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Empowering the subaltern? Critical approaches to Japan's human security policy in Myanmar

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Abstract

In 2010, Edward Newman proposed a Critical Human Security Studies (CHSS) that sought to bridge policy-making and academic divides over the concept of human security by marrying problem-solving and critical approaches. CHSS aimed to provide a clearer definition of human security, challenge the structural dynamics of human insecurity and engage communities whose existence was threatened. Whilst CHSS purports to offer a real opportunity to address human insecurity, the question remains as to whether CHSS can truly incorporate the demands of local communities into its framework and engender structural change. This paper considers post-colonial contributions to International Relations to explore the concept of empowerment. Taking Japanese investment into the Thilawa Special Economic Zone (SEZ) in Myanmar as a case study, the argument demonstrates how Japanese policymakers and Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) alike have defined empowerment in terms of resilience or through the provision of socio-political infrastructure. These approaches silence the subaltern voice, condemning the insecure other to a condition of bare life, and maintain existing social and political relations. Postcolonial approaches maintain that human security has to be inclusive by engaging local communities, listening to their needs, understanding the local context, and empowering individuals to design and guide projects to enable them to live lives in 'freedom and dignity'. This critique can be further extended to highlight the necessity for NGOs to question their complicity in neoliberal development policies and evolve novel practices that advocate structural change to realize human security as dignity.

Keywords: Japan, Human Security, Critical Security Studies, Myanmar, Subaltern

1. Introduction

In proposing the concept of Critical Human Security Studies (CHSS) in his 2010 article, Newman questioned why Critical Security Studies (CSS) and human security scholars were set against each other. (Newman 2010, 77–94.) Newman noted that CSS and human security should be natural allies as they both aim to challenge orthodox approaches to international security and privilege the individual as the referent of security analysis, yet the two approaches diverged significantly. On the one hand, human security scholars set aside conceptual debates to focus on improving people's well-being. In

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doing so, human security became an amorphous concept to which state elites attached a multitude of different meanings in order to realize their own self-interests at the expense of human beings. Critical security scholars, on the other hand, dismayed by the lack of conceptual clarity of human security, emphasized theorizing over practical measures to support human beings in their daily lives. By marrying critical security studies with the concept and practice of human security to create CHSS, Newman sought to overcome the critiques that bedeviled both approaches. Newman claimed that CHSS would offer pathways to overcome the state-centric nature of human security, challenge structures of domination, and emancipate human beings to realize their potential and ensure their well-being.

This article employs a postcolonial approach to demonstrate that the CHSS project is fundamentally flawed. We argue that CHSS silences the subaltern voice, condemns the insecure other to a condition of bare life, and maintains existing unequal social and political relations. The paper extends this postcolonial critique to examine the case of Japan and assesses how the concept of empowerment has been incorporated into its human security policy in terms of resilience or through the provision of socio-political infrastructure. Though Japanese policymakers have engaged with Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) in an attempt to engage local communities, the case of the Thilawa Special Economic Zone (SEZ) in Myanmar highlights the limitations of Japan's human security policy. Postcolonial approaches maintain that a critical approach to human security has to be inclusive by engaging local communities, listening to their needs, understanding the local context, and empowering individuals to design and guide projects to enable them to live lives in 'freedom and dignity'. The paper concludes by noting that whilst postcolonial scholars provide few clues as to how to engender structural change (Kapoor 2002), relations of domination cannot be overturned if their discursive underpinnings are not challenged. With the national interest as their *raison d'être*, policymakers are unlikely of their own accord to question the notion of human security as resilience. It falls on NGOs to critically reflect on how their own actions substantiate this neoliberal developmental logic and evolve novel practices that do not settle for human security as resilience, but advocate structural change to realize human security as dignity.

2. CHSS, Emancipation and Empowerment

Newman's CHSS project sought to overcome the state-centric and problem-solving approach of human security and the lack of a practical contribution to human wellbeing on the part of CSS advocates by combining the two approaches. Newman began his article by examining how the concept

of human security evolved. The United Nations Development Program (UNDP) advanced the concept of human security in its 1993 “Human Development Report” which focused on the development needs of human beings, including access to food, employment opportunities, and environmental care (UNDP 1993, 2). In its 1994 report, the UNDP subsequently added health, personal, community, and political security to the original three components, and divided the concept into freedom from want and freedom from fear (UNDP 1994, 24-5). Whereas freedom from want concerned issues related to economic development, freedom from fear expressed a need to confront threats that undermined the liberty of individuals and sought to protect their physical well-being. According to the UNDP, the state should be replaced as the key security referent with human beings. Human security was actively adopted by policymakers who perceived it as a label to cover all kinds of strategies to address concerns about human safety and needs. Some scholars and policymakers also welcomed the concept, seeing human security as an opportunity to sanction repressive states until they improved their human rights records, or face armed intervention and regime change if they persisted or to impose a neoliberal reform agenda on developing states in the periphery. (See Chapter two, Tadjbakhsh and Chenoy 2007, for an overview.)

Despite its warm reception amongst some circles, human security has been widely criticized by the broader academic community, which perceived the concept as being too broad and ill-defined to address the myriad of threats that could fall under this label. (Tadjbakhsh and Chenoy, *ibid.*) According to Roland Paris, actors would interpret human security in line with their own interests leading to a plethora of incompatible definitions (Paris 2004, 371). These academics maintained that security and development should be kept separate in order to preserve their analytical clarity and practical utility. Critical IR scholarship also raised concerns about human security, questioning its emancipatory potential (Chandler and Hynek 2011). Thomas argued that the concept only presented problem solving approaches geared to short-term, state-centric policies that respond to the symptoms rather than the underlying causes of insecurity (Thomas 2001, 162-4). These state-centric approaches were also seen to serve the national interests of states at the expense of individuals and local communities (Tadjbakhsh and Chenoy 2007, 29; Newman 2010, p. 88; Christie 2010, 178; Wyn Jones 1999, 99), rather than empowering human beings in need.

Newman then turned his attention to CSS, which sought to reveal how current structures of global governance have evolved, challenge how these structures work in the interests of certain actors, and transform these structures to emancipate those people who toil under them (Cox 1981, 126-55). The CSS project aimed to expose how the existing structures shape how individuals understand and act in the world and to provide an alternative vision of reality (Booth 2007, 247, 338). As Booth argues,

“[e]mancipation is the philosophy, theory, and politics of inventing humanity,”(ibid., 112) of determining how we, the human race, might best live. CSS proponents argue that it is possible to determine what is infor the interests of all human beings, to promote projects in accordance with these interests, and critique alternatives (Ibid., 240-2). At the heart of the CSS project is the concept of immanent critique, which Jones defines as, “[t]he ability to identify immanent, unrealized, or unfulfilled possibilities within the reality of any given order”(Booth 2005, 220-1.) For Jones (ibid, 229) and Booth (Booth 2007, 272-4), this means not only setting out what a future “concrete utopia” might be, but also *engaging in politics* to realize emancipatory objectives today. Emancipation is therefore not an end goal but a continual process of refining how human beings might live to best fulfill their potential that starts now (Jones, 1999, 77).

For CSS proponents, realizing emancipatory objectives requires speaking on behalf of the subaltern. This may be due to physical constraints, such as intimidation by military or police forces, but can also derive from the “false consciousness” of subjects, namely their inability to exercise reason in order to extricate themselves from the myriad ways in which they have been socialized to behave and thereby determine what is best for their own security (Floyd 2007, 330-1; also Booth 2007, 112-3). In such cases, CSS scholars urge their audience to choose sides and intervene by speaking on behalf of the disenfranchised in order to emancipate them (Jones 2001, p. 30; Booth 2007, 110-2; Floyd 2007.) For Floyd, CSS scholars can employ consequentialist ethics to determine what is and is not good for another’s security and thereby “step into the security equation and on behalf of the actors encourage some securitizations and renounce others, depending on the moral rightness of the respective securitization’s consequences” (Floyd 2007, 339).

Whilst CSS proponents provide critiques of the current structure of global governance, they have largely failed to engage policymakers and provide concrete strategies to transform the current order (Booth 2005, 124-5; Booth 2007, 265-6, 268; Wyn Jones 1999, 161.) For Newman, human security offers the possibility for CSS to engage with policymakers and seek ways to pursue an emancipatory agenda that could have a real impact on people’s lives today (Newman 2010). Nonetheless, Newman concurs with CSS proponents that most human beings are unable to challenge structures that undermine their security and therefore need outside support (ibid., 93.) Newman therefore perceives empowerment in the following terms: “human security has at its core *the individual as object*. Some advocates of human security also identify *the individual as the key vehicle* for attaining security through empowerment” (ibid, 93. Emphasis added). Here, the insecure human being is to be identified and rescued rather than being considered as an active subject in conceiving and addressing their insecurity.

From a postcolonial perspective, human security can only claim to be critical if it acknowledges that human security must be articulated by individuals in specific cultural contexts (Shani 2014; Introduction, Pasha 2013). Rather than equating security with emancipation as CSS scholars have done, the emphasis should be on de-securitization; namely shifting security issues back into the domain of everyday politics (Shani 2014, 74-6). Drawing on the work of Giorgio Agamben, Shani argues that it is culture, society, and religion that imbues a life with meaning, or *bios*, as opposed to the human security approach that reduces people to bare life, a state or survival without meaning or political voice; lives that can be killed, but are not worthy of sacrifice (Shani, 2014, Berman, 2007, 30). Postcolonial IR scholars argue that both the CSS and human security projects articulate a neoliberal agenda to transform others in the name of “progress” (Shani 2014; Introduction, Pasha 2013.) This agenda emphasizes autonomy, self-reliance and the realization of self-interest through profit and accumulation at all costs and the repudiation of alternatives (Shani, 2014, Shani, 2007, 17-29.) It distinguishes between the secure, developed world whose inhabitants are “insured” and insecure people in the Third World who are “uninsured” (Duffield 2006, 11, 15.) This regulatory biopolitics works through global governance networks comprising states, international institutions and NGOs, to help the non-insured populations secure their own basic needs, become resilient in the face of perennial threats to their well-being, and contain these threats so that they do not spread to the developed core (Ibid, pp. 15-19, 24-5; Papuvac 2005, 161-3, 171-2).

Though the CHSS project claims to address human insecurities, it “position[s] colonized people as victims, incapable of answering back,” (Loomba 2005, 192; see also, Shani 2014, 77) and reduces them to bare life; echoing Spivak’s argument in her acclaimed article entitled “Can the Subaltern Speak?” (Spivak, 1988). Spivak highlighted how the voices of the women were lost in debates about the early 19th century practice of *sati*, the widow sacrifice, in India. She argued that whilst colonial authorities maintained that they were rescuing women from a harmful practice, the local patriarchy responded that *sati* was an expression of female agency, as the woman had volunteered for self-immolation.³ Echoing the approach of colonial officials, Booth details the false consciousness of communities who support the practice of Female Genital Mutilation (Booth 2007, 112-3), but fails to acknowledge how this practice is disputed by members of such communities (Soy 2014.) Though critiqued for being “defeatist,” Spivak’s claim expresses the “constructed, domesticated nature of the

³ Since the publication of ‘Can the Subaltern Speak’, Spivak has substantially reviewed and clarified her work. Her argument is not that the subaltern cannot ‘talk’, but rather that when the subaltern does talk, they are not heard. The ways in which the subaltern articulates their position is mediated by the colonial situation in which they exist and their message is re-inscribed with meaning in line with the hegemonic discourse of the colonizer. The subaltern remains perpetually outside this hegemonic discourse. See *Subaltern Talk: Interview with the Editors*, Landry and Maclean 1996, 287-92.

‘other’,” forcing the reader to question in whose interests discourses of emancipation work and to destabilize them (Polat 2011, 1269). Rather than emancipation being “the theory and practice of inventing humanity, *with a view to freeing people*, as individuals and collectivities, from contingent and structural oppressions,”(Booth 2005, 181, Emphasis added.) emancipation starts with open-ended dialogues that nurture an appreciation of and respect for alternative visions of our common humanity (Hutchings 2011, 641-3, 647). Humanity is invented with others, not for them. From a postcolonial perspective, how we move from identifying human beings as the key object or referent of security to them being the acting subject of security is central to the concept of empowerment.

3. A Post-colonial Critique of Empowerment in Japan’s Human Security Policy

Japan’s human security policy has also incorporated the concept of empowerment in problematic ways, echoing the approach of CSS proponents. The concept of empowerment entered Japan’s human security discourse following the publication of the Commission on Human Security’s (CHS) Human Security Now (HSN) report on 1 May 2003. The CHS was co-chaired by Amartya Sen and Sadako Ogata and the HSN report stressed a human centric approach to security that encompassed both freedom from fear and freedom from want as well as emphasizing an individual’s freedom to enjoy a life of dignity and respect (Fukushima 2010, 95; Osa 2012, 98.) Ogata and Sen maintained that human security required both the top-down protection of the state and the bottom-up empowerment of the people (Fukushima 2010, 95, and Ogata and Cels 2003, 273-82). The CHS failed to clearly define human security, preferring to see it as an all-inclusive concept that had to be flexible in terms of how different cultures around the world could interpret it (Osa 2012, 98). For Ogata and Sen, human security should make practical contributions to peoples’ lives around the world.

The practical approach endorsed by the CHS was echoed in Japan’s revision of its official development assistance (ODA) policy. This is not surprising as Ogata became the president of the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA), which coordinates Japan’s ODA program. JICA incorporated human security into its mission statement and ODA disbursement practices (JICA 2010; Kurusu and Kersten 2011, 129-30,) and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MOFA) revised the ODA Charter in 2003 to include a human security focus (MOFA, 2009; Kurusu and Kersten 2011, 128). Following the publication of MOFA’s medium-term policy report in February 2005, Japan’s ODA policy incorporated the CHS’s concepts of protection and empowerment and aimed to involve NGOs and grassroots organizations more (Fukushima 2010, 98-100).

Despite purporting to work from the bottom up, Japan’s human security policy fails to adequately

engage local voices and continues to perceive human security as state-centric (MOFA 2008). Proponents of Japan's human security policy argue that its results-orientated focus is founded on both a top-down approach that builds the capacity of states to ensure the safety and well-being of their citizens and emphasizes the role of international "experts," as well as a bottom-up approach that helps to inform the development of human security policies (Hoshino and Satoh, 2013). How proponents of Japan's human security policy interpret this top-down and bottom-up approach highlights an insufficient engagement with local communities and individuals to ascertain their human security needs and the nature of the policy response, despite 'empowerment' being a central aspect of Japan's human security policy.

Hoshino, for example, sets aside local communities when he argues that human security comprises ownership in terms of bottom-up input from states and partnership in terms of top-down policy/aid from the international community (Hoshino 2006, 28.) By contrast, Ogata Sadako, a key figure in the development of Japan's human security policy, described her work in the CHS as bringing "together the 'bottom-up' socio-economic development programs with the strengthened "top-down" protection inputs by the state" (JICA 2006). From Ogata's perspective, "empowering people" equates to "guaranteeing them education, jobs, access to information, health care, and provision of a social safety net" (ibid.,) so that they can "develop the capabilities for making informed choices and acting on their own behalf" (Ogata and Cels 2003, 274). It is not apparent how individuals and communities can have an effective voice in the provision of these "socio-economic development programs." Instead, Ogata argues that a top-down approach is first needed to empower the victims of human insecurity so that they can then make "better choices" and voice their concerns. Takasu Yukio, then Japan's UN representative, perceives "empowerment" in rather different terms, stating that "[e]mpowerment strategies help people to increase their resilience so that they can survive downturns and difficult conditions. In other words, human security puts the emphasis on prevention through empowerment of individuals and communities"(MOFA 2008.)⁴ In Takasu's speech the focus is less on empowerment in terms of creating a more prosperous future for individuals, as Ogata stresses, and more on securing people's bare needs so they can fend for themselves. The myriad ways in which Japanese policymakers have defined "empowerment" has allowed them to keep the focus of Japan's human security policy ambiguous and malleable.

From the 1980s, international donors criticized the Japanese government for failing to cultivate

⁴ This position has been critiqued by David Chandler, who argues that we have entered a post-interventionist phase in which Western policymakers maintain that it is no longer their responsibility to intervene and save others. Instead, the emphasis is on helping people around the world be more resilient to threats to their security. See Chandler 2012, 213-229.

a human-centered approach into their foreign development policy through the inclusion of NGOs (Gilson and Purvis 2003, pp. 202-204; Osa 2003, 251-265; Kim Reimann, 2003, 298-315). Critics considered NGOs to be able to challenge state-centric approaches to human security, as NGOs can ensure the effectiveness, continuity and transparency of aid through coordination and dialogue (Noda 2006, 34-7; Osa 2012, 127; Fukushima 2010, 114; Hoshino 2006, 29-30; Gilson and Purvis, 2003, 193-207). Noda argues that NGOs provide the key link to place humans as the subject of human security rather than the object, helping to organize networks and empower humans, and acting as an alternative service provider to the state (Noda 2006, 35). NGOs are better at working at the local level, as well as being able to act as watchdogs and advocates for change (Gilson and Purvis 2003, 199, 203-205). In response to these critiques, Japanese policymakers attempted to engage local communities by involving NGOs in their human security policy to empower people, through such initiatives as the Grant Assistance for Grassroots Human Security Projects (GGP). JICA and MOFA identified clear roles for NGOs in responding to conflicts and natural disasters, as well as in terms of training and education and worked with the Japan NGO Center for International Cooperation (JANIC) in these areas (Fukushima 2010, 105, 113). Some Japanese NGOs have enthusiastically collaborated with the government. Bridge Asia Japan (BAJ), for example, became a JICA development partner in June 2000 and has consulted regularly with MOFA (Ibid., p. 115).

Though the Japanese government has provided grassroots funding for NGOs, MOFA officials remain hesitant to work with non-governmental actors on state policy (Yoshida 2004, 142). In addition, Osa ascribes the side-lining of NGOs in the official Japanese discourse on human security as being due to a lack of media attention to international crises and a tradition of the Japanese government tackling public safety issues (Osa 2003, 255-2600. Indeed, since the Meiji era, the Japanese state has always exercised a significant degree of oversight over civil society in a bid to employ civil society to achieve the national interest (Garon, 2003, 42-62). Japan's bureaucracy continues to control the behavior of NGOs through financial, regulatory, and legal means and hampers the operations of NGOs that challenge state policy (Pekkanen, 2003, 116-34).

Even when the Japanese government has incorporated NGOs into their human security policy, they have simply subcontracted work to the non-profit sector to fulfill its security and development needs on the cheap. Some Japanese NGOs are therefore reluctant to label their work as human security, as they see it as a government term that is only added after a policy has been implemented rather than guiding that policy (Fukushima 2010, p. 114). For example, the Japan International Volunteer Center (JVC) are more guarded about participating in government-led human security policies, perceiving that as human security is often employed arbitrarily and inconsistently, it can undermine trust that

NGOs have garnered at the local level or even work counter to the efforts of NGOs (ibid., 115).

Although dialogue between the Japanese government and NGOs has improved, Japanese NGOs still have little say in the quality and quantity of ODA, and, compared with other donor countries, Japanese NGOs are allocated a small fraction of the ODA budget (Noda 2006, 36). As Ohashi Masaaki, a JANIC trustee, argues, the Abe Shinzō administration's 2015 Development Cooperation Charter has not incorporated comments from Japanese NGOs. Instead, he states that the Charter is "very nationalistic and narrow minded, with large gray zones around the use of ODA for prohibited military purposes, and prioritizes the economic growth of developing countries as well as short-term benefits for Japanese private companies" (Ohashi, 2016, 341). Once again, when it comes to Japan's official interpretation of human security, the state side-lines individual communities in the policymaking process, as postcolonial scholars warn and as can be observed in the following section, in the case of Japanese investments into the Thilawa SEZ in Myanmar.

4. Developing "Asia's Last Frontier" – Japanese Investment in Myanmar

Japan's development of the Thilawa Special Economic Zone (SEZ) in Myanmar highlights many of the issues outlined in this paper. Together with JICA, Mitsubishi, Marubeni and Sumitomo Corporations acquired a 49% stake in the development of an industrial site in Thilawa, situated 23 kilometers from downtown Yangon (Yomiuri Shimbun 2015a). Dubbed 'Asia's last frontier', Myanmar is depicted in the Japanese media as a golden opportunity for Japanese companies to establish new production sites and benefit from a cheap but well-educated workforce, a growing consumer market in the heart of Southeast Asia, as well as tax breaks and customs exemptions (Yomiuri Shimbun 2015a; Yomiuri Shimbun 2014). Such advantages have off-set a raft of problems, including corruption, as well as a lack of water and electricity supply, that had previously deterred investors (Yomiuri Shimbun 2014). As democratization proceeded in Myanmar, following the 'Saffron Revolution' of September 2007, so the Japanese government and industry was eager to counter Chinese efforts to seize economic opportunities in the country, especially following the establishment of the China-led Asian Infrastructure and Investment Bank (AIIB) (Yomiuri Shimbun 2015b). Japanese officials have also assisted the Myanmar government by contributing to reforms of the country's legal system to foster a more conducive environment for investment (Roughneen 2014).

Japanese investments and ODA in Myanmar should abide by JICA's guidelines that were written with the concept of human security firmly in mind. Although Keidanren emphasized the importance of human as well as infrastructure development in Myanmar (Yomiuri Shimbun 2013), this did not

extend to the concept of human security as the Japan-based NGO Mekong Watch highlighted in its reporting on the Thilawa SEZ.⁵ Mekong Watch aims to represent ‘the voices of people affected by Japanese-financed development projects in the Mekong Region to relevant decision makers in Japan’(Mekong Watch 2016). Mekong Watch began monitoring JICA’s interest in investing in the Thilawa SEZ in the Spring of 2014, noting as early as 24 April 2014 that JICA was not abiding by its environmental and social guidelines concerning the distribution of aid and had failed to meet with local residents to discuss their concerns (Mekong Watch 2014a). According to the NGO, JICA officials continued to ignore the villagers’ appeals to discuss the development of the Thilawa SEZ despite the villagers raising serious concerns pertaining to the coercive means employed by the Burmese authorities to force Thilawa residents to give up their land, as well as the failure to adequately compensate the residents or find an appropriate relocation site (Mekong Watch 2014b). U Myint Thwin, the lawyer representing the villagers, noted that the government seized the land in 1997, but had not abided by Myanmar’s Land Acquisition Act and had required residents to pay land ownership tax until 2012 (Mekong Watch 2014c). The claims made by the residents were supported by a report conducted by Physicians for Human Rights (PHR) (Physicians for Human Rights (PHR) 2014). The PHR’s director of programs, Widney Brown said,

[T]he Thilawa project exemplifies how devastating forced displacement can be on local communities when governments completely disregard human rights laws for the sake of a business development. The Burmese and Japanese governments should work to improve the living conditions for those displaced by this misguided venture, and ensure that this disaster is not repeated when hundreds of other families are relocated for future development projects (Mekong Watch 2014d).

In the words of U Mya Hlaing, leader of the Thilawa Social Development Group, a community organization protesting against the SEZ, “the people in Thilawa continue to suffer, but the Myanmar government isn’t listening and JICA isn’t listening. They don’t seem to care that the project is violating their own guidelines” (Mekong Watch 2014b).

On 4 June 2014, the Thilawa Social Development Group submitted a formal complaint to JICA requesting that an investigation be conducted into JICA’s funding of the Thilawa SEZ (Mekong Watch 2014e). Expressing his motivation for filing the complaint, Khine Win noted the failure of JICA to ensure that the residents’ livelihoods were maintained. He stated,

⁵ The case of Thilawa is not uncommon. As Myanmar has democratized since 2011 under the Presidency of Thein Sein, a parliamentary commission recorded 745 cases of land grabs across the country. (Roughneen 2014).

[T]he houses they built in Myaing Tha Yar [the relocation site] were so small and poor quality, so I decided to take compensation instead so I could build a better house for my family. Now I am in debt. And because it took so long to build my house, I lost my contract with the factory where I worked. This new life is very difficult for me (Ibid).

In response, JICA began its first ever investigation into a development project since its Guidelines for Environmental and Social Considerations were passed in 2010 (Mekong Watch 2014f). As part of the investigation, JICA's chief examiner, Dr. Harashina Sachihiko, met with residents to discuss their concerns (Mekong Watch 2014c). The case was even taken up in the Japanese Diet on 12 May where Mr. Ishibashi Michihiro of the then Democratic Party of Japan (DPJ), quizzed Tanaka Akihiko, the head of JICA, and Kishida Fumio, the Minister of Foreign Affairs, about the failure of JICA to abide by its guidelines (Mekong Watch 2014g).⁶ Despite the attention the case received, the Burmese authorities continued to intimidate Thilawa residents in a bid to compel them to drop their complaint (Mekong Watch 2014h).

The complaint was ultimately rejected by JICA's Examiners' Office on 4 November 2014, which found that JICA was "not in non-compliance" with its own guidelines, despite emphasizing the need for improved dialogue with local residents (Annen and Harashina 2014). The local residents responded that JICA's examination had simply accepted the Myanmar government's position on land rights and had not properly evaluated issues relating to sewage and unsanitary water quality at the relocation site (Mekong Watch 2014i). The Thilawa residents voiced specific complaints against the manner in which JICA's report was produced. Mya Hlaing, for example, stated that "[Thilawa residents] mortgaged their houses and bought motorbikes for taxi businesses, because they don't have any job opportunities and they have nothing to eat... But it was written [in the JICA report] as if people bought motorbikes because they got extra cash" (Yen 2014). Though the examiner's report did not accept JICA's responsibility for the damage to people's livelihoods, the report did suggest a number of improvements that needed to be made at the relocation site, including to the sewage system and water quality (Mekong Watch 2015). From January 2015, Mekong Watch acknowledged that JICA worked with the Myanmar government and Thilawa residents to help the residents to pay off outstanding debts, organize microfinancing for residents to start their own businesses, provide vocational training so that residents would be more likely to find work in the new SEZ, and oversee improvements to the sewage and water supply systems at the relocation site (Ibid.).

⁶ There was, however, limited reporting on the objections of Thilawa residents in the Japanese media, especially when compared to the amount of coverage given over to Japanese investment and competition with China in the region. See Asahi Shimbun 2014.

The case of the Thilawa SEZ highlights a number of issues relating to the problem of developing a CHSS project along the lines that Newman suggests. Focusing first on the Japanese government, by its own admission, JICA did not do enough to ensure the human security of Thilawa residents following its support for the SEZ. JICA failed to discuss the development project with local residents or to adequately consider their claims that the Myanmar authorities had coerced them into giving up their land. The fact that JICA undertook its own report rather than allowing an independent inquiry to review its conduct further demonstrates the inadequacy of Japan's human security policy from a critical perspective. The report itself rewrote the experiences of Thilawa residents, as Mya Hlaing's comment above about JICA portraying residents squandering their money on motorbikes highlights. Once it became clear from the report that JICA's approach to financing the Thilawa SEZ had been less than adequate and that more had to be done to ensure the welfare of the community at the relocation site, the organization responded with programs and infrastructure designed to increase the resilience of the residents to the substandard conditions they now faced.

The activities of Mekong Watch also need to be critically evaluated, however. The NGO undoubtedly perceived their activities as working on behalf of Thilawa residents to publicize their cause, support residents' calls for an investigation and help to push the Japanese government to respond to their basic needs at the relocation site. Nevertheless, the NGO acted as a problem solving organization that aimed to adjust JICA's approach to development, rather than questioning the approach and seeking out alternatives to development. The interaction between Thilawa residents and Mekong Watch demonstrates how the residents were encouraged to articulate their concerns in terms of compensation and legal obligations; a language that adhered to JICA's developmental approach. The fact that Mekong Watch praised JICA's efforts following the report to provide debt relief, microfinancing, vocational support and improvements to water management at the relocation site is indicative of a Japanese NGO that has internalized their government's development policy and merely seeks to smooth its rough edges for those people whose lives have been bulldozed away.

5. Conclusion

Newman's CHSS project seeks a potential pathway for developing the concept of human security and to improve policies aimed to ameliorate people's well-being and safety, but the project is based on flawed foundations. This paper has engaged with postcolonial perspectives to demonstrate that far from empowering local communities, CSS proponents seek to emancipate people by speaking for them. Similarly, Japan's human security policy has adopted the notion of empowerment without

involving the local communities which Japan's policies allegedly seek to secure. In so doing, both the CSS and Japanese approaches to human security establish new patterns of biopolitical governance over local communities whose existence is reduced to a bare life.

The case of the Thilawa SEZ demonstrates how a hegemonic discourse determines how development is understood and the parameters according to which it can be challenged. Displaced Thilawa residents were directed to articulate their grievances in terminology that corresponded to JICA's complaints procedure. JICA's report absolved the organization of wrongdoing and instead placed the blame on the residents themselves. At the same time, JICA's report noted that adjustments to the situation of Thilawa residents at the relocation site were needed to make them more resilient. Mekong Watch, the Japanese NGO that defined itself as representing the displaced residents, praised JICA's actions and sought no alternative to the construction of the SEZ. Instead, the villagers of Thilawa were offered the possibility of working in the SEZ, a project based on exploiting the human and material resources of Myanmar, dubbed 'Asia's last frontier'.

New frontiers will be found in time as the developmental machine rolls on and over ever cheaper pastures, displacing lives as it goes. Alternatives to development are certainly needed to counter these trends. A truly critical human security needs to seek out and elaborate alternative discourses wherever they may be found. It necessitates a transfer of knowledge and skills when these are requested and a willingness to challenge dominant and repressive structures at the regional, state and international levels. It has to evolve an inclusive approach that engages local communities, listens to their needs, understands the local context, and empowers individuals to design and guide projects to enable them to live lives in 'freedom and dignity'. This requires at the very least respectful and open-ended dialogue with local communities and individuals about their traditions, culture, society, religion, livelihoods and aspirations, as well as constant self-reflection and a readiness to appreciate different ways of experiencing life as a human-being.

At the same time, whilst postcolonial approaches tend to focus on the local level and provide few clues as to how to engender structural change (Kapoor, 2002), relations of domination cannot be overturned if their discursive underpinnings are not challenged. With the national interest as their *raison d'être*, policymakers are unlikely of their own accord to question the notion of human security as resilience. Though operating within legal and budgetary constraints imposed by the Japanese government, Japan-based NGOs should critically reflect on how their own actions substantiate a neoliberal developmental logic. In so doing, these NGOs can instead evolve novel practices that challenge the equation of human security with resilience and advocate structural change to realize human security as dignity.

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Understanding Human Security in African Agrarian Societies: The Case for a Cooperative Model

Rangarirai Muchetu¹

Abstract

The concept of Human Security (HS) gained momentum in the aftermath of the cold war. Its central idea was conscientization of nations of the need to refocus their concerns from territorial threats (such as those presented by the cold war) to individual-centred threats (in terms of survival, livelihood and dignity). In Africa where privatization of development or aid is widespread, HS allows local voices to define for themselves what security means instead of the state/development agencies. The article looked at the concept of HS and how it is understood in Africa and argue that it has the greatest potential to increase the creativity of the people as well as their dignity and to reduce threats to their survival. It has the equal potential to organize and develop multilateral cooperation between the people, the states and international organizations. This narrative play extremely well with that of cooperatives especially in the agricultural sector. Cooperatives are a relatively old idea, and like the HS, have often been neglected as a development approach. Their unit of analysis is the individual at the household level, whose vote represents a significant platform/method for airing their voices. By nature, these cooperatives enhance freedoms from want and freedom from fear. The article brings to light the possibility and the challenges of applying HS (a relatively new concept) in an African country, Zimbabwe and how cooperatives can be used to overcome the constraints. Using an in-depth literature review, qualitative and quantitative data collected by the author around farming communities in Goromonzi, Zimbabwe, this paper presents an argument on how agricultural cooperatives can be used to enhance HS in agrarian societies.

Keywords: Human Security, Cooperatives, agrarian societies, community development, Zimbabwe

Introduction

Humanity has faced diverse threats over the course of history. In the first half of the last century, human unwell-being manifested themselves in the form of wars, racism, inequality, poverty, drought, food insecurity, unemployment, economic instability and unfair trade practices to mention but a few. Although several of these challenges persisted into the latter half of the century, other new issues such as terrorism, food safety, inequality, natural disasters, and those related to environment and climate change began to take centre stage (Hernandez, et al. 2018). However, these threats have taken shape

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in varying intensity depending on the period, social class, geographical region, race and religion.

Prior to the end of the cold war, solutions to these issues were conceptualized at the national and bilateral-level in which the government provided people's security based on national boundary lines (sovereignty); and multilateral solutions were thought to undermine state sovereignty. The concept of Human Security (HS) faces challenges in this respect. This is comprehensible in the African context in which several externally-led destabilization campaigns increased socio-political polarization (Mkandawire 2011, 31-33). Post-cold war, African nations were concerned with nation-building and with this came the national and sovereignty questions (Moyo and Yeros 2011, 3-7). HS recognizes that focusing only on sovereignty often fosters havens for gross human 'wrong-doings'. Thus, a globalist form of sovereignty in which all communities can claim a common well-being (protection) and self-constructed destiny (empowerment) is required. However, there is hope, even though the global north is building boundaries around its national borders (USA under Trump and Brexit in Europe), the global south seeks an alternative path. Various nations have given in to regionalism as seen through the surrender of some sovereignty to regional authorities (Mkandawire 2011, 31) such as the Southern African Development Community (SADC), the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) and the Association of South East Asian Nations (ASEAN). This departure from the traditional norm gives scope for the acceptance and adoption of HS in the global south.

HS, although relatively new, has permeated development discourses particularly in East Asia where a few governments have incorporated the concept into their official policy documents. However, the concept has gained diminutive traction among African scholars, lobbyist and policy makers. This study seeks to contribute by analysing the concept from an African perspective. The HS concept attracted the attention of the Japanese government and scholars so much that it has been at the forefront of its development initiative (in resource terms as well as in its promotion) (Mine, Gomez and Muto 2019, 9). After the release of the Ogata-Sen report of 2003 (Commission on Human Security 2003), Japan incorporated the concept in its Overseas Development Assistance (ODA) to help in fostering peace and development in numerous countries especially in its priority region of Asia. What is mostly appealing to this article is Japan's policy to support self-help efforts or individual/community-centred development.

In order to address direct threats to individuals such as conflicts, disasters, infectious diseases, it is important not only to consider the global, regional, and national perspectives, but also to consider the perspective of human security, which focuses on individuals. Accordingly, Japan will implement ODA to strengthen the capacity of local communities

through human resource development. [...] Japan will extend assistance for the protection and empowerment of individuals. (Government of Japan 2003, 2).

Although the nature of threats in East Asia may differ from those in Africa and the rest of the world, they can fundamentally be tackled with the same concept. While issues such as typhoons, heat waves, earthquakes and torrential rains (floods and mudslides) in Asia may be differentiated from droughts, outbreak of pests (locust, worms, birds) and crop/animal diseases in Africa, the reality is that they are all environmental and climate change related natural disasters. And these issues require multilateral cooperation and active participation of the affected people regardless of national, regional, racial or class boundaries (Hernandez, et al. 2018). This article argues for the use of farmer cooperative organizations within the concept of human security to solve contradictions in the agrarian societies which house over 60% of the populations in the global south. This is because cooperatives enable organized participation of people in the processes that inform the solutions to their problems. This article achieved this by discussing the evolution of the human security concept in the world, in Asia, in sub-Saharan Africa. The article then give a brief introduction to cooperatives and try to locate them within the human security movement. Using primary case-study data collected in Zimbabwe, this article provides some empirical evidence to illustrate the high potential of cooperatives to achieve higher and sustainable human security levels.

1. Discourses and experiences of Human Security: An overview

Human security is a framework of public action to address human unfreedoms by combining top-down protection with bottom-up empowerment (at state and individual/community levels) (Hernandez, et al. 2018, 1). Given that at the heart of the HS concept lies the individual or the community, security should be delivered to the people not by a state security apparatus alone, but by people or communities themselves, so a considerable level of ownership and control of the process is necessary. Evans (Evans 2004, 265) argues that the concept of HS has been around for many years and has often been presented as a political tool, a theory, a policy, and a framework. In this section, the article discusses the historical trajectory of security and the birth of the concept of HS.

1.1 Evolution of Human Security in the World, Asia and Africa

Prior to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR), a few security frameworks existed across various geopolitical divides. During the colonization of Africa, the conquerors managed to push

a false notion of security, that of protecting various tribes in Africa from wars against other tribes thereby justifying European invasion (Ndadinda 2011, 303). When the WWI and WWII broke out, threats became global and the need to set a global agenda on security became apparent (Mine, Gomez and Muto 2019, 2). Roosevelt's famous 1941 speech in which he declared four fundamental freedoms (speech, religion, fear and want) became the base of human rights development frameworks as seen and applied them today. The **human rights** framework began to take shape in 1948 (through to the 1950s). From the 1960s through to the early 1990s, the **human needs and human development** approaches took center stage, not as a replacement for the human rights concept but as a compliment.

These concepts of human needs and development recognized the importance of economic development and the need to raise the wealth of the nation. Thus, the focus was still at the national level; the major unit of measurement was growth in GDP and industrialization much to the neglect of the more humane issues such as individual needs and dignity. Although it managed to solve a few issues in the world, Asia and Africa, the framework has failed to reduce the amount of poverty and, in worse cases, has failed to reduce the amount of armed conflicts across the Asian, middle Eastern and African states. These frameworks assumed governments to be adequate channels of security. Additionally, the human rights approach was heavily linked to the geopolitical dictates of the post-world war and the ensuing cold war. Since the concepts were conceived during a neo-liberal period, it is understandable that they were not concerned about the patterns of distribution of wealth and the rising inequalities across and within nations (Ndadinda 2011, 309). Human well-being must go deeper than just increases in wage rates and an expanding GDP, and it must move from a global view, down through the nationalistic lens to the community or the individual (Figure 1).

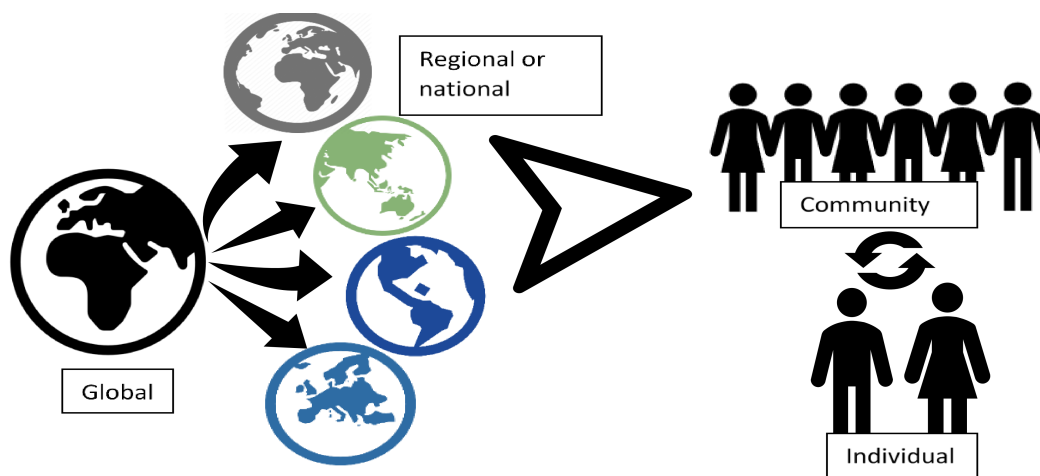


Figure 1: Paradigm shift in the focus of security from national to individual or community

Source: Constructed by Arthur (2018)

HS was born to compliment the issues of state security, enhance human rights, and strengthen human development and human needs (Commission on Human Security 2003, 2). From an economic development point of view, human security calls for the mitigation of neo-liberal concepts of development and to alleviate their negative effects on the people (especially the rural peasants). This is a direct point of convergence with the cooperative movement as defined by Chayanov (Chayanov, 1991) (see section 3).

Evans (Evans 2004, 266) points out that the understanding of HS also depends on how threats are defined and weighted. The particularity of the threat should inform the solutions. In this respect, one may ask what the characteristics of the threats in Africa, in the agrarian society, and to the farmers are. How can these be solved? For so long, such threats as poverty and exploitation have dominated the peasantry; and development programs and/or frameworks have failed to solve them. Attributing some of the failure to the hubristic nature of the state on one side and disorganization of the agrarian communities on the other, Scott wrote; ‘...the state, as I make abundantly clear, is the vexed institution that is the ground of both our freedoms and our unfreedoms’ (Scott 1998, 7). In the context of rural people, a program that improves their survival and livelihood may lead to an undignified existence, reducing the level of HS. The inclusion of the ‘dignity aspect’ contributes to mainstreaming the life experience of the subaltern in the human security discourses (Mine, Gomez and Muto 2019, 4).

1.2 Weaknesses of Human Security

Critics of HS argue that, just like its predecessors, the concept sounds good in speeches but extremely difficult to implement or put into practice (Sen 2009, 227). The problem lies in the definition of the concept which has been termed too ambiguous, vague and too broad to put into actionable perspective (Paris 2001, 87-88, Evans 2004, 262-263, Ajakaiye and Dercon 2008, Ndadinda 2011, 311). It is accused of not providing a straight solution to the problems, instead it outlines a framework that lets people establish the solution themselves (Evans 2004, 263). HS is also said to consider everything as important for development whereas other approaches advance prioritization. For example, some approaches highlight that it is more important for states to attain political and civil freedoms ahead of economic, social and individual/collective freedoms. One of the major hurdles that HS has had since its conception has been the fact that many national governments have thought of it as an antinomy to national sovereignty and national security. The fear has been that individual freedoms could lead to ‘too autonomous communities/individuals’ that threaten the traditional order of social hierarchy and resource distribution (Ren 2016, Mine, Gomez and Muto 2019, 3-4).

However, it has been argued that the broadness and the ambiguity of the concept is its greatest

strength. The concept does not do away with the need for state protection, but it adds in the need to empower the individuals or communities from below. This works also to reduce excessive government power on the communities (Mine, Gomez and Muto 2019). It links all the issues in development and provides a theoretical platform/concept that enables the holistic solutions to these issues to be treated under the same framework and under the same priority tags (Ndadinda 2011, 312).

1.3 Experiences in Asia

Although HS has been institutionalized in Japan, the same cannot be said for other Asian countries. The concept was discussed in Thailand to such an extent that a ministry was named after it, the same situation was observed in the Philippines where they went further and developed a HS index (Mine, Gomez and Muto 2019, 8). The concept has always steered debates in such countries as South Korea and Indonesia as well. In South Asian countries such as India, Pillay (Pillay 2016, 45) argues that the concept of HS closely resonates with various ancient Indian beliefs. If institutionalized it could be an alternative to solving inequality and such things as farmer suicides which are rampant in India's agrarian structure. However, experiences from China and Cambodia closely resemble those experienced in African countries and hence are of interest to this article.

Ren (Ren 2016, 113-116) writes of a convergence between China's practices and the idea of HS. There is a growing realization that human and military security are clearly separate but complimentary. In China, HS is conceptualized as non-traditional security, one not concerned with war or peace or military-related activities, but rather with the economy, society, culture and environment, and hence, the society or the people are the major focus of the concepts. The concept, just like in China and India, is not common in Cambodia, but HS-like methods and projects are prevalent (Sovachana and Behan 2019, 26). In addition to human rights violations, disease, starvation, displacement of people, deforestation, grinding poverty, Cambodia farmers also face such threats as land grabs. Even though the country has followed a growth trajectory over the last decades, this growth has come at the expense of human security as seen through rapid environmental degradation, limited liberties and unequal wealth distribution (ibid.). Given the need to keep growth rates positive, and due to corruption, rural communities have been displaced to pave way for the large-scale 'productive' companies, a phenomenon that is also affecting many livelihoods in sub-Saharan Africa.

1.4 Contemporary Human Security movements in Africa

The struggle to control/manage the use of limited resources leads to conflicts and wars. Just like in many parts of the world, there is no one single cause of conflict in Africa, though a more detailed

analysis reveals a pattern of causes that can be underlined as generic. At the heart of these conflicts lies inequality, economic decline and state collapse worsened by the legacies of colonial rule and the negative effects of the political economy of the cold war (DFID 2001, 6). The more the focus falls on the individual/community-level causes of conflict, the more it is realized that they are rooted in the need to a sustainable and dignified livelihood. Africa's population is one tenth of the global population but home to a third of the poorest people. On this continent, extreme poverty is double that of the global average, and GDP growth has regressed over the past 40 years (Poku, Renwick and Porto 2007, 1160). Against this backdrop, discussions of economic human security are vital. Radical scholars assert that, in the African context, economic security (economic democracy) is more important than political democracy or sovereign security arguing that economic security is in fact a prerequisite to political/nationalistic sovereignty. Reducing bad governance is key in fostering development, but that should not be the sole focus because this may yield negative development (as done by aid over the last thirty years) (D. Moyo 2009). It may be true that in countries like the Democratic Republic of Congo and in Somalia, the priority should be to restore the political order, but in the rest, ensuring economic security is crucial.

In their conceptualisation of the threats that face Africa today, Moyo & Mine (Moyo and Mine 2016, 3-4) highlight that African conflicts originates from differences in religion, politics and the negative effect of the neo-liberal economic agenda. The deepening liberal democratic agenda has led to retarded economic growth which led to deeper human insecurity. The greatest threat to agriculture is the continued increase in land concentrations evidenced by increased large-scale farming and agribusiness. This phenomenon is single-handedly responsible for some of the continent's conflicts, political violence and renewed geopolitical militarization (Moyo and Mine 2016, 6). The prolonged and persistent new forms of dispossession (land grabs) and exploitation (production contracts) requires new ways or new forms of solutions (resistance) that places the agrarian peasants at the centre. Violence on human beings goes beyond physical, but can also be economic violence, political violence, and social violence. Each type of violence presents obstacles to achieving higher levels of HS (Moyo and Mine 2016, 3-7). A lot of African agrarian societies are faced with economic and social violence.

While the term, HS is still new to the African landscape, the fundamental principles have always been practised. This is the universality of the concept. Although HS has not been called HS in African communities, it surely has been practised under different names (Moyo and Mine 2016). Gradually, African leaders and development agents realized that development was a vital cog in the achievement of HS (Poku, Renwick and Porto 2007, 1155). Furthermore, it is becoming clearer that this development should be achieved through a coordination of various stakeholders who may employ

different approaches. The key is cooperation between these different actors who can be categorized as the government, the market and the community (Hayami and Godo 2005, 310-343). This is the reason why human security is slowly gaining ground and is said to be omnipresence in the Sustainable Development Goals 2030 (SDGs). The SDG goals are linked more to economic emancipation than to national sovereignty.

2. Human Security in Zimbabwe

Just like in India and China, the phrase ‘human security’ has not been used directly in development policy language but it resonates well with the Zimbabwean (African) concept of *ubuntu* in the Bantu language. The Shona word for *ubuntu* is *unhu* and is usually used in the axiom '*munhu munhu nekuda kwevanhu*', which means a person is only human if they recognize the humanity of others (Samkange 1980). The concept has three value sets, *i)* to recognize others as human beings *ii)* human life supersedes all material things such as wealth *iii)* all leaders hold power at the will of the people. Just like HS, *unhu* puts the individual at the centre. A person is always recognized as a person irrespective of the strength of kith and kinship. These three values have always been practiced in Zimbabwean communities. They are a vital cog in the value system that informed establishment and management of formal and non-formal establishments such as legal institutions (constitution), cooperative societies and various social movements (Ibid).

Human security threats in Zimbabwe include unemployment, historical injustices and post-war violence, election violence, corruption, sanctions, cash crisis, Economic Structural Adjustment Program (ESAP) effects, hunger, diseases, and droughts (climate change) (Hove 2017, 47). Local and international media occasionally place politics as the biggest causes of HS threats especially the way the state carried out the ESAP, the war in DRC and the land reform program. The land reform in particular did not sit well with western powers who control the financial markets. Over the past 25 years, the Zimbabwe economy has shrunk by more than 50% and the hardest hit are the people in the rural areas. The land reform initiated in the year 2000 was met with international backlashes since it grossly violated private property rights; the US-imposed sanction on Zimbabwe both directly and indirectly crippled the financial sector. And without finance to start production, newly resettled farmers could not resuscitate the agricultural sector, and hence the economy itself. The little funding for agriculture that came was in the form of exploitative contracts which some scholars read as part of the new scramble for African resources (Moyo, Jha and Yeros 2012). However, very little was produced locally and all the foreign currency on the market soon disappeared to buy basic commodities

from other countries, thereby worsening the situation (this situation has persisted until the present day).

It is against this background that the article argue that the threats found in the agrarian societies in Zimbabwe are mostly to do with market inefficiencies (for services, funding, inputs and outputs), exploitation (from financial capitalist companies), poverty and high transaction cost for agricultural production. The study further argue that these issues can be solved using the cooperative approach/system and empirical evidence is presented to substantiate this (see section 6).

3. Overview of Agricultural Cooperatives

Although cooperatives are a simple and old development approach, very little is known about them in development discourses. Yet, through the various periods of the worst threats to humanity such as the WWI & II, the International Cooperative Alliance (ICA) was one of the few international organisations that were able to survive these global geopolitical rifts. This is because it was more concerned about individual member security than national sovereign security (which drove the world war) (Lars 1996). In simple terms, cooperatives are autonomous and independent organizations with open/voluntary membership and whose control is democratic. These organizations are not motivated by profiteering, which sets them apart from the corporates and ideally places them in a position to fight poverty, exploitation and under-development. エラー! 参照元が見つかりません。 shows a list of cooperatives principles as recommended by the ICA.



Figure 1: Principles of cooperative as recommended by the ICA.

Source: (Graphics.coop 2018)

Although cooperation is part of every society, the first formal cooperatives were recorded in

England by the Rochdale pioneers, and the concept soon spread to the Raiffeisen and Schulze-Delitzsch cooperatives in Germany (Thompson 1994, Klein 2009). The idea would later spread to other areas, albeit with differentiated localization levels (modifications that had varying results) such as the collectives, communes and Ujamaa in Russia, China and Tanzania respectively, or the Japanese Agricultural Cooperatives (Ishida 2003).

In Africa, cooperatives initially served colonial interest (Wedig and Weigratz 2018). Farmers had no control and if truth be told, these were not cooperatives *per se* because they did not respect most of the cooperative values and principles. In Zimbabwe, the first cooperatives were formally registered in the aftermath of the Cooperative Societies Act of 1956 which formalized white-settler farmer's cooperatives. Eventually, they filtered to the black farming communities. These cooperatives were based on the Ceylon Cooperative Ordinance of 1922 which was in turn modelled around the British-Indian-Pattern of Cooperatives, hence were created by the colonizers to capture the indigenous/local farmers production (Scott 1998, Wedig and Weigratz 2018). The Zimbabwean cooperative system, just like many in Africa was characterised by a hubristic state from above and at the bottom, a weak rural civil society at which reduced the African farmers from being innovators in pre-colonial periods to being imitators and adaptors of techniques/technologies during and after colonialism. Instability, stratification and informality has increased in the rural societies with each passing wave of neo-liberal reforms. This necessitates collective organization (Hyden 2006, 142, 151). Cooperativism in such countries as Japan and other parts of Asia is dominated by multi-purpose cooperatives where each cooperative is a one stop-shop for farmers (from inputs, to production, output marketing, insurance and even banking). Agricultural cooperatives in Zimbabwe on the other hand are framed around a single-purpose model with most focusing on supply and marketing functions only. As observed in some studies (Ishida 2003), agricultural cooperatives that focus on input supply and output marketing only tend to be less profitable than those that also specialize in other sectors such as insurance and banking. Unfortunately, at independence in 1980, the new government of independent Zimbabwe continued with the hubristic policies on peasant farmers. At the peak of the government control, just as in China, Russia and Tanzania, collectives/communes were formed under model B settlement type. Because the state had too much power and control in their management, they failed drastically (Mudege 1995, Hyden 2006, Scott 1998). Hyden explains how the heavy handedness of the state in cooperative business brought political patronage into the cooperative movement. Thus, corrupt leaders became rich and used that wealth to buy support and pacify criticism and destroyed a huge amount of the essential trust that had been built among the membership. Although this trust has been extremely difficult to replace, the conditions that existed and shaped the nature of the government/state in the

1960-1990s has drastically changed giving scope/hope for the re-emergence of collective actions in the rural areas (Hyden 2006, 154-155).

4. The Potential link between Human Security and Agricultural Cooperatives

There are three main branches of HS approaches *i)* that focuses on human rights *ii)* that focuses on safety of the people and *iii)* that focuses on sustainable development of human beings (Evans 2004, 266). The core values of HS are to give the means for **survival, livelihood and dignity** (Commission on Human Security 2003). Within these three branches, HS can be approached from two perspectives. First approach recognizes the need to protect vulnerable people in times of conflict and crisis, and although extremely necessary, this tends to be more West-centric and does not effectively seek to solve the root cause of conflict. It includes food aid in times of poverty, floods, or drought; they are the typical ‘give-people-a-fish’ type of solutions. These were the mainstream approaches used in ensuring human well-being over the past 50 years. Second is HS as a proxy for human empowerment. It attacks anything that can threaten human well-being and empowerment. These are the interventions that teach people how to fish and represent empowerment, this article argues that cooperative fall into this category. Historically, establishment of cooperatives was motivated by such things as poverty and famine or drought, however, cooperatives model produced sustainable solutions. When dealing with current threats, during a famine for example, it makes more sense to provide a fish instead of a fishing rod. This is not condoned through the cooperatives system, but there is need to develop sustainable mechanism for self-help driven solutions such that when by the time a famine occurs, the people would have saved/dried some fish from the previous.

HS entails the making of norms and is itself an international norm, and this compliments well with cooperatives which have a high potential for norm-making themselves. Cooperatives have robust networks and institutions that make easy flow of information and diffusion of ideas (such as HS in this case) to and from the people. Additionally, the concept of dignity is very appealing since it puts the community at the fore since what is dignified in one locality differs from the next. Thus, to understand ‘subjective dignity’, development officers are forced to include communities in their project discussions (Commission on Human Security 2003, Mine, Gomez and Muto 2019, 4). As such, a cooperative offers a better way for individual voices to be heard. Evans (Evans 2004, 272) argues that eventually, participation of civil society groups as well as the participation of citizens will be the most powerful factor in the progression of HS. Cooperatives provide that platform for sustainable provision of HS while other approaches are for the short term. This is yet another justification of

integrating cooperatives into the HS framework especially in the context of Africa.

Ren highlights that human security is bi-pronged, so it seeks to protect and to empower human beings. In protecting and empowering people, another convergence with cooperatives is attained since the cooperative movement seeks to achieve the same. To achieve empowerment and hence human security, there is need for cooperative efforts between the government, individuals and the society (Ren 2016, 116). One of the ways of empowering the people is to offer a good education, but it must be education that drives for people's access and control over the resources that form their livelihood. As highlighted throughout the paper, the focus must be on the root causes of threats to human life; war, violence and conflicts are based on some need to control resources. Contemporary natural disasters are thought to emanate from climate change, a phenomenon that has been attributed to human pollution and unsustainable use of natural resources. We can solve issues in a sustainable way by using the protection and empowerment approach to HS and then espousing it with the cooperative movement approach. Grassroot autonomous organizations have the potential to make the complementarity between state security and human security a reality (Ren 2016, 117). Not only do social organizations help in increasing individual security, but they also strengthen governance structures for the betterment of the national security. Furthermore, cooperatives can help solve the conceptual issues in HS. The broadness and hence difficulty in implementing the concept can be lessened using cooperative institutions. Cooperatives can help define problems.

5. Zimbabwe case study: Some evidence of the potential of cooperatives to improve Human Security

We have so far discussed the concept of HS from the global view, the African perspective, and tried to describe the concept as applied to agrarian societies. Additionally, we talked about cooperatives and the nexus between HS and the cooperative movement. To further understand the concept and how agricultural cooperatives can lead to improved HS, we present findings from data obtained from a survey in Goromonzi district, Zimbabwe. Goromonzi is a district in Mashonaland East province whose agrarian structure was reconfigured during the Fast Track Land Reform Program (FTLRP) of 2000, just as in the other 9 provinces in Zimbabwe. Mashonaland east province lies in natural region 2 of Zimbabwe's agro-ecological zones making it ideal for crop production. This province was selected based on this reason and also for the fact that it is closer to Harare, this reduced monetary and time cost for the research. The FTLRP resulted in three different types of agrarian agricultural production models, small-scale CA, small-to-medium scale A1, and large-scale sized

A2farms. In terms of numbers nationwide, the majority of the households obtained small-to-medium scale farms and it is these that our study focused on. There are about 12 A1 farms and 2 CA sites in Goromonzi (see Figure 3).

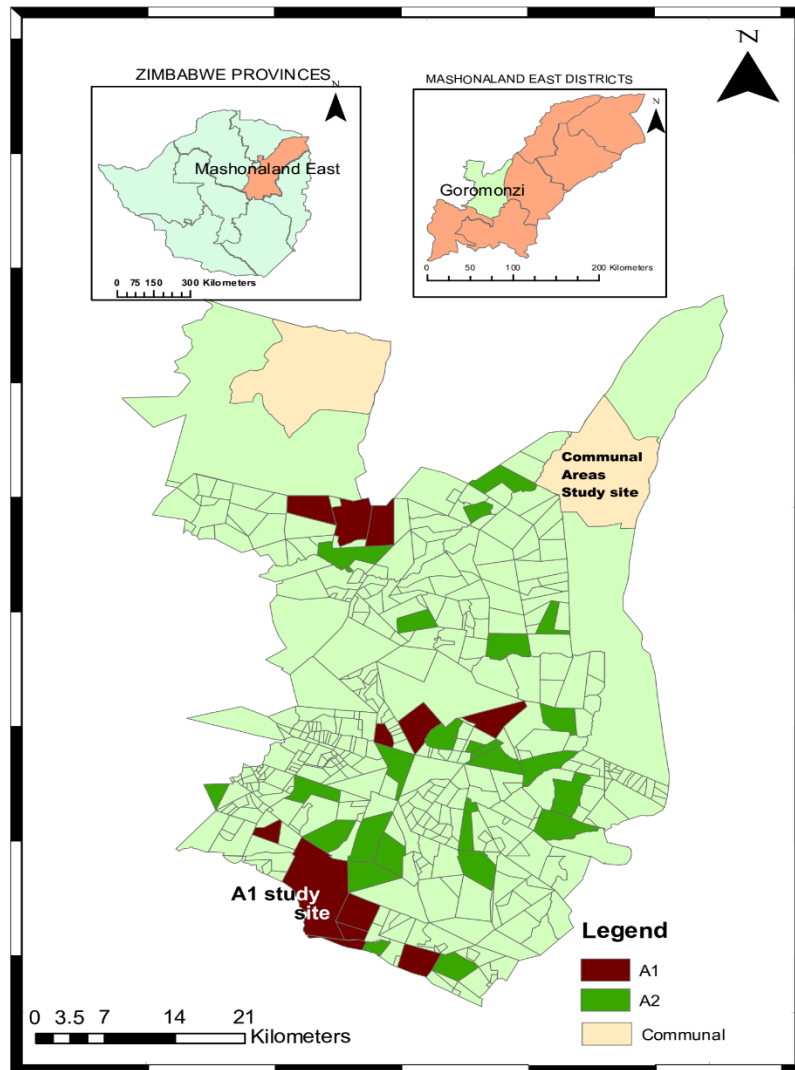


Figure 3: Map of the study site: Goromonzi district, Zimbabwe
Source: Ministry of Lands, Agriculture and Rural Resettlement (2012)

We utilised multi-cluster random sampling to select the two farms, one in the communal areas (CA) and the other farm in the resettled (A1). Firstly, from the available seven district, we randomly selected Goromonzi district for the study. The study then randomly selected one CA from the two areas available, and then randomly selected one A1 from the 12 farms available for sampling. To determine the statistically significant sample size; a 95% confidence interval, a 10% margin of error and a household target population of 430 A1 and 5034 CA were keyed into the Qualtrics® online tool

(Qualtrics 2018). To reduce the cost of data collection, and also in light of time constraints during data collection, the research decided to use a margin of error equal to 10% instead of 5%. At this margin of error, the online tool recommended that the survey should select a minimum of 95 CA households and 79 A1 settlement model households as a representative sample of the population. From a list of farmers provided by the Goromonzi extension officers within the selected CA and A1 farms, the study randomly selected 100 farmers in each farming/settlement model who were members of a cooperative for questionnaire interviews (8 households from the A1 were dropped because of incomplete data). These cooperatives were producing a wide range of products from eggs, horticultural crops (tomatoes, vegetables and potatoes) to dairy and poultry products. We asked questions to help us understand about the establishment, management, production, profitability, economic viability, governance and policy environment, access to market and most importantly, independence and sustainability of cooperatives. Additionally, we interviewed 6 key informants including ministry officials and leaders in the national cooperative movement.

Fifty percent of the respondents were from Communal Area (CA) cooperatives, where farmers hold 0.5-1ha of arable land and the rest were from newly resettled areas (A1), where farmers hold an average of 5ha of arable land. The CA is formerly known as the native reserve areas in which black people were settled in during the colonial times and it is the place where the old cooperatives were formed by the Rhodesian government. The A1 is the new farmers who got land in the 2000-2003 Zimbabwe Fast Track Land Reform Program (FTLRP). Most of the beneficiaries originated from the urban areas and had diverse socio-economic characteristics (SMAIAS 2015, Muchetu 2018). From the key informant interviews we carried out, the government seems to have given up on the cooperative model. The government used to heavily support cooperatives, but this started to change from the inception of ESAP in the 1990s, and the situation is likely to get worse under the ‘Zimbabwe is open for business’ mantra that the new dispensation is preaching. Approximately 94% of the farmers in the A1 formed their cooperatives after 2010 (Table 1).

Table 1: Period in which the cooperative was formed

Year of formation	A1		CA		Total	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Don't know	3	3.7	3	3.0	6	3.3
1980-1990	0	.0	29	29.0	29	16.0
1991-2000	0	.0	10	10.0	10	5.5
2001-2010	2	2.5	11	11.0	13	7.2
After 2010	76	93.8	47	47.0	123	68.0

Source: Cooperative survey questionnaire, 2018

While new cooperatives were being formed in the CA as evidenced by the 47% proportion of those formed after 2010 (Table 1), we found out that 64% (Figure 4:) of the cooperatives in the rural area were formed under the instruction or guidance of NGOs. Although this is a divorce from the state sponsored cooperative (which still helped 20% of the cooperatives), NGO-initiated programs are known to be highly unsustainable (depending on the structure of the program). Almost all (98%) of the cooperatives in the A1 were formed by the farmers themselves without the help of the political leaders, NGOs or the Extension officers (Figure).

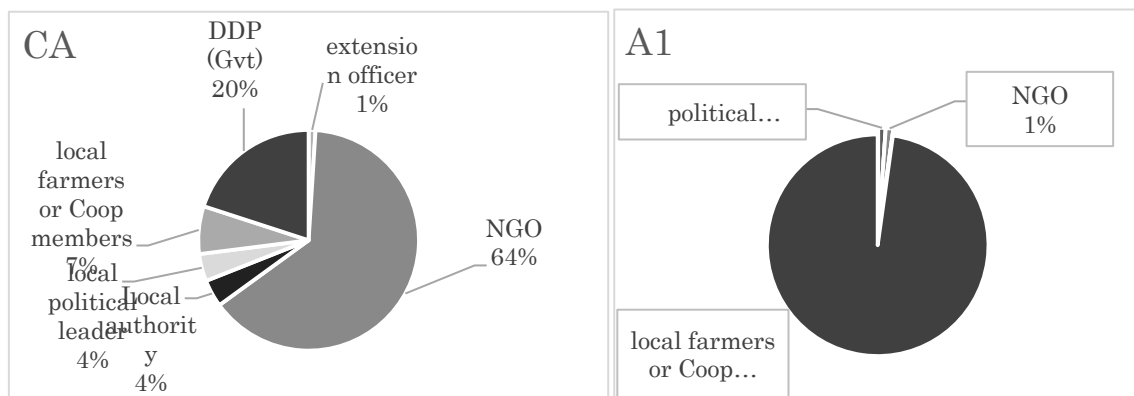


Figure 4: Source of idea to form a cooperative by settlement type

Source: Cooperative survey questionnaire, 2018

The respondents were asked what they thought was the reason for starting the cooperative in the first place, and interestingly the top three reasons they reported (56.3% of the respondents) are in fact highly responsive areas in the human security approach. Approximately 21.9% pointed to the fact that their cooperatives were formed to empower marginalized members (higher proportions in the CA-25.3%, see Table 2).

Table 2: Reason for forming cooperative

Reason	A1		CA		Total	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Empower marginalized members	50	18.1	76	25.3	126	21.9
Increase standard of living	54	19.6	56	18.7	110	19.1
Address market failures	60	21.7	28	9.3	88	15.3
Increase production	55	19.9	28	9.3	83	14.4
Economic development	13	4.7	69	23.0	82	14.2
Bulk input purchases	13	4.7	26	8.7	39	6.8
Provided needed services	28	10.1	0	0.0	28	4.9
Cheap storage and transportation	0	0.0	8	2.7	8	1.4
Bargaining	0	0.0	7	2.3	7	1.2

Source: Cooperative survey questionnaire, 2018

Approximately 19.1% reported that the cooperative was there to improve the living standard of the members by addressing market failures (15.3%) and increasing production (14.4%). Slightly more A1 cooperative farmers thought that the cooperative would help address market failure and increase production as compared to CA farmers (Table 2).

As a triangulation method, we further inquired why each member had joined the cooperative and we found out that farmers were interested in increasing their income (56.3%) and that they thought they could do this by joining the cooperative. This was prevalent in the CA (75%) while most of the members in the A1 thought they could improve the quality of their product or service if they joined the cooperative (47.8%, Table 3). What this data reviews is the fact that cooperatives try to increase human security by eradicating poverty.

Table 3: Reasons for joining the cooperative for individual members

Reason	A1		CA		Total	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Increase income	33	35.9	75	75	108	56.3
Increase bargaining power	0	0	13	13	13	6.8
Obtain unavailable services	3	3.3	0	0	3	1.6
Bulk purchases	0	0	4	4	4	2.1
Improve product or service quality	44	47.8	2	2	46	24
Lower operating costs	1	1.1	5	5	6	3.1
Defence against adverse conditions	10	10.9	1	1	11	5.7
Cheap storage and transportation	1	1.1	0	0	1	0.5
Total	92	100	100	100	192	100

Source: Cooperative survey questionnaire, 2018

In addition to the above, respondents were asked if they felt that their lives had been improved since joining the cooperatives. Using a five-point Likert scale, over 71% agreed (36.5% strongly agreed) that their plight had been improved since joining the cooperative (Table 4). In the A1 sector, where cooperatives were organized as associations for, by and of the people, higher proportions of members (51.1%) strongly agree that the cooperative had a higher positive impact on their standard of living.

Table 4: Has the life of the member improved because of the activities of the cooperative

Response	A1		CA		Total	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Strongly agree	47	51.1	23	23	70	36.5
Agree	20	21.7	47	47	67	34.9
Neutral	16	17.4	30	30	46	24
Disagree	5	5.4	0	0	5	2.6
Strongly disagree	4	4.3	0	0	4	2.1
Total	92	100	100	100	192	100

Source: Cooperative survey questionnaire, 2018

The results further solidified our claims that cooperatives may be a viable alternative to improving human security in agrarian societies. Members highlighted that their incomes had significantly increased when they joined the cooperative (40.1% overall, and 53.7% in the CA). In addition to increased income (24.3%) and lowering operating costs (25.7%), approximately 37.1% of the A1 cooperative members highlighted that they had effectively solved some market failure issues. They could now access inputs and services otherwise unavailable to non-members.

Table 5: Specific ways in which members benefited from holding cooperative membership

	A1		CA		Total	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Access to input markets	6	8.6	3	3.7	9	5.9
Access to output markets	2	2.9	8	9.8	10	6.6
Better bargaining power	0	0	25	30.5	25	16.4
Increased income	17	24.3	44	53.7	61	40.1
Access to unavailable services	26	37.1	0	0	26	17.1
Lower operating costs	18	25.7	1	1.2	19	12.5
Others	1	1.4	0	0	1	0.7
Total	70	100	81	100	151	100

Source: Cooperative survey questionnaire, 2018

Cooperatives seek member welfare first before they seek to increase profits. Overall, 73.3% of the respondents agreed that their cooperative valued their welfare ahead of making profits. This was slightly higher in the A1 sector (79.1%) as compared to the old settlement (68%) (Table 6). Although this sounds preposterous to a classical economist, whose conceptualization of agribusiness revolves around making profits at all cost, in terms of human security and cooperatives, there must be a balance between making profits, environmental sustainability, fair trade and labour practices. The goal is not solely to increase the national output, but it is to increase the benefit going to an individual or

community.

Table 6: Cooperatives value member social welfare ahead of profit making

	A1		CA		Total	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Yes	19	20.9	32	32	51	26.7
No	72	79.1	68	68	140	73.3
Total	91	100	100	100	191	100

Source: Cooperative survey questionnaire, 2018

Throughout the article, we made an argument about how cooperatives complimented human security efforts by providing an organized institutional base with robust structures that enable smooth forward and back flow of information. We then highlighted how this was important as it would put the concerns of the community/individuals at the fore. The respondents reported that their cooperatives had sound structures which sometimes included management committees, board of directors, supervisory committees, administration committees and auditors. An official from the ministry of Small to Medium Enterprises and Cooperative Development (SMECD) highlighted that the Cooperative Societies Act (1990) provides for the establishment of these structures to facilitate smooth flow of information. In this respect, 91.1% of the total respondents rated the flow of information within the cooperative as average to very good. Higher proportions of farmers in the A1 sector (44.5%) rated the flow as good to very good as compared to the same category in the CA (23%) (Table 7). However, the official reported that the government does not usually use these channels to get backward feedback from the cooperatives but were channels of information and instruction from the government to the cooperatives.

Table 2: Ranking of the flow of information in the cooperative

	A1		CA		Total	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Very good	8	8.9	2	2	10	5.3
Good	32	35.6	21	21	53	27.9
Average	35	38.9	75	75	110	57.9
Bad	14	15.6	2	2	16	8.4
Extremely bad	1	1.1	0	0	1	0.5
Total	90	100	100	100	190	100

Source: Cooperative survey questionnaire, 2018

In the same vein, a larger proportion of the cooperatives (41.1%) carried out their meetings monthly particularly in the CA (56%). Largest proportions of A1 farmers carried their meetings once in three months (32.6%) followed by once in two months (27.2%) and then monthly (21.7%) (Table 8). The frequency of meetings influences the flow of information, on the forward and backward feedback mechanism. The rate at which meetings were held is impressive given the fact that the cooperative societies' act provides that a mandatory annual general meeting be held. Such high rates of meetings are ideal within the HS framework; the more members are involved in decision-making, the more the projects become people-centred.

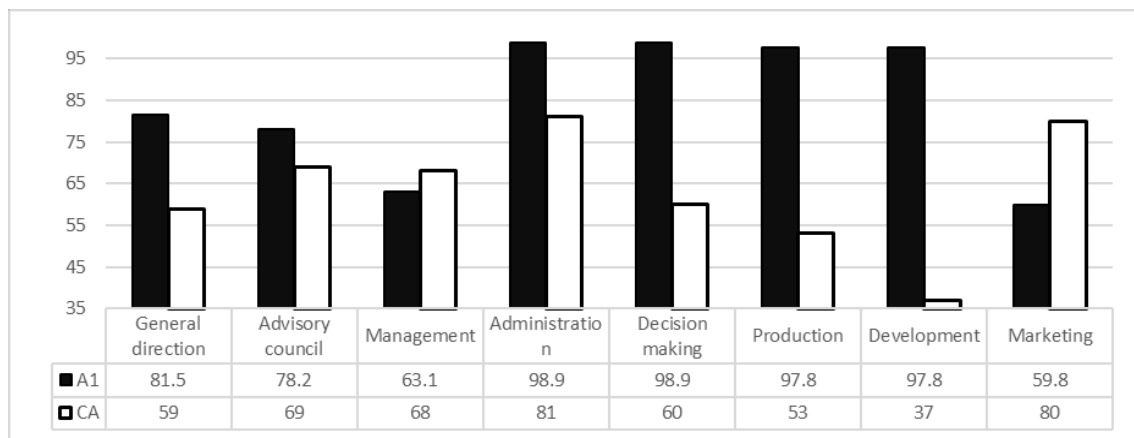
Table 3: Frequency of convening and attending meetings

	A1		CA		Total	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Don't know	5	5.4	0	0	5	2.6
Annually	1	1.1	2	2	3	1.6
Bi-annually	10	10.9	0	0	10	5.2
Quarterly	30	32.6	18	18	48	25
Bimonthly	25	27.2	7	7	32	16.7
Monthly	20	21.7	59	59	79	41.1
Every fortnight	1	1.1	7	7	8	4.2

Source: Cooperative survey questionnaire, 2018

In addition to convening and attending meetings, the analysis tried to find out the extent at which farmers participated in the programs and whether they felt that their views were important in decision-making and direction of the cooperative. From Figure 5, it is quite evident that participation rates were relatively higher in the A1 sector as most of the people (75% and more) reported that they were involved in the activities of the cooperative. The only exception was that only 63.1% and 59.8% of the A1 farmers reported that they were actively involved in management and marketing activities respectively. On the other hand, CA farmers were also actively involved in the activities, although participation was lower in development activities of the cooperative (37%) and in deciding the general direction of the cooperative (59%).

Figure 5: Ranking of participation rates (%) as 'Average' or higher by settlement type



Source: Cooperative survey questionnaire, 2018

This points to a more proactive membership within the new cooperative movement. By and large, this can be understood from the fact that most of the A1 cooperatives were formed by the farmers, thus they must be actively involved in the running of the cooperative because no one else will. The data from this survey are in line with from other studies. For example, a study (Wedig and Weigratz 2018) in Uganda found out that cooperatives that were divorced from the control of the state were succeeding in defending the members' rights. Bigger cooperatives could use lobbying to further the needs of their members while middle-to-small-sized ones were promoting gender and equality through the cooperative business model (direct improvement in standard of living) to further their plight as they did not have enough power to engage the state. Similar findings in Tanzania (Lyimo 2012) showed how fishing cooperatives were providing solutions to agricultural market contradictions and hence protecting the farmers from exploitation especially through aggregating power for better marketing and price conditions.

6. Conclusion

The article has discussed in greater detail the concept of human security, how different it is from previous development approaches. We have illustrated how it has been conceptualized in the world, Asia and in Africa, and presented a discussion of the types and character of threats in these respective geographical locations. Secondly, we explained what is meant by cooperative model, how it has evolved and the prospects going forward. In doing this, we managed to locate several points of convergence between cooperatives and the concept of human security to such an extent that we can

conclude that cooperatives can be utilised by development agents to achieve better or higher levels of human security in agrarian societies. Results from the field survey supported our argument as several empirical evidences were presented to show experiences of cooperative members in Zimbabwe and how they had benefited from forming agricultural cooperatives.

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