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THE INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY AND GLOBAL GOVERNANCE OF HUMAN SECURITY

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Abstract

This paper addresses the global governance of human security and particularly its provision across borders. It argues that the responsibility to protect (R2P) framework is part of global governance. Of special interest to this paper is the role the international community plays within the global governance of human security. The international community is assigned a collective responsibility to protect populations from genocide, war crimes, ethnic cleansing, and crimes against humanity that becomes activated when an individual state fails in its primary, individual responsibility to protect. Moreover, the international community is assigned an on-going preventative responsibility. In a sense the international community is a "governor" of sorts. Yet, the R2P framework is unclear in its conceptualization of the international community. Evidently within the R2P framework the international community is not a world government, a formal international organization, or necessarily synonymous with the society of states. Yet, existing alternative conceptualizations of "international community" are unhelpful. Hence the paper offers a novel suggestion: the international community as "potentiality." The concept refers to the possibility of forming a configuration of actors and networks for the purposes of solving global governance issues. My proposal captures both how the international community is in flux and ad hoc, and how one can see some permanence in the international community "governing" without being a government.

Keywords

Introduction

Research on global governance gained a significant impetus with the publication of Rosenau and Czempiel's (1992) edited volume. The title of the book could not have been more to the point: *Governance without Government*. Rather than focusing on government—especially difficult at the global level since no world government exists—global governance "highlights the spontaneous appearance of a multiplicity of spheres of authority or control mechanisms, adding up to a complex hodgepodge" (Kustermans, 2011: 20). Rosenau and Czempiel's volume focused on such issues as world order, global institutions, historical analysis, economics and finance, transnational practices, democracy, and citizenship. These and similar themes have dominated the discussions since. Relatively speaking, though, issues of human security have been less analyzed as part of global governance.[1]

Particularly the *provision of human security* across borders merits further attention within discussions concerning global governance. Here, I refer mainly to providing and guaranteeing negative peace conditions (the absence of general violence or war) by external actors. To illustrate its importance with the help of on-going examples one needs only to cast attention to the so-called Arab Spring or the numerous on-going intra-state conflicts around the world. Moreover, the provision of human security across borders has been discussed under different terminology and themes, and it is important to understand it as part of global governance in general and not as an isolated sphere as is sometimes the case. Here, of special significance is the responsibility to protect (variously RtoP or R2P, the latter preferred in this essay) framework. Its relevance is highlighted by the global order it envisions through re-inventing sovereignty, a fundament of international politics. It imagines a different global order, one "governed" by the international community at least as far as human security is concerned, as I will argue in this paper.

Debates concerning global human security and its provision across borders are not new, but they may not have been recognized as being part of the wider debates concerning global governance. For me the most familiar perspectives to this issue are humanitarian intervention and the R2P framework, but it could easily be understood to encompass also such non-forceful measures as development and disaster aid. Although humanitarian intervention and responsibility to protect are not the same, they both concern the actions of external actors when faced with grave humanitarian crises, in which the local government is unwilling or unable to save a significant portion of its population or it is itself the perpetrator of atrocities against a part of its population. Moreover, both envision a governance structure through which external actors can provide security to the endangered populations outside of their own borders. To the extent that there are such similarities across these two otherwise different frameworks, they represent two frameworks of the wider tradition of global governance that

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[1] The global governance of human security has received some attention. For example Axworthy (2001) has highlighted both the need and ways in which people could be put first in re-understanding security globally—thus echoing the Brandt Commission (Independent Commission on International Development Issues, 1981). Khong (2001) has underlined the broadening of security—for example the securitization of economic privatization, environmental degradation, and gender discrimination—and assessed critically its logical implication: *individual* human beings ought to be the ultimate referents of security. MacLean, Black, and Shaw's (2006) edited volume examines human security governance from the perspective of new multilateral relations, while for example Tehranian's (1999) volume looks both established and evolving global institutions from the perspective of human security. Furthermore, for example Barnett and Adger (2007) connect climate change with human security and the risk of violent conflict

deals with the forceful provision of human security across borders. Given my space limitations, however, I must focus on only one of these frameworks, namely the R2P framework.

The international community plays an important role in the provision of human security across borders, particularly within the R2P framework. In the second substantial section I review the framework's understanding of the international community. Since the R2P framework is unclear in its understanding of the international community, I review two alternative conceptualizations. Like the R2P framework generally, these two understand the international community to be conceptually distinct from the international society or the society of states. According to the alternative conceptualizations there is something "more" that members of the international community share that enables one to distinguish them as a community. Yet, these proposals are not without their problems especially in relation to the global governance of human security. For this reason, the third substantial section explains my own suggestion. I propose that the international community is not an international organization or a world government. Rather, it is more like an ever-changing configuration or a "binding tool" that brings together particular actors and governance networks relevant to the issue at hand. I make use of an analogy with the human brain in order to explain my suggestion that understands the international community as a "potentiality." Before a brief conclusion I discuss some benefits and problems associated with my proposal.

Providing Human Security across Borders

The provision of human security across borders may entail a number of things. One reason for its broad spectrum arises from the different ways one can understand human security. Is one referring to human security in a more restricted fashion (usually understood as freedom from violence or fear) or more expansively (often understood as freedom from want)? [2] Alternatively, one can provide something in many ways, either indirectly or directly. Here, one thinks of the difference in being part of providing human security across borders by making a donation for instance to the Red Cross or taking direct action for instance as part of Médecins Sans Frontières (MSF). In this paper, however, the background reference is mainly on forceful measures by external actors in order to ensure at least negative peace conditions.

The forceful provision of human security across borders has been discussed generally under two headings. The temporally longer (and possibly still more extensive by volume) debates were and are conducted under the rubric of humanitarian intervention. [3] Since the International Commission on Intervention and State Sovereignty (ICISS) 2001 report, however, the debates have taken a new turn thanks to the introduction of the responsibility to protect framework. The now ten-year-old R2P framework has set in motion a discussion that touches the very

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[2] The classic division is from United Nations Development Programme (1994)

[3] For an overview, see e.g. Arend and Beck (1993), Finnemore (2003), Holzgrefe and Keohane (2003), Lang (2003), Pattison (2010a), and Wheeler (2000).

structure of the international level.[4] An important aspect for the present discussion is the R2P framework's re-characterization of sovereignty and its more proactive stance in comparison to the reactive character of humanitarian interventions. For instance, the R2P framework emphasizes prevention as a central aspect, whereas humanitarian interventions are (usually) discussed as reactions to existing grave humanitarian crises.[5] Nevertheless, similar to both humanitarian intervention and R2P debates is their state-centricity, although not always as is demonstrated by the effect private military and security companies has had on the debates (e.g. Pattison, 2010b).

From the perspective of global governance, humanitarian intervention debates were often restricted to debating whether the UN Security Council, third parties authorized by the Council, or concerned states even without authorization should or legally could intervene in other sovereign states. In contrast, while humanitarian interventions were usually discussed with reference to the existing international structure, the R2P framework suggests a new kind of global human security governance structure.

The R2P framework, like the arguments supporting humanitarian intervention, is fundamentally concerned with human security globally.[6] It begins by highlighting each sovereign state's responsibility to protect its own population and by re-conceptualizing sovereignty as responsibility. This re-conceptualization of a fundament of international politics suggests an alternative vision of the international level as such. This alternative vision of the global order prioritizes human security and obliges states to provide it within their own borders and to assist the international community in ensuring it everywhere in the world.

Thus, the international community is to operate as a final guarantor of human security globally. The international community plays a central role in the framework exactly because it is to operate as a secondary, collective, "backup" provider of human security in cases where individual states have failed in their primary responsibility to protect or where states abuse their own populations (International Commission on Intervention and State Sovereignty, 2001 para. 2.29). Some may feel that my argument contradicts for example the Secretary-General's view that "the international community can at best play a supplemental role" (United Nations General Assembly, 2009b para. 14). One should note, however, that the Secretary-General wants to emphasize that the primary responsibility falls on individual states, and that the international community is to help states succeed (United Nations General Assembly, 2009b

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[4] For an overview of R2P after 5 years, see e.g. Bellamy (2010), and now after ten years, see e.g. Luck (2011) and Sharma (2011). See also e.g. Thakur (2006) and Welsh (2002). For the argument regarding the very structure of the international level, see Peltonen (2011b).

[5] The UN Secretary-General has highlighted the importance of prevention as part of the R2P framework (United Nations General Assembly, 2009b)

[6] Space considerations prevent me from providing a detailed account of the R2P framework, but there is no need to repeat all of it here anyway. Currently the main documents include International Commission on Intervention and State Sovereignty (2001), the *World Summit Outcome Document* (United Nations General Assembly, 2005), the General Assembly Resolution (United Nations General Assembly, 2009a), and the Secretary-General's reports (United Nations General Assembly, 2009b; 2010). The R2P framework concerns genocide, war crimes, ethnic cleansing, and crimes against humanity (United Nations General Assembly, 2005 para. 138). R2P has been described as an emerging international norm (Brunnée and Toope, 2010) that has nevertheless been abused (Badescu and Weiss, 2010). Some argue that the framework has not contributed anything of substance (Hehir, 2010). For a review of the past ten years, see Luck (2011) and Sharma (2011).

para 10(a)). It is true that the R2P framework assigns primary responsibility to individual states, but simultaneously the framework contains a collective responsibility of the international community to ensure human security if particular states fail. In other words, the international community plays a supplemental role in helping individual states succeed in their individual responsibility to protect *and* at the same time the international community has a collective responsibility that becomes "activated" if needed.[7]

New "governor" in town?

The implication of the previous points is that the international community, as collectively having the final responsibility to ensure that populations are secure globally within the R2P framework, can arguably be seen to "govern" the provision of global human security. Here, governing does not refer to the centralized use of sovereign authority. Rather, in line with discussions on governance, it refers to the diffuse exercise of political authority and influence.

To explain, individual states have the primary responsibility to provide security to their populations, but the international community has a responsibility to ensure human security when individual states fail to meet their responsibility to protect or commit atrocities against their own population. This collective responsibility assigned to the international community can be understood to denote a governance role, since here responsibility is not simply synonymous with a duty or an obligation but it refers to being *in charge* of something, namely the provision of human security in cases where a particular state is unable or unwilling or it is itself the perpetrator of atrocities. In other words, the international community's responsibility denotes it being in charge of ensuring that mass atrocities are prevented or stopped and that devastated societies are re-built. Exactly how this will be done remains open and context-dependent, but it is clear that the international community is assigned—seemingly by fiat—a responsibility to ensure this within the R2P framework.

All this is prima facie evidence that the international community may be a governor of sorts when it comes to the global provision of human security. I say "a governor of sorts," because the international community is neither a world government nor a governor in any centralized sense. It is neither a formal international organization whose membership list could be examined, nor does it refer to any fixed, single or multiple centers or spheres of authority and networks resulting in a complex "hodgepodge" or to any other "traditional" understanding of global governance, as I explain in the remainder of this paper.

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[7] For the two levels of responsibilities at stake, see Peltonen (2011a).

The International Community

The international community is central to any discussion on the global governance of human security. The first thing to note is that the international community is not necessarily the same as the international society.[8] While some may use the two terms synonymously, I understand them to be two distinct concepts within the realm of global governance of human security.

International community in R2P

The R2P framework assigns an important role to the international community, but it is less clear on how it sees the international community itself. For instance the ICISS report clearly states that the international community is to act in cases where particular individual states have failed to protect their populations or they themselves perpetrate atrocities (International Commission on Intervention and State Sovereignty, 2001 para. 2.29). The report refers to the UN Security Council as the first "port of call" (International Commission on Intervention and State Sovereignty, 2001 para. 6.28), but this does not mean that the Security Council is the international community. In cases where the Security Council fails to act, the report continues, the General Assembly under "Uniting for Peace" procedure, regional or sub-regional organizations, or concerned states "may not rule out other means to meet the gravity and urgency of that situation" (International Commission on Intervention and State Sovereignty, 2001 Right Authority F). One has the impression that the international community is whatever collection of states and/or their organizations end up fulfilling the international community's responsibility to protect.

The *World Summit Outcome Document* seems to refer to the international community as a collection of states. It calls for the international community's help in ensuring that states succeed in their individual responsibilities and for its support in establishing an early warning system (United Nations General Assembly, 2005 para. 138). Moreover, the "international community, *through* the United Nations, also has the responsibility to use appropriate diplomatic, humanitarian and other peaceful means" (United Nations General Assembly, 2005 para. 139, emphasis added). The use of "we" in the other parts of the paragraph (forceful measures) gives the impression that the signatories are the international community. Here, unlike in the ICISS report, the international community seems to be used synonymously with the international society; the international community is the society of states.

The Secretary-General's report on implementing the R2P framework provides yet a different understanding of the international community. He refers to the international community in many ways, for instance to "an active partnership between the international community and the State" (United Nations General Assembly, 2009b para. 28). "The costs to a society engaging in serious crimes and violations relating to the responsibility to protect […] can include […] losing a place at the table as a member of the international community" (United Nations General Assembly, 2009b para. 32). By refusing to accept international prevention and protection assistance a state may challenge the international community "to live up to its own responsibility" (United Nations General Assembly, 2009b para. 56). Through diplomatic sanctions the international community may highlight forbidden practices (United Nations

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[8] The classic English School conception of the international society originates e.g. from Bull (1977/2002).

General Assembly, 2009b para. 57). Most importantly, perhaps, the Secretary-General, within Pillar Two of his report (international assistance and capacity-building), discusses the international community's commitment to assist individual states in meeting their responsibility to protect. Here, Pillar Two draws "on the cooperation of Member States, regional and subregional arrangements, civil society and the private sector, as well as on the institutional strengths and comparative advantages of the United Nations system" (United Nations General Assembly, 2009b para. 11(b)). It would seem, then, that for the Secretary-General the international community is not simply the society of states, but that various actors either are or can be part of the international community. This would seem to be similar to the view held by Gareth Evans, one of the architects of the R2P framework, to whom the international community involves a range "from individuals to NGOs to national governments to international organizations" that are "in and around the international community" (Evans, 2008: 296).

From these brief illustrations it is evident that the international community is an elusive concept within the R2P framework. It is unclear whether the international community is "simply" the society of states; whether it is a combination of the Security Council, various regional and sub-regional organizations, and concerned states; or whether for example the international community is defined on the basis of who acts to meet the international community's responsibility to protect. In the latter interpretation whatever actors end up fulfilling the responsibility to protect are the international community, and in this sense the international community is determined from a problem-driven perspective. Be that as it may, the R2P framework does not provide a singular answer to the question "who" or "what" is the international community that is to "govern" the provision of human security. Hence, one must look elsewhere in order to gain better insight.

Existing alternatives

Generally speaking, conceptualizations of "international community" that understand it as not synonymous with "international society" can be divided roughly into two categories. On the one hand are "those who see the international community as some form of moral collectivity of humankind which exists as an ethical referent even if not organized in any way, and [on the other hand] those who see it as some kind of agent possessing the capacity for action" (Buzan and Gonzalez-Pelaez, 2005: 32).[9] Since in the global governance of human security the international community is to act, or at least this is the implication, I leave aside abstract understandings of "international community." Consequently I focus here on two existing proposals that are rather advanced in their structure. One emphasizes a "we-feeling," the other common ethos in distinguishing certain actors as members of the international community.

The first conceptualization is offered by Buzan and Gonzalez-Pelaez. They (2005: 33) argue that the international community, standing "at the opposite end of the [conceptual] spectrum from '[international] system'" is distinguished by "the existence of we-feeling above the

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[9] I would claim, however, that this division is artificial for two reasons. First, those who see the international community as an ethical referent nevertheless expect someone to act on behalf of the international community. Second, those focusing on action are also referring to only some forms of action as defined by an abstract understanding of what constitutes responsible behavior.

rational structures of norms, rules and institutions required for coexistence and cooperation." At one end of the conceptual spectrum is the Waltzian international system, in the middle is English School's international society, and at the other end is international community. Historical processes, like culture, tradition, historical ties, religion, economy, ideology, international law, technology, and science (Buzan and Gonzalez-Pelaez, 2005: 37), lie behind a we-feeling that characterizes international communities. If present, they may transform coexistence and cooperative association by generating a shared identity. Most often, especially in less abstract conceptualizations of international community, "the main practical aspect of international community is found on the subglobal level, referring to a tighter net of states within international society that share a higher degree of integration defined by a strong common identity" (Buzan and Gonzalez-Pelaez, 2005: 38). This implies that there may be several sub-global international communities. On the other hand, the global level might contain a thin international community where, however, the shared identity or we-feeling would be rather weak.[10]

The second proposal originates from Schimmelfennig (2002), who—followed by Ellis (2009)—offers an alternative formulation of the international community. Instead of we-feeling, both Ellis and Schimmelfennig emphasize the common ethos shared by actors that constitutes them as members of an international community. Here, too, the international community is something "more" or "thicker" than the international society. It is the introduction of common ethos that potentially transforms an international society into an international community. By a common ethos, Ellis (2009: 4) understands "generally the same norms, rules, identities, and views of moral conduct" shared by members of a community that enables them to self-identify with others and with the community in question (Ellis, 2009: 8-9). Yet, common ethos is insufficient without high interaction density. One needs both for there to be an international community. On the other hand, conceptually speaking, high interaction density by itself would result in interdependence. Low interaction density and a lack of common ethos would characterize an international system (Schimmelfennig, 2002).

Problems in existing conceptualizations
To apply either of these conceptualizations of "international community" to the global governance of human security would run into trouble. For one, both are state-centric (at least in their presentation), but given the hints within the R2P framework there does not seem to be any compelling reason to exclude non-state actors. The R2P framework seems to include the civil society and even the private sector where appropriate (e.g. United Nations General Assembly, 2009b para. 10(a)). Moreover, international and transnational non-state actors can also share a we-feeling or common ethos among themselves—hence possibly constituting their own international community—or they may be part of the historical processes to a similar extent as states that might qualify them to be considered to be members of the same international community as particular states. While this may not be the case under all circumstances, it seems plausible within the broader theme of the global governance of human security.

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[10] Here may lie a plausible explanation why some refer to the international community as an abstraction, while others understand it as a more concrete community.

Second, both conceptualizations seem to begin with the idea of an international society and they both introduce elements that transform part of the wider international society into an international community of particular actors. Here, the international community is a "club" of sorts, and it is missed that contemporary (if not all) global governance relies on dynamic networks (see e.g. Kendall, 2004).

Third, it seems that the international community, within the R2P framework, is to operate in the interests of humanity. To that extent, the international community is humanity's agent. Yet, since the international community cannot act by itself—not even as the kind of collectivity proposed in the alternative conceptualizations—it needs agents or representatives of its own. Thus, the international community is an agent in an abstract sense, whereas practically speaking particular actors, like states, regional organizations, and possibly parts of the civil society, are the agents of the international community.[11] It is uncertain to what extent either of the outlined conceptualizations of "international community" is able to include this characteristic.

Fourth and perhaps most importantly, neither of these conceptualizations capture the problem-driven understanding of the international community present in the R2P framework and generally in the global governance of human security. After all, the framework begins with human insecurity as a problem to the solved.

The International Community as "Potentiality"

Given that the international community does not necessarily have to be constituted only of states, and given that non-state actors, like the MSF, play an important part in the provision of human security across borders, a more plausible understanding of the international community in the global governance of human security begins with the realization that the determining factor for being part of the international community is not formal status. Certainly a central aspect of any community is to have something in common. After all, the roots of "community" lie in the Latin words *communis* and *communitas* that focus on what the members of a community have in common. It is only that formal status is not the most important factor that members should share but rather the aim: the provision of human security. This aim is shared by a vast number of very diverse actors—or in the case of private security companies, whose aim is financial gain, it is the means to their end. Hence, given that for instance international and transnational non-state actors are in fact doing much of the work on the ground—whether on their own or in partnership with states and their organizations—non-state actors, the civil society, and private sector are part of the global governance of human security—even we as individuals become part of it when we make a donation on the street. Therefore it would seem essential to understand the international community in a non-state-centric, complex fashion at least in the global governance of human security.

To consider the international community not from the perspective of what characteristics its members share in common but from the perspective of its aim brings the discussion

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[11] Note the difference between an actor and an agent.

necessarily to a more abstract level, but this cannot be avoided because the international community is not an organization but an abstraction of some kind. In abstract references to the international community one is less concerned with a practical community that is to act and more interested in the *idea* of an international community—that there is or should be an international community—which is then shared in addition to the aim of the international community. Perhaps it is only the notion of common humanity that binds various actors (and issues) together under the rubric of "international community," but it is certainly not without effect. Such abstract ideas about the international community operate as important rallying points that induce or are used to induce action. It is, after all, necessary to have something *like* the idea of an international community as a catalyst for such altruistic action in international politics as the provision of security for non-citizens who possibly live on the other side of the globe.

The combination of these two points—members of the international community share an aim, not a characteristic, and there is a shared idea of an international community—imply that the international community must be inherently dynamic and in constant flux (until and unless it is institutionalized).[12] Its membership is not fixed and it is highly context-dependent. Here, Tony Blair's (1999) speech provides an example. He referred to the international community and its principles in relation to global finance, free trade, Third World debt, the environment, and international security particularly in relation to humanitarian intervention. For Blair, the G7 and the WTO were the relevant governing bodies in global trade and finance issues, Kyoto Protocol in relation to the environment, and the UN Security Council and NATO as the institutions relevant for international peace and security. The particular governance issue area determined who "was" (or represented) the international community in Blair's view. Similarly, within each issue area, say within the global governance of human security, relevant actors, institutions, and norms vary depending on context, time, and locality.

In sum, in the absence of a world government or some other organization to whom the responsibility to provide and ensure human security could be assigned and institutionalized, the international community is assigned the responsibility, because it does not fall upon any particular individual actor. Yet, since the international community itself is not properly institutionalized, the global governance of human security seems to operate—or it should operate according many—on the basis of "those who can, should" (this principle is advocated in Walzer, 2002: 31) and "those who do, are" the representatives or agents of the international community.

But how can one understand something that is constantly in flux? I would argue that the best way to perceive the international community understands it as a *potential* grouping of various (diverse) actors within a particular context for a problem-solving purpose. The concept operates as a conceptual "binding tool" within given circumstances. It "binds" or "connects" particular actors together on the basis of what they have in common regarding a given issue that falls within the notion of global governance. In problems pertaining to the global governance of human security, the concept connects actors that can (or should) contribute to the solution of those problems. These problems are such that they cannot be solved by any

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[12] This aspect is amplified if one considers how, at least momentarily, one becomes part of the global governance of human security by making a donation on the street. While I make references to this point, I cannot develop it fully given the space restrictions. Nevertheless, it is part of my proposal and general argument implicitly.

particular individual actor or actors, or that it is not the responsibility of any particular individual actor or actors to solve them. Moreover, since a given problem of human security can evolve or new issues may come to light, the number or "kind" of relevant actors cannot be pre-determined. Some actors may be part of the international community only in some cases and only for a short period of time, while others may be "the usual suspects." The solutions depend, of course, on the problems. In some cases the solution requires an intervention in genocide or the rescue of flood victims. In other cases the problems of human insecurity result from global financial crisis or environmental degradation.

To exemplify this, it can be that for example the IMF or World Bank become highly relevant after a successful humanitarian intervention conducted under Security Council authorization by a coalition of the willing, and thus the international community, first the coalition of the willing, expands or changes to include these financial organizations even though they were not relevant at the beginning. In other words, the intervention activates particular networks and actors as "the international community" while in the reconstruction phase "the international community" is composed of other actors and networks. Clearly, influential actors have multiple memberships and roles, and there is some overlap. Yet, the main idea here is that the international community is not fixed but it operates as a conceptual binding tool that brings together the operations of particular actors and governance networks.

One way to illustrate this idea of the international community as a potential grouping is to imagine a complex set of actors and networks that forms like a neural network of the brain. Here, actors are the metaphorical "nodes" that are connected to other nodes. While all nodes could be connected to each other through other nodes, a single node is connected only to a few like in the human brain (or perhaps only to a single node). The sum of all these connections forms a grand network (the whole system), but smaller networks that connect only some but not all nodes are possible—and there is potentially a myriad number of ways to form such networks. Moreover, like in the neural network of the brain, some nodes (actors) and connections disappear while others come to be.[13] For the sake of convenience, let me continue with the analogy with the human brain, and consider how when researching the human brain one often uses functional MR imaging (fMRI) that shows how some parts of the brain become activated (highlighted). Similarly, imagine that some actors (nodes) and networks become highlighted when one refers to or uses the concept "international community." Some nodes are central because they connect many other nodes, much like in global governance some actors are more central than others, while some may only be connected to a single node.[14] Furthermore, there can be more than one network that becomes highlighted at the same time without there being any necessary need for the various connections to form one complete network—even though that might be possible in some complex fashion. Like with the brain, some nodes (actors) are not highlighted, and a network that some connections form need not be connected to another network. This is because, like in the human brain, a particular purpose may require the simultaneous but independent "operation" of different parts of the system. For example blinking affects the brain by causing some parts of the brain to become "active" without being connected to other activated parts

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[13] Here one must leave aside the fact that a biological brain deteriorates over time, whereas the metaphorical neural network can "regenerate" itself or "evolve."

[14] Remember the donation on the street.

while simultaneously effectively suppressing yet other parts, and the rest of the brain is simply inactive (e.g. Bristow, et al., 2005).

In the same way, references to the international community in relation to the global governance of human security result in the independent "activation" or operation of various actors and networks that are not necessarily connected with each other, while simultaneously excluding other actors and networks as irrelevant, counter-productive, or even harmful. This is because only some actors and some networks are relevant to the problem at hand, while other actors and networks may be relevant to a different problem. Hence, in a hypothetical case A, only some actors and networks are connected for the processing of the relevant issues. In another case B, other actors and connections are relevant. In both cases, the connections are made on the basis of the actors and networks having something in common, namely their ability and relevance to providing or being part a solution. Moreover, in both cases the connections "not made" are still possible but unrealized, yet in a state of readiness of sorts to become part of the process if required.

Thus, I suggest that the international community is not the whole complex system of all actors and their connections. It is not even any fixed part of the whole. Rather, it is an idea that forms a configuration of actors and their connections. The configuration represents the "international community" in a given context. In this manner the international community results from the potentiality of connections within a complex system, and in practice it is the particular configuration of actors and networks within a particular context. Here, it is not the status of the actors, but their interconnections in formulating a relevant "whole" that matters. It is not the status or characteristic of (international) actors that matters in the international community membership but rather their contribution and relevance to the global governance problem at hand.

Furthermore, the international community, the configuration, is not fixed even in relation to the purposes at hand, because the initial inclusion of some actors and governance networks may expand or decrease depending on the process itself; or it may be that a new, independent network begins to operate (without necessarily meaning the end of previously operational networks). Some of the initially excluded actors and governance networks may become included (highlighted) if they become relevant during the process of solving the initial issue, new issues emerge, the actors change themselves so that they become relevant (for example gain membership in WTO that in turn makes that actor a relevant player in particular governance networks), or possibly a completely new actor is "created" exactly for the very purpose at hand (one thinks here of the ad hoc international courts among others).

Problems and Benefits

To perceive the international community as I propose has the advantage of at least not running in to the four problems I mentioned in relation to the alternative conceptualizations. My proposal is not state-centric or otherwise conditioned by the "kind" of actors that supposedly form the international community. It does not transform some part of the international society into a (static) group. Rather, it emphasizes dynamic networks in line with global governance in general. Moreover, it understands the international community not as an actor but as something that can have agents (or representatives). Finally, it follows a problem-driven approach to human security like the R2P framework and other forms of global governance.

My proposal offers a vision of global governance that is also compatible with the R2P framework. Rather than seeing global governance as a "hodgepodge" of multiple spheres of authority one can see a "governor," the international community, without indicating any permanence or a world government, and without losing the value of the notion of complex governance without government. This is because my proposal draws attention to the complex connections and patterns between actors and their networks while simultaneously it emphasizes their fluidity and ever-changing character that is nevertheless not random. To that extent, the international community as potentiality in global governance allows one to understand both "ad hocery" and continuity, because the only really permanent aspect is the potentiality for making a relevant configuration for the global governance of particular issues, known as the international community.

One could argue, however, that there are some problems with my suggestion as well, of which the following two are perhaps the most central. First, how is the international community to govern if it is "potentiality"? Second, does not the international community have to be an (moral) actor or agent if it bears responsibilities?

Before discussing these problems, one must first distinguish between the international community as an idea or a reference point—the international community as potentiality—and the context-dependent, problem-driven configuration formed by various actors and networks that is known as the international community and that "actually" acts and does things. For the sake of clarity, I refer to the former as "international community" and to the latter as "configuration."

Regarding the first problem, I have argued that for example the R2P framework understands the international community as a governor of sorts but not as some clearly centralized authority. I have further argued that the concept "international community" enables the formation of a configuration that does the actual "governing" by acting. Yet, also the international community "governs" albeit not in a similarly concrete fashion. To exemplify this with reference to the R2P framework, on the one hand the framework assigns the international community both authority and responsibility without institutionalizing them to any particular organization(s), group of actors, or otherwise. On the other hand, the international community "is" the potentiality of forming a configuration of actors and networks that operate as the international community's agent. Here, the international community "governs" at the level of ideas and in the formation of the configuration that then acts. The notion that there ought to be something like the international community governs

the very formation of the configuration. Naturally, it is highly significant which actors and networks end up being part of the configuration and doing the "actual" governing.

To explain with my previous analogy with the human brain, much like the activated parts of the human brain "govern" that we blink and what happens when we blink—for example in contrast to winking—the international community as a configuration "governs" how and whether or not human security is provided or ensured globally. But this kind of "governing" is highly diffuse. It is not any particular actor or a certain group of actors that governs. Rather, it is the formed whole within which the relations and connections are more important than any particular actor. Here, again, one could draw an analogy with the human brain and blinking: no single brain cell is vital to blinking but the various connections and activated parts of the brain "govern" blinking—and where a particular "node" is missing, the "required" connections may be formed through other nodes.[15] In sum, as paradoxical as this may sound, the international community "governs" its own formation in practice, namely the formation of a particular configuration for a given governance problem.

The second problem relates to responsibilities requiring that their bearer is an actor or an agent with particular "abilities." Supposedly responsibility "stems from agency" (May, 1992: 17).[16] How can the international community have responsibilities if it is "only" the potential of forming particular configurations for the purposes of global governance? While a detailed discussion of this point would require a paper of its own, I should provide at least preliminary clues as to "what is going on" in relation to the question whether the international community, as understood in this paper, can actually bear the responsibilities assigned to it.

Also here it is important to note the distinction between the international community as potentiality and the configuration of actors and networks. In a nutshell, for instance the R2P framework assigns, by fiat, responsibilities to the international community but it is the configuration that acts and bears the burden of those responsibilities. At stake is a form of *vicarious responsibility* and not any agent-based notion of responsibility of the international community.

To explain better, typically vicarious responsibility, in law, involves holding one person liable for breach of the law by another person (Cane, 2002: 175-76). Here, an example could be how an employer is legally responsible for the conduct of an employee during employment. The same is true within the realm of morality, where parents are held responsible for the behavior of their child. A typical example is the parents' obligation to repair a harm caused by their child. The parents did not cause the wrong, yet they have the responsibility to make it right. Something similar is at stake when it comes to the international community's responsibility. Note that I am *not* arguing that the international community's responsibility is like the

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[15] Naturally, if too many nodes are missing, the connections may not form "properly" and they may thus form other configurations that then may have unintended consequences. To continue with the medical analogy, inability to form certain connections in the human brain results in the inability to do certain things. While the human brain may not try to form the required configuration through radically alternative paths, one can imagine what would happen if it did. Thus, a person whose brain was damaged might end up opening her mouth involuntarily every time she blinked.

[16] An agency-centered approach to responsibilities is an oversimplification, as I have argued elsewhere. See Peltonen (2010).

responsibility of parents to repair a harm caused by their child. The international community's responsibility does not arise from it having committed a wrong, or from it being vicariously responsible for the wrong committed by a particular state against its population.

Rather, the international community's responsibility relates to its responsibility to prevent, stop, or repair the *harm caused by others*. The international community's responsibility denotes it being in charge of ensuring human security globally. But since the international community cannot act, it needs agents or representatives of its own—here known as the configuration—that vicariously bear the international community's responsibility to ensure human security (and thus govern the global provision of human security). In other words, the configuration, by forming, takes upon itself the responsibility of the international community. It is this configuration (a collectivity of actors and their networks) that holds vicariously for example the collective responsibility assigned to the international community by fiat in the R2P framework.

Conclusion

In this paper I have argued that humanitarian intervention and the R2P framework can be understood to be part of the global governance of human security. Particularly the latter framework contains a notion of global human security governance by a governor of sorts: the international community. The collective responsibility assigned to the international community denotes that the international community is in charge—it has the ultimate responsibility—to ensure at least negative peace around the world.

My primary focus in this paper was to propose how to understand the international community rather than to question whether it can hold the responsibility assigned to it by fiat. The R2P framework does not provide a singular answer to the former question, but evidently the framework does not understand the international community as synonymous with the society of states—apart from the 2005 *World Summit Outcome Document*. Alternative accounts of "international community" as not synonymous with the society of states draw attention to such aspects as we-feeling or other common characteristics that international actors, usually states, share. In these accounts, the international community is imagined as a "thicker" sub-set of the society of states. Yet, such accounts are unhelpful in understanding the global governance of human security more generally, because they usually neglect non-state actors, focus on shared characteristic(s) or historical paths of particular actors, overlook the roles played by dynamic, not fixed governance networks, and the problem-driven characteristic of global governance.

To counter these problems, I proposed a way in which one can understand the international community as being both fixed and dynamic. The international community as an idea operates as a "binding tool" that unites various state and non-state actors, and networks into a configuration in order to solve a given global governance problem. The resulting configuration is not a permanent grouping of actors on the basis of their shared identity or historical ties—although such aspects can be important. Rather, the configuration is formed on the basis of which actors and networks can be part of solving a given problem. The overall

configuration may be formed of unconnected networks in the same way as blinking causes the activation of different unconnected parts of a human brain. In fact, I used the human brain as an analogy to my proposed notion of the international community as potentiality in order to illustrate the complexity of global governance and the myriad number of possible configurations.

Thus, my argument that the international community is a governor of sorts came with a strong caveat; "governor" does not refer to some managerial head. The international community is not a fixed "thing," but rather the potential of forming a particular configuration that vicariously takes upon itself the responsibilities assigned to the international community. Thus, the international community refers, for example in the global governance of human security, to a configuration that provides and through which human security is provided across borders. This configuration contains a constant potential of change and "ad hocery." At the same time one can see some permanence due to the *idea* of an international community that "governs" or should "govern" without being a government.

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