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Analysing Bøås and Jennings' Interpretation of State Failure and Human Security

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“The challenge of the 21st century will be to ensure the security of people. Unless people feel secure in their own homes, the security of states will continue to be threatened” (UN High Commissioner for Refugees, in Troeller, 2001, p. 79). The collapse of the binary division of the world in 1991 led to the emergence of a new world order, with new challenges and understandings of the international balance of power. In the 1990s, scholars tried to adapt their narrative discourse to these new challenges and encouraged a renewal of academic research to better reflect both the emerging conflicts as well as the new world order. In this context, there was a shift in security studies from state security to human security, which favoured individuals' and populations' interests over those of the state.

As the international community tried to adapt to this shift in power, a focus was put on the capacity of states to uphold their power and legitimacy, as well as their capacity to guarantee the protection of their citizens. States failing to do so were considered either *fragile* (sometimes also called *weak*), *failed* or, in the case of the disappearance of a central government — *collapsed* (Rotberg, 2002). The intensification of terrorism and the expansion of the *war on terror* aroused the interest of Western countries in fragile and failed states. Both academia and policymakers tried to find justification for potential interventions into so-called fragile and failed states, which led to many interpretations of their definitions and typologies.

The emergence of *human security*, as well as failed states, in the context of a war on terror and the shaping of a new world order, led some scholars to believe that ‘the concept of state failure is only useful in the context of human security’ (Bøås & Jennings, 2005). This essay aims to discuss this claim and to explore the advantages as well as the limits of such a statement. While it can be argued that human security does add to the concept of state failure, it seems too restrictive to consider it ‘only useful’ in this context. The first part of this essay explores how human security adds to the debate on state failure as an explanatory tool rather than an analytical one. It shows how human security offers a broader approach and an alternative to the traditional military one, including new actors. This section also argues the importance of understanding the context of each failed state, rather than trying to have a unique and stereotypical approach to state failure (Rotberg, 2002). The second part of this essay defends the inclusion of state security in the debate, as it is critical to understand international interventions as well as the pathways to state failure. This part also analyses the notion of world order, and how failed states are considered as destabilizing it. The last part of this essay argues that there is a gap between academic research and policymaking (Paris, 2011), which shows the limits of Bøås & Jennings' argument. Finally, this essay introduces and analyses the notion of state-building as an alternative approach to understanding and preventing state failure (Rotberg, 2002; Fukuyama, 2004) and links it to the idea of the security-development nexus.

Human security and state failure: The explanatory value of human security

Defining human security and state failure

The notion of human security emerged in the 1990s as a consequence of the end of the Cold War and the multiplication of conflicts — often called *new wars* — as well as the increase of diverse problems affecting humans' well-being. Countries like Canada, Japan, and Norway (Axworthy, 2001) shifted their focus on security from a state-

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centered approach to a human one. This section argues that human security, although radical in the 1990s (Hampson, 2011), is not sufficient to understand the capabilities of states. Due to its polysemy, it cannot be considered an analytical tool, but rather an explanatory one. Human security is one way to understand the specificities of each failed state, but is not the only element relevant when talking about state failure. Human security allows us to consider non-state actors in failed states and the role they play in provoking or solving state failure. Before looking at the added value of human security to the concept of state failure, it is important to understand the origin of this concept and the diversity surrounding its understanding.

State failure, just like human security, is a polysemous concept. Milliken and Krause (2002) suggest considering state failure from an institutional and functional point of view, while Goldstone (2008) understands state failure as a lack of both 'effectiveness and legitimacy' of a state (p. 285). In general, state failure reflects the inability of the state to fulfil the expectations of the modern state. However, there is no consensus on how to define a modern state, nor are there any instructions on how states should best reflect this ideal, which inherently produces a lack of clear definition of state failure. The Weberian state, as well as the Westphalian model, are often considered to be the elements that best describe what a modern state is, although Troeller (2001) argues that with globalisation and the new world order we now have entered a 'post-Westphalian period' (p. 76). Milliken and Krause (2002) defend the Weberian state as an ideal that states should be aiming for, but is not necessarily an achievable goal. Due to the various understanding of what constitutes a failed state and the role of the state, the analysis of the consequences of a failed state will differ. In the case of state failure in the context of human security, it seems important to first look at the relations between state and societies.

Human security and state-society relations

Bøås and Jennings define state failure as the state failing its citizens. Their perspective nuances the debate around the failed state. They go beyond the classic approach of state failure as a lack of institutions or weakness of the government because of instability in the country, and include countries that would usually be considered strong states. They consider Iran and North Korea as failed states because they fail to provide for their citizens. The advantage of this approach is to include minorities' rights in the equation and see how the state fails to protect them or to even recognise them. Although the orthodox definition of state failure refers to the weakness of a state and the impact on its population institutionally, it is interesting to consider how in the case of human security we could nuance this definition and broaden it to states which appear to be strong but are oppressing minorities rights. In this case, some Western countries could be considered failing when it comes for instance to women's and minorities' rights or the LGBTQ+ community's rights. Poland's recent ban on abortion and the United States' transphobic legislation, such as Arkansas' SAFE Act, exemplify how typically non-failing states could be considered as failing. Similarly, France's law against separatism and sectarianism is only increasing Islamophobia and widening the gap between its religious communities, which could constitute France as another failing country. In these three cases, it appears that through discriminatory legislation these countries are failing to provide security to a part of their population. Human security here allows us to determine the failure of states, which are normally considered international models of strong states.

The study of human security in different countries is invaluable to broaden our understanding of and the approach to security. Through this new lens, the emphasis is no longer on borders, but rather on humans' well-being and their access to certain vital elements like healthcare and education. The widening of security matters raises the question of a state's duties towards its citizens, as well as its capabilities. By including human well-being in security affairs, there is a shift toward the importance of state-society relations. The notion of state-society relations is significant for understanding the problems of state failure. In this sense, the statement of Bøås and Jennings is right to relate state failure to human security.

It appears that in failed states, state-society relations are at their lowest. The government no longer feels accountable to its citizens — often because of important foreign investments or involvement in political and economic reforms (Eriksen, 2011) — and even 'prey[s] on [its] own citizens' (Rotberg, 2002, p. 86). In many failed states, the authority is held by a few and based on clientelism and patrimonialism. The government extracts resources from its citizens and distributes the profits to an elite, according to a 'patronage-based system' (Rotberg, 2002, p. 86), or favours one

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ethnic group over another, creating a feeling of injustice. Many conflicts, such as the civil wars in Zaire, Sierra Leone, and Somalia in the 1990s, are rooted in these behaviours. Although ethnicity is often cited as a catalyst in conflicts, Keen (2008) emphasises that ethnic divisions are not necessarily an explanation of the conflict, but could rather be a consequence of the war. In this case, governments benefit from the chaos originating from conflicts over ethnicity to achieve personal goals. It then appears to the international community that the state has failed only because of the emergence of a civil war, when in reality the state is thriving in the conflict. In this sense, human security helps understand in what way the state has failed, as it has permitted a conflict to develop and created insecurity for its citizens while enabling personal gain for specific elite actors.

Not only does the state fail its citizens, but these inequalities — based on tribal or ethnic favouritism — lead to poverty and increase the risk of complex political emergencies. Approaching the state-society relations through the human security prism in the case of failed states allows us to understand the context in which the state is failing and its consequences on the population. Human security holds an explanatory value, as it emphasises the pathways to state failure and no longer considers state failure as a structural problem, but rather focuses on the specificities of each failed state.

Human security and human rights: The refugees' case

When talking about state failure, it is important to ask who the state is failing. By considering it through the lens of human security, it becomes clear that the state is failing its citizens, or at least a portion of them. One relevant example to understand the explanatory value of human security in the case of state failure is the issue of refugees. Often seen as a threat to national security, refugees are mostly regarded for their impact on the countries of asylum, rather than the reason why they left their country. Yet, forced displacement is a direct result of complex political emergencies (CPEs) and should therefore be understood from a human security point of view first, rather than from a state security perspective. In fact, if it were not for CPEs, many forced displacements could be prevented and individuals' security ensured. Keen (2008) argues that 'the displacement of civilians has frequently been a *goal* of conflict (...) rather than just a by-product' (p. 13). In this case, the human security lens emphasises the impact of state policies and actions on its citizens during an internal conflict. In Rwanda, the government aimed to eradicate the Tutsi population, leaving them no other choice but to emigrate elsewhere in order to save their lives. In Somalia, Al-Shabaab instigated terror in rural areas, forcing many Somalis into internal displacement, which in turn caused insecurity and provoked complex emergencies in refugee camps within the country due to famine. These two examples highlight the importance of human security as an explanatory tool for state failure: in one case the state provoked the genocide – failing a part of its population – while in the second case the collapse of the state enabled strong new actors to manipulate the conflict to serve their own interests. In both cases, the states failed their citizens and instigators benefited from the displacement of these same populations.

Troeller (2001) considers the question of refugees through the lens of human security and relates it to the principle of human rights. Troeller's approach nuances the perception of refugees and asylum seekers as a threat to national security in the asylum country. People leave when their security is put at risk, and they can no longer survive in their countries. This is a result of the so-called new wars, which are mainly intra-state wars motivated by ethnic differences. This started with Nigeria's civil war in the late 1960s, early 1970s and became more widespread with the end of the Cold War because of a lack of support from the two superpowers. The genocide in Rwanda in 1994, as well as the Yugoslav war in 1991, are two examples of the impact of ethnic hatred conflict on human security, as they resulted in the 'forced displacement of some nine million people' (Troeller, 2001, p. 69). At the end of the 20th century, over 100 million people had left their country, which represented "2 per cent of the world's population" (Troeller, 2001, p. 69). The relation between forced displacement and state failure is clear: because states could not guarantee the security of their citizens, these citizens had to leave to ensure their individual security.

Through the example of state-society relations and human rights, it becomes clear that human security certainly enlightens the concept of state failure. However, as the examples have shown, because of the polysemous aspect of human security, it appears that it has only an explanatory value for the concept of state failure. It helps to understand the impact of each conflict on the populations, but cannot be used as an analytical tool for the capacity of the state itself. The failure is interpretable depending on the elements we observe — human well-being or institutions of the

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state. Therefore, state failure has an impact beyond the population, as it also reflects on regional and international dynamics of a globalised world. This raises the question of the role of state security in the context of state failure.

State security and state failure: The influence on the world order

If it can be argued that state failure is the state's inability to or choice not to provide for its citizens and a matter of human security, it is nonetheless critical to also approach this concept from a state-centred point of view. In fact, the notion of state failure firstly implies that the state as an institution and regarding its statehood has somehow failed to achieve something. Whether that is protecting its citizens, enabling development, or upholding the monopoly of violence — and therefore its sovereignty, as Weber argued — the notion of failure, essentially refers to the state's capacity. In this sense, it is fundamental to analyse the concept of state failure from a state security perspective as well.

What is a modern state?

Many scholars (Cliffe, 1999; Migdal, 1988 & 2001, Rotberg, 2002; Krasner, 2004; Fukuyama, 2004; Goldstone, 2008) have debated the definition of a state and what is required of the state to consider it strong. Due to the Westphalian model and colonialism, Western states, and more specifically European states, have become the archetype of a strong well-functioning state. The problem with this model is that it gives little space for variation in forms of other states and thus implies a hierarchy, where states functioning differently from Western ones would be considered failed. Bøås and Jennings, just like Migdal (1988) before them, criticise this approach as it 'assum[es] that all states are essentially alike and are supposed to function in the same way' (Bøås & Jennings, 2005, p. 386). They rightfully emphasise the importance of context and history in each state formation. Although their critique of the perception of a modern state and the analytical tool used to evaluate the strength of a state is relevant, their reduction of the concept of state failure to human security is problematic. Rather than categorically rejecting the use of *offragile*, *weak*, *failed*, or *collapsed* to describe the capacity of a state, there should be a shift in the way states are considered and analysed. Eriksen (2011) suggests considering states as 'categories of practice', following Bourdieu's analysis (p. 237). This would allow for a consideration of the differences between states 'as variations in the *form* of statehood, and not as *degrees* of statehood or of "failure"' (Eriksen, 2011, p. 237). This approach moves away from the traditional perception of the successful modern state as the European model. This model is unattainable — even for Western states — and creates a hierarchy between states, which fails to consider the historical background of each state's foundation. It also encourages perceiving state failure through a comparative approach (Bøås & Jennings, 2005) but also maintains a hierarchy between states (Rotberg, 2002). Likewise, this can only lead to biased and subjective analyses of states. In line with these problematic approaches, Migdal (2001) quotes Shils' theory of the centre and the periphery in society, which can be extended to a comparison between states. In this case, the peripheral states will follow the "values and beliefs" (Migdal, 2001, p. 44) of the elite — understood as Western states — and aim to copy their institutionalisation. In this sense, states unable to follow this model of central states are considered as failing, as their structures and organisations do not reflect this model.

To prevent these misinterpretations, Eriksen (2011) suggests considering the modern Western state as an 'ideal type' (p. 236), which would result in the merging of both empirical and theoretical research on state and statehood. Interestingly, Eriksen does not reject the use of the Western state as a model. On the contrary, he acknowledges the influence of this model on non-Western states. Many were colonial states, and their infrastructures are founded on this model. Rather, he suggests using the Western state model as a 'normative standard' (Eriksen, 2011, p. 246) to understand post-colonial states.

This approach nuances the analysis of a state through its "*effectiveness and legitimacy*" (Goldstone, 2008, p. 285), its capacity to provide services (Rotberg, 2002 and 2004), or even the strength of its sovereignty (Krasner, 2004). These elements are still important to understand the capacity of a state, but with Eriksen's suggestion, they are no longer compared to the capacities of other states, but rather are examined from a domestic point of view. This normative approach allows differentiating the theoretical aims from the empirical reality of states, which nuances the framing of a state as failed. In line with this approach, Migdal (1988) suggests that to understand the role of the state and its capacities, we must see beyond the mere definition of the state as a political organisation. Migdal (2001)

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denounces the myths created around the concept of the state due to the Weberian heritage, which tends to see the state as an isolated subject and "has led to a mystification of its capabilities and power", when in reality the state has limited power (p. 232).

The modern state has long been framed through the Western model in a comparative and hierarchical perspective, encouraging the labelling of the state as *weak*, *fragile*, *failed*, or even *collapsed*. Migdal's and Eriksen's approaches suggest shifting away from an immutable definition of the state, which neglects the historical specificities of each one and creates a questionable hierarchy in the international order. It is, thus, critical to understand that the new world order plays an essential role in the definition of failed states.

Failed states and the new world order

In the wake of 9/11 and the multiplication of terrorist attacks in Western countries, there has been a rise in interest in states' capacities, especially those of states deemed fragile (Rotberg, 2002; Milliken & Krause, 2002; Menkhaus, 2004). The presence of terrorist groups in fairly secured and stabilised countries has forced the international community to focus on the strength — or lack thereof — of states in non-Western countries. It became evident that the political and economic instability in some countries was no longer *their* problem, but had become a question of international security. This realisation challenged the *us versus them* approach, which had considered in the 1990s and early 2000s the West as the successful example of a strong but less-involved liberal democratic state (Fukuyama, 2004). Economists had encouraged the shift away from a state-centered approach and favoured the liberalisation of societies, where the private sector has the monopoly over the economy and the state does not get too involved. Following the withdrawal of the state from the economic market, the studies on the structural aspects and effectiveness of the state decreased. It is only with terrorist attacks, starting with 9/11 that Western states and therefore the international society, redefined their interest in the power of states and sovereignty. Therefore, Bøås' and Jennings' statement lacks understanding of the importance of state security in the consideration of a failed state. Although the security of the individuals in so-called fragile or failed states has alarmed many NGOs, IGOs, and donors, it is mostly the risk of the spread of terror across the borders of these failed states that has reinforced the interest in understanding the pathways to failed states. The literature on fragile and failed states skyrocketed, and many scholars tried to develop their own definitions of these concepts and offer explanations for how and when a state fails and how to prevent it (Rotberg, 2002 & 2004; Krasner, 2005; Bates, 2008; Goldstone, 2008).

It is critical to understand that the focus shown for state failure — and to an extent for statehood — on a global level is deeply rooted in globalisation. As seen through the example of 9/11, the attacks were transported to the West as a form of holy war against the Western model and revenge for the failed interventions like the one in Somalia. Globalisation has reached a level of interdependence and interconnectivity between states, where a structural change in one state automatically impacts the international community. As a result, global governance has aimed to legislate the capacity of states to intervene in certain conflicts, to prevent the spread of instability in the neighbouring countries and therefore in the international society. Through globalisation, states have become responsible for one another and ought to intervene if one state fails to function. This approach to the new world order and global governance profoundly challenges the notion of sovereignty. On the one hand, states are responsible for their own security and domestic affairs. On the other hand, their insecurity seriously affects the security of neighbouring countries and also the international community and therefore becomes a matter of international security.

In this sense, the UN has been working on principles such as the Responsibility to Protect (R2P) or the Responsibility to Intervene (R2I). These conventions aim to both protect the sovereignty of each state, but also defend human rights when the state fails to do so. In theory, R2P and R2I mainly intend to protect individual rights, but as was demonstrated here, the interest in doing so is to ensure the containment of insecurity within the borders of the failed state and to protect international security. It is evident through this example that although state failure seems to be related to the concept of human security, in the context of international relations the failure of the state becomes a danger to world order and a matter of state security.

Failed states and international interventions

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The theorising of R2P aimed to encourage international interventions when a state was unable to provide security for its citizens. Although a noble cause in theory, the failure of numerous international liberal interventions has put the concept into question. In the case of state security and state failure, it is important to grasp that R2P has been used to serve certain political national interests rather than those of the international society and the citizens impacted by conflicts and complex emergencies. Axworthy (2001) argues that if it were not for a lack of power of global governance in the UN, state failure could be prevented through interventions, and refers to the example of the UNAMSIL in Sierra Leone, which was disapproved by the Security Council for national interests. Had UNAMSIL intervened in the early stages of the instability, the conflict and therefore the failure of the state could have been prevented. Similarly, Andersen (2000) asserts that multilateral development assistance in Rwanda in 1991 triggered the conflict and led to the genocide. In reality, it is both the pressure of external donors for a democratic transition in the first place and the national interests of intervening states like France in the second place that facilitated the genocide. In this case, humanitarian interventions struggled to succeed because of the interference of the national military, such as the French military helping the Hutu government. The failure of Rwanda toward the Tutsi population was prolonged because of international interferences. This led to regional instability and strongly influenced the conflict in Zaire/DRC, which then provoked the failure of the state.

Generally, international interventions are trying to save the lives of the populations in zones of conflict and prevent the spread of insecurity in the region. In reality, the interference of different national interests (state security) in the management of interventions and humanitarian aid often leads to an aggravation of the situation, provoking complex emergencies. By analysing state failure through the lens of state security using human security as an explanatory tool, we can understand how complex emergencies have been enabled by a lack of global governance and the predominance of national interests in the decision-making process. In Rwanda, NGOs and militaries were already in the country when the genocide happened. Their presence was supposed to support a democratic transition and economic liberalisation, which would then allow the country to receive financial aid from IGOs like the World Bank. However, the pressure for a democratic transition only increased the tensions between Hutus and Tutsis. The genocide happened in 1994 because the Hutu government had relations with the French government, which 'was blind' to the extermination (BBC, 24/03/2021). The interference of France in the handling of the situation provoked a complex emergency in the region, with both Tutsis and Hutus leaving the country to either save their lives or avoid the international court system. They became refugees in neighbouring countries, creating instability in the region. In this case, it is evident that human security would not be sufficient to understand how a complex emergency emerged, but also how Rwanda failed. It is only when looking at it from a state security perspective with both the interests of the Hutu government and the implication of the French government that we can fully grasp the complexity of this failure. Similarly, it is only by including the numerous failures of US and UN military interventions in Somalia that we can fully grasp the origin as well as the impact in the region (principally in Kenya and Ethiopia) of the state's failure and how its collapse provoked numerous complex emergencies like the famine in 2011.

The concept of state failure is polysemous, as it both asks the question of whom the state is failing, but also how the state failed. This, thus, includes human and state security at once. The various examples, cited in the first two sections of this essay, show the disparity between academic research on these concepts and policymaking. It is therefore important to understand that the conceptualisation of these notions should remain flexible and adaptable to the evolution of reality on the ground.

The gap between academic research and policymaking: The limits of Bøås and Jennings' statement

Understanding the world order: The gap between academic research and policymaking

In his article on world order, Paris (2011) criticises the gap between academic research and policymaking on fragile states. Paris' critique is relevant in the case of Bøås and Jennings' statement, as they only consider state failure in the context of human security, brushing to the side many other elements, which could help understand the causes and consequences of state failure. As stated in the introduction, this essay aims to discuss the 'only useful' part of the statement. If the first part has proved the utility of human security as an explanatory tool to understand state failure, the second part certainly reinforced the critical role played by state security in both the approach and the interventions in failed states. The notion of state security can even be taken further if included in the scope of global

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governance, where the focus on state failure has increased since the 1990s and especially 9/11 (Rotberg, 2002). In the case of state failure and human security, the gap between academic research and policymaking is multi-layered.

The main critique around human security, which shows the limit of this statement, is that of a lack of clarity in the definition. In fact, many scholars have argued that human security cannot be considered a new definition of security because there is no consensus on its definition (Ayoob, 1997; Paris, 2001). As Hampson (2011) explains, "there continues to be considerable methodological, definitional and conceptual disquiet about the real meaning of human security" (p. 279). Hampson presents a similar argument to Paris" as to the debatable influence of academic research on policymaking. One could argue that Bøås and Jennings' statement matters less if its impact on practical policy is questionable. However, as Paris (2011) argues, it is not so much about the direct influence of research on policymaking as it is about the way it shapes debates and our understanding of global governance and international relations. Therefore, a statement as radical as this one, which reduces state failure to the context of human security, can mislead the perspective that global governance and policymakers will have on the causes and consequences of state failure. In other words, if the academic research considers state failure only in the context of human security, it will favour an environment from which other elements and fields — outside of the security realm — will *de facto* be excluded, or securitised and thus misunderstood. The danger of misinterpreting phenomena and following general patterns in the understanding of conflicts has already proven its limits, from which academic research should be learning. The failed interventions in the early stages of the conflict in Somalia or the interference of the French government in Rwanda's genocide are only two examples of these failures. The failed interventions in Syria because of opposed national interests and the impact of the proxy war between Saudi Arabia and Iran in Yemen are two recent conflicts that exemplify both academic research's and policymaking's tendency to still try and follow general patterns in understanding state failure and complex emergencies, rather than consider the specificities of each conflict. The emphasis on the definition of state failure has mainly interested academia, but the suggestion of some scholars (Cliffe, 1999; Rotberg, 2002; Fukuyama, 2004) to focus on the prevention of state failure instead shifts the approach from a security perspective to a development perspective.

State-building and the security-development nexus

The Iraq war in 2003 and the catastrophe following the attempt to rebuild the state in the post-conflict period have largely questioned the interest of ensuring security first — through wars and international interventions — and providing development afterward. The development of Somaliland during the civil war in Somalia is another example that questions, among other things, the relevance of waiting for the state to fail before rebuilding it and developing the country. Not only do interventions in failed states often fail to achieve reconstruction, but they also cost a lot to the international community (Troeller, 2001).

After neglecting the interest of the state to focus on individuals' security and economic development, scholars and policymakers are now shifting their approach and considering the benefit of state-building and strengthening in the context of fragile states (Rotberg, 2002; Gordon, 2014; Menkhaus, 2014; Paris, 2014). Rotberg (2002) argues that there should be a focus on improving state weakness through the strengthening of the institutions, thanks to the help of outside assistance (p. 93), as "strengthening states prone to failure before they fail is prudent policy" (p. 95). According to this definition and the example of the failure in Iraq, preventing state failure — by encouraging development — is more likely to succeed, rather than rebuilding a state after a conflict. Fukuyama (2004) argues that a strong state-building is necessary to ensure state security and thus prevent a state from failing. However, Fukuyama also recognises the difficulty of achieving a certain ideal model — citing the "problem of 'getting to Denmark'" (p. 30) — and asserts that conflicts in some countries like Somalia cannot be solved because of a lack of local demand for reform (p. 30). If he is right in claiming that most interventions have made things worse, his approach to state-building and reforms is biased. It is based on the ideal model of the Western state. However, as the second part of this essay has proved, this model should rather be normative.

As Cliffe (1999) has demonstrated, it could be interesting in the case of reconstruction — this could be extended to prevention as well — to consider other models, which would be a better fit for the country and its historical background. Cliffe advocates for a study of the 'fate of the state' (p. 38) to understand the typology of CPEs and state failure and improve both academic research and policymaking. This approach emphasises the specificities of each

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state and conflict and encourages future interventions to adapt to the situation on the ground rather than apply general patterns. In line with this argument, it is critical to understand the importance of recentring state-building and interventions to 'local ownership' (Gordon, 2014, p. 126). Gordon advocates for a strengthening of the security sector reform, where the focus should be put on improving relationships between the state and its population rather than on strengthening institutions. The first part of this essay argued that state failure in the context of human security can be understood as a lack of trust between the people and the state, as the state is often not accountable to its people. Encouraging the strengthening of institutions without promoting trust between the state and the people first, is only taking the risk to weaken the institutions and provoke state failure again (Gordon, 2014). Therefore, it is critical to promote a form of state-building and development, where the human is put at the centre. Academia and policymaking should aim to achieve a level of understanding, where human security is used to promote state security and vice versa — in other words, where the population and the state work together to ensure development and strengthen the institutions. This could possibly help prevent states from failing. The security-development nexus in the context of state failure is vital, as the development and building of trust between the population and the state enable the state to prevent its own failure. Considering state failure only in the context of human or state security, without acknowledging the importance of development, can only lead to a misjudgement of the origin and consequences of a failed state. Promoting development on a local scale, where the population has a role to play, and international interventions are only a second resort could improve the strength of the state. This is only possible if we agree to shift our approach to the state away from the Western ideal type.

Conclusion

'The concept of state failure is only useful in the context of human security.' (Bøås & Jennings, 2005). Although radical, this statement allows us to question both concepts and our common understanding of what a state ought to be. If human security is an important explanatory tool to grasp the consequences of state failure, it is nonetheless critical to include a state security perspective to understand the context in which failed states are emerging. The polysemy of both state failure and human security also raises the question of the gap between academic research and policymaking. In fact, if academic research tried to focus more on the specificities of each failed state and each complex emergency rather than attempting to identify general patterns and fixed definitions, it could influence policymaking differently and focus more on the importance of development on a local scale. This could shift the approach of global governance on R2P and the duty to intervene and encourage the development of the state through a 'local ownership' (Gordon, 2014, p. 126).

Focusing on development and state-building rather than security emphasises the importance of promoting good governance. By implementing good governance, we could prevent states from failing, as they would be more accountable to their citizens and include them more in the decision-making process.

However, this approach needs to be nuanced, since just like in the case of international interventions in failed states, it could easily lead to a gap between the academic promotion of development on a local scale and the reality on the ground. First, the academic field must reconsider the definition of the state through the Western model and accept new approaches. The case of Somaliland already challenges many preconceptions of the state, as the population has managed to rebuild a country from the bottom up.

Just like the security studies, which have broadened their understanding of security in the 1990s with the emergence of human security, scholars need to reconsider the idea of a one-model-fits-all state. The importance of Bøås and Jennings' quote is that they acknowledge the value of human security in state studies, which also encourages considering the state-society relations, rather than seeing both concepts as separate objects. Human security includes a broader notion of security, although it is a contested concept (Ayoob, 1997; Paris, 2001). It encourages the shift away from the traditional military approach to conflicts and complex emergencies, which lacks nuances and fails to include all the factors that lead to state failure. The criticism of the hierarchical approach of states in Bøås and Jennings' article can be extended to security studies. Ayoob (1997) advocates for a more open-minded and inclusive approach, which would include the reality of what he calls 'Third World states' and their challenges (p. 121). The argument in the first part of this essay to consider human security as an explanatory tool, thus, allows us to see human security as malleable and adaptable to the environment and aims of many actors. This, then, allows us to

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understand the intervention of foreign states in the managing of failed states and encourages us to consider new approaches, such as that of a development lens.

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