose fears?', 'whose security?' and 'whose liberty?' is being enhanced or diminished. These are particularly salient questions for the uneven distribution of security across different social groups: men/women and minorities/majorities. Such questions, however, are less evident in debates about threats of terrorism and political violence, as well as other contemporary fears and responses to them. Nevertheless, in the political confrontation between fear and liberty, where necessary, actions that infringe liberties are more evidently justifiable if those who support the actions are burdened by them and their impacts are not restricted to members of identifiable minority groups - whether implicitly or through differential implementation.

Drawing together the metaphors and analogies outlined thus far, in thinking about how we might conceive the relation between **security** and **liberty**, the following sets of relationships are suggestive:

1. **Inversely related** in that more of one produces less of the other - as in the metaphoric balance – whereby the notion of 'trade off' implies that enhancing security demands corresponding reductions in liberty and *visa versa*.
2. **Mutually reinforcing** suggests a relation in which the two are interconnected and can enrich each other – possibly to the extent that they constitute each other – evoking 'liberty in security' and 'security in liberty'.
3. **Security as a precondition for liberty** evokes the earlier analogy of security as foundational building block, whereby security is a prerequisite for the exercise of rights and the enjoyment of liberties.
4. **Security as precluding liberty** evokes the securitising tendencies of the ambulance cum juggernaut captured in 'counter-law'.
5. **Liberty as a precondition for security** implies that normative principles of justice, human rights protections and experiences of fairness and equality of treatment may be fundamental pathways to security; evoking 'security through liberty'.
6. **Precariousness** suggests a relationship that is simultaneously close but problematic and ambiguous; as conjured by Oberleitner's 'porcupines in love'.

It is with regard to a combination of these last two relationships that I wish to elaborate a conception of sustainable security, in my concluding thoughts.

As already identified, security has both temporal and socio-spatial, distributive dimensions. First, temporality is central to all security projects and informs experiences and prospects of security (Valverde, forthcoming). Unlike the retrospective gaze of criminal justice - that seeks normatively to reorder the past - security looks to what is to come. Not only does security continually evolve and transmute as a concept (as threats and risks as well as practices and technologies change), but so too, security has a future-orientation. Security is concerned not simply with managing present threats and risks but also with governing as yet unknown futures. When we think of our safety, we think not just of the present moment but project into the future. Hence, technologies, mentalities and practices of security offer assurances about the future and generate expectations that people can count on and build upon (to continue the architectural metaphor). Yet, in anticipation, we project towards the

future, but what comes out of the future is our past, our inter-subjective and culturally informed assumptions, experiences and beliefs that all inform our insecurities.

Moreover, security practices and securitisation moves have both short-term implications and longer-term consequences – they exert an evident temporality. The evolving and interdependent nature of security problems means that nothing done to solve one security hazard is without impacts. As Molotch (2012: 219) notes: ‘this sets up the need for continuous change and refinement – with no end ever’. Security practices and discourses, he argues, too often presume ‘finality’; ‘armour in place, bad guys dead or behind bars, instead of ongoing attentiveness to ranges of interacting opportunities and constraints’ (*ibid.*). Troublesomely, today’s quests for security in their myopic attempts to control present risks and assuage extant fears, scatter the future with sources of impending insecurities. For example, the suspension of normal codes and recourse to ‘emergency measures’ – be it extraordinary rendition, extra-judicial hearings or other forms of ‘counter-law’ - may provide temporary relief, but will often have ramifications that reverberate into the future. More mundanely, these may have an incremental and accumulated acculturation and normalising effects – whereby over time the exception becomes the norm in an undefined ‘state of exception’ (Agamben, 2005) or ‘permanent state of emergency’ (Bigo, 2010) – and/or may generate legitimacy deficits that undermine social trust. Yet, trust and legitimacy are precious ingredients in shared experiences of security. Like other forms of authority and power, public security systems seek to generate commitments to compliance and cooperation. In this, judgements about the legitimacy of legal authorities and security apparatuses – people and systems - are crucial to why people obey the law and comply with decisions taken (Tyler, 2006). Hence, the urgent ‘now’ (ambulance-like) dimension of security, if experienced as illegitimate, can serve to undermine future security.

Second, security is socially and spatially variegated. The existence of excessive security differentials and uneven distribution of safety have the capacity to exacerbate and compound extant inequalities. So too, they can foster inter-group or inter-personal tensions and social conflicts. Thus, spatial and social inequalities in security, like illegitimate security, can generate vicious circles and malign feedback loops across time. In many senses, security expresses the ‘intrinsic connectedness of temporal and spatial relationships’ (Bakhtin 1990: 84). It is here that the notion of sustainable security has some purchase.

The concept of ‘sustainability’ has most often been deployed in environmental studies and human development. In these contexts, sustainability is characterised in terms of meeting short-term needs without compromising future generations’ capacity to meet their own needs (World Commission on Environment and Development, 1987). Central are the concepts of needs and the idea of limitations imposed by the state of technology and social organisation on the ability to meet present and future needs. The notion of ‘social sustainability’ implies interdisciplinary insights in its connections with economic and environmental sustainability, but privileges societal values and social norms. To furnish sustainable societies, we need to better understand and to seek to change practices and behaviours that are unsustainable; those that, in a security context, undermine ethical principles, normative values and promote inequalities that foster future conflicts and insecurities. Sustainable security practices, therefore, can be defined as those that meet the needs of the present without compromising the well-being of the future through adverse societal impacts, depletion of other fundamental social values, such as trust and legitimacy, or erosion to principles of freedom, due process or equity of treatment.

Like security, sustainability expresses temporality; it is an ongoing process, evincing movement, responding to change and requiring open-ended reflection, not a fixed state to be achieved. Hence, the notion of 'sustainable security' is useful in that it foregrounds the temporal and spatial unevenness of security practices and their implications for peoples' liberties and freedoms, as well as experiences of (in)justice both in the present and in the future. In addition to its analytical attributes, the notion of sustainable security has normative and political properties. First, it foregrounds equity of access to key goods and services as a prerequisite of sustainable communities, in that inequities breed insecurities. As such, security should not be treated as a good simply to be maximised, but rather as something to be achieved as far as possible at an equal level for all; to minimise inequities of distribution. Second, it underscores equity between generations, in that future generations should not be disadvantaged by the activities of the current generation. Third, it challenges the neo-liberal triumphalism of the market as the distributor of social utility by providing space for the recognition of the moral limits of markets (in the provision of security), and in so doing subordinates economic goals to social values (Sandel, 2012).

A conception of sustainable security seeks precisely to reconcile short-term security needs that enable people to adapt and live confidently with threat and risk, with longer-term goals of developing a functioning, legitimate and normatively viable security system. It follows that the sustainability of security practices as public goods necessitates not only the construction of a just society in the present, but also the design of arrangements and procedures that secure lasting and continuing (social) justice in the future. This involves not only being attentive to the capacity of security measures to impact disproportionately on specific groups or unduly discriminate against them, but to be reflexive in terms of the constantly changing social, environmental, economic, political and legal climate in which security is enacted. Such an endeavour will necessitate consideration of the role of justice principles and the rule of law as vital stepping stones along the pathway to legitimate and sustainable forms and levels of security. This underscores the requirement to attend to the short-term security needs of living with risk and threat in contemporary societies in which uncertainty prevails without prompting social injustices and amplified inequalities or compromising future security by generating new sources of insecurities. The goal is to contain and restrict the prevalence and harmful consequences of the exceptional emergency (ambulance-like) and counter-legal qualities of security whilst facilitating its legitimate and well-being protective characteristics.

Security is frequently identified as a core component of what makes resilient and 'sustainable communities' (Raco, 2007). Yet, the role of security logics and practices in sustaining the vitality of communal life and security as a positive social good and lived reality are little understood. Aligning security with the notion of sustainability, begs a number of useful allied questions: to what extent and in what ways do security practices, discourse and technologies sustain and promote equitable, inclusive and just societies? To what extent are they socially sustainable? Conversely, to what extent and in what ways do quests for security in seeking to meet short-term demands compromise the security of future generations? Sustainability is ultimately bound up with institutional design, social practices and human behaviour. As such, it opens up debate, negotiation and contestation over preferred futures, under conditions of deep contingency and uncertainty. Hence, the appeal of sustainable security as an idea resides in its capacity to operate as an integrating framework; as a way of thinking about the relationships between different dimensions that

constitute security as a practice and ideal, rather than simply as a barometer for assessing the justifiability or otherwise of a specific component of security.

In foregrounding a conception of 'sustainable security' (as a positive notion), a future research agenda will need to connect extant ways of thinking about security with key normative principles and values of social justice and legitimacy which shape both its current and longer-term pursuit. These will need to include concern for both substantive and distributive justice and fairness. In so doing, it will need to connect with and support human rights discourses while attentive to the differences and interconnections between human rights and (human) security. Such an approach must go beyond overly simplistic binaries and balancing acts between 'security' and 'liberty', as if these exist in some direct hydraulic relation. It will also need to avoid any implication that attempts to enhance security inevitably lead automatically to some type of rights-related infringements and that enhancing rights leads to increased insecurity. This requires us to conceive of the relationship between security and liberty as a recursive relationship in which security is also seen as a platform for well-being and human autonomy - for the exercise of freedom.

In this vein, Rita Floyd (2011) specifies three criteria that, if fulfilled at the same time, would render securitisation morally right. These are that: first, there is an objective existential threat; second, the referent object of security is morally legitimate; and third, the security response is appropriate to the threat in question. This forms part of, what she terms, a 'just securitisation theory' (Floyd 2014) which interrogates and seeks to build criteria for assessing the morality of both securitisation and de-securitisation. This demands that attention is given to thresholds and questions about principles of proportionality – not simply from a legal or normative perspective but also in terms of a more nuanced and descriptive sociology of seriousness. Hence, how do we evaluate the seriousness of security threats and risks? What is the evidential basis upon which security threats become actionable? What are the appropriate thresholds for securitisation? In this regard, the Commission on Human Security (cited earlier) has proposed to restrict its focus to 'critical' and 'pervasive' threats, be they environmental, economic, food health, personal or political. Such a threshold-based conception cuts across and challenges both narrow and broad interpretations of human security (Owen, 2004). But much more need be done to elaborate upon this.

The preceding arguments have sought to underscore the significance of tacit security mechanisms, mundane order and the quotidian needs, conditions and practices of ordinary people. Traditional notions of security have been criticised for their rigidity in relation to insufficiently incorporating the views and experiences of minority groups and women in particular (Hansen, 2000). Any sustainable understanding of security must explore how security and its evolution have been gendered in the past and might be influenced by changing gender relations in the future. Ironically, perhaps, the etymology of the word 'security' derives from the Latin root *securus* which literally means 'without care'. Care in this sense refers to anxiety, fear or worry. Hence, to be secure is to be 'carefree'. This juxtaposition of security and care belies a deeper association between the two terms in that security presupposes care – feelings of attachment and sociability. One can only be truly 'carefree' where there are ongoing, routine and tacit systems of sharing, relations of care, and forms of resilience that constitute a latent benign social environment. It is self-evident to suggest that relations of care – like forms of mundane security - are profoundly gendered.

Despite its universalising implications, human security - like human rights and the liberal political tradition from which it borrows – embodies a model of the autonomous, rational human subject who is the bearer of capabilities and of individual rights (Gilligan, 1982) which sits awkwardly with the situated and relational quality of social power that mediates much human life, structural inequalities, violence and insecurities and, in particular, women’s experiences of them (Nussbaum, 2005). Moreover, the logic of rights pays insufficient attention to an ‘ethics of care’ (Kittay, 1999; Robinson, 2011). However, as Marhia notes: ‘There is no *a priori* formula for intervening in these relations: this requires situated empirical analyses and is inevitably (and productively) a source of contestation’ (2013: 32). Nevertheless, in order to address the uneven global and local distribution of vulnerabilities and insecurities, any notion of sustainable security must do more than secure the individual; it must acknowledge and nurture the ‘social life of security’.

Conclusion

At the same time, we need to be aware of the limitations and misuses of notions of sustainability, notably in the context of security. First, sustainability has a consequentialist (ends-oriented) logic in which future security needs may be used as a trump to present day individual rights and civil liberties. Human rights discourses, by contrast, are non-consequentialist. We need to be careful that under conditions of uncertainty, worst-case scenarios (Sunstein, 2007) do not promote precautionary logics that stifle civil liberties and side-line legal norms of due process in order to intervene at the earliest possible stage to stop our (as yet) unknown demons surfacing (Crawford, 2010).

Secondly, it has been argued by some that the language of sustainability - drawn from the apocalyptic scenarios over climate change has a tendency to depoliticise and de-democratise debate and constitute a key arena through which ‘the post-political frame is forged, configured and entrenched’ (Swyngedouw, 2010: 216). Swyngedouw contends that:

‘Much of the sustainability argument has evacuated the politics of the possible, the radical contestation of alternative future socio-environmental possibilities and socio-natural arrangements, and has silenced the antagonisms and conflicts that are constitutive of our socio-natural orders by externalizing conflict. It is inherently reactionary.’ (p. 228)

By contrast, a progressive notion of sustainable security should seek to politicise the values and moral choices upon which security decisions are premised. In so doing, it should open up debate and dialogue about our conceptions of security, the practices to which they give rise and their social implications. Consequently, there is a need for an expansion in the policy and critical imaginations that are used to categorise, diagnose and provide solutions to security problems. This will require, amongst other things, a re-imagination of the long-term socio-economic causes of *in*securities and their distribution across time and space. This means acknowledging the interconnections between local violence and vulnerabilities, such as domestic violence, and global violence and vulnerabilities, such as war and social conflicts.

Thus envisaged, security constitutes a radical vantage point from which to consider questions of social sustainability. As Molotch contends: ‘Security entails thinking *critically* and in a comprehensive manner about present strategies and questioning them – at general

levels as well as in specific detail' (2012: 217, emphasis in original). Demands for 'more security' should invite fundamental examinations of societal values. They require us to attend to judgements both about the present and the future based on normative principles informed by empirical evidence of existing security practices; both those of authorities and of the everyday, mundane and ordinary social means by which people manage their lives.

In sum, an understanding of 'sustainable security' needs to be attentive; first, to the temporal and distributive dimensions of security; second, to the capacity of security measures to impact disproportionately on specific minority groups or unduly discriminate against them; and third, to the manner in which minority voices and gender dimensions are frequently silenced in security debates. Such an approach should seek to investigate how security is produced, by whom and informed by what values. It should also seek to identify the conditions under which security practices can turn from vicious into virtuous circles, and the norms and values that inform the long-term sustainability of security measures and processes. Moreover, it needs to develop a more nuanced understanding of the interconnections and interactions between security and liberty. Following Bigo (2010: 415), it will need to give 'more serious attention to liberty as the condition of existence of any account of security that claims scholarly pretension'.⁵ Finally, context matters. A normative approach alone does not take us far enough. In the study of what constitutes sustainable security, there is an evident need to supplement normative and analytical enquiries about logics, dynamics and attributes of security and securitisation processes, with a robust empirical examination and critical interpretation of given security practices and lived experiences in particular locales. We need to know more about what 'security looks and feels like to different actors' working in specific settings (Ranasinghe, 2013: 104). In this, a research agenda focused around sustainable security will need to be attentive to questions of temporal and spatial scale (Valverde, 2011). It will also need to interrogate the manner in which the ambiguities, paradoxes and ironies outlined in this paper are played out and influenced by ordinary people in habitual settings, as well as by elites at particular moments in history, through specific security projects. Last but not least, it will need to play close attention to the implications of current (and past) security endeavours for future security practices and the wider social forces that shape tomorrow's insecurities.

⁵ Bigo goes on to argue for the development of 'liberty studies' to 'go beyond critical security studies' (2010: 413).

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