

The Human Security Approach: A Study of Interdependent Nature Between Its Dimensions and Content

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Abstract ;

Security is considered one of the pivotal issues in the current era, coinciding with profound transformations that have witnessed the emergence of new actors parallel to the roles of the state. As a result, security paradigms have shifted from a focus on military security as a form of hard power to a focus on non-state security. This transformation has led to the emergence of new security approaches stemming from the idea of expanding and deepening the concept of security. Based on this premise, the study aims to shed light on the core content of the human security approach, and to identify the integrative nature among its various dimensions: cultural security, societal security, political security, environmental security, health security, food security, and cyber security.

Article info

Received January 08.2025
Accepted May 29.2025

Keyword:

- ✓ Security,
- ✓ Security Trends,
- ✓ Military Security,,

1. Introduction

Digital The contemporary world has witnessed numerous new developments that have sparked transformative revolutions on all levels—local, regional, and global—within an environment shaped by the dynamics of globalization. These dynamics have brought with them a flow of information and the exposure of relationships and hierarchies among states, which has widened the scope of security threats and diversified them into both symmetrical and asymmetrical forms. In this context, many calls have emerged demanding that priority be given to the security of the individual, alongside the provision of material power. As a result, there was a need to formulate an approach capable of encompassing the diverse dimensions of this emerging concept. This gave rise to what is known as the **Human Security Approach**, an approach centered on the security of the individual.

Based on the above, the central research problem can be formulated as follows:

Research

Problem:

What is the nature of the relationship between the various dimensions of the human security approach?

Sub-questions:

1. How has the new global environment contributed to the emergence of the human security approach?
2. What characterizes the relationship among the different dimensions of the human security approach?

Methodology:

The study adopts a **descriptive approach** by exploring the concept of security, the human security approach, and the various dimensions associated with it.

It also relies on an **analytical approach** to examine the interrelations between these dimensions and to determine their mutual influences.

Section One: The Various Dimensions of the Human Security Approach

The international community has not yet reached a consensus on a precise definition of human security, as it remains one of the emerging concepts that began circulating in the late 20th century. The aim was to reassess the literature of security concepts in light of current international developments. Despite this, the concept finds its foundational roots in international relations and international law, which govern these relations.

The concept of human security began to take shape in the post-Cold War era. Since the 1990s, it has been used by states, governmental organizations, and non-governmental organizations advocating for the need to establish a security principle that addresses new challenges, particularly those related to economic development.

The concept of human security is reflected in the idea that: **"Human security revolves around ensuring the safety of individuals, complementing traditional security concepts that focus on securing the individual, but within a broader and more comprehensive framework embodied in the state or society."**

The Concept of Human Security:

Human Security from the Perspective of International Entities and Institutions

1. Human Security from the Perspective of Official Bodies

Kofi Annan offered a comprehensive definition of human security:

“In its broadest sense, human security means more than the absence of armed conflict. It includes human rights, good governance, access to education and healthcare, and ensuring that every individual has the opportunity and capacity to fulfill their potential. Every step in this direction is a step toward reducing poverty, achieving economic growth, and preventing conflict. Achieving freedom from want, freedom from fear, and the freedom of future generations to inherit a healthy natural environment — these are the interrelated pillars of human, and therefore national, security.”

Annan thus expanded the traditional components of human security — *freedom from fear and freedom from want* — by adding the imperative of **intergenerational environmental sustainability**, thereby broadening the scope of the concept significantly.

2. Human Security from the Perspective of International Law

Human security has legal foundations derived from **customary international law**, and it is enshrined in the **United Nations Charter** and the **Geneva Conventions on Human Rights**. These instruments provide a legal framework for imposing sanctions on member states that violate such principles and thereby threaten human security.

Accordingly, it is observed that the concept of human security as defined by the **United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)** is the most comprehensive and widely accepted. Most academics and researchers refer to this definition, particularly the one introduced in the **1994 UNDP Human Development Report**.

3. A Holistic Perspective on Human Security

Human security represents an effort to **fundamentally redefine the concept of security**. It is primarily an **analytical tool** that focuses on ensuring the security of the individual rather than the state. Thus, identifying options to mitigate threats to individuals becomes central to public policy recommendations and actions.

In line with this expanded definition, the **causes of insecurity** have grown to include threats to **social, economic, and political conditions**, as well as to **food and health security, environmental integrity, community well-being, and personal safety**.

The policy initiatives resulting from the implementation of the human security framework include considerations that **go far beyond traditional military power**, significantly reducing the emphasis on armed forces—if not replacing them altogether.

Therefore, at its core, human security is characterized by the following principles:

1. **People-centered**
2. **Multidimensional**
3. **Interconnected**
4. **Global in scope** — achieved through **development and democracy**.

Based on the above, we find that the contributions of those concerned with security issues have increasingly focused on security **outside the framework of the state**, directing attention toward the **individual** as the primary subject of concern. This emerging orientation was driven by the rise of new and more impactful security threats targeting individuals across various levels.

4. Human Security from a Globalized Perspective

Globalization can be defined as:

“...the process by which barriers between countries and peoples are dismantled, transitioning societies from separation and fragmentation to proximity and unity, from conflict to harmony, and from divergence and difference to homogeneity and similarity. This leads to the formation of a global consciousness and shared values based on humanitarian charters...”

It is also described as:

“...the growing dominance of the Western consumer lifestyle and the increasing means of imposing it politically, economically, through the media, and militarily — particularly after the global repercussions following the collapse of the Soviet Union and the Eastern Bloc. It represents an attempt to impose pragmatic, utilitarian, secular materialism, along with its associated values, laws, principles, and worldviews upon the global population.”

Human security fundamentally differs from liberal-modern notions of individual security. It stands in stark contrast to liberal references to competitiveness or individual ownership — i.e., the expansion of personal power and autonomy based on property rights and free market choice. Instead, human security describes a **state of being** in which material needs are met and human dignity — including active participation in social life — is guaranteed and fulfilled.

This form of security is **indivisible**, and **cannot be achieved for one person or group at the expense of another**.

Section Two: The Interdependent Relationship Between the Dimensions of Human Security

The dimensions of the human security approach are diverse and vary based on their domain and focus:

- **Community security** is based on the foundations of society.
- **Health security** depends on both the physical and non-physical aspects of health.
- **Food security** relates to the availability of food, both locally produced and imported.
- **Cybersecurity** concerns the protection of personal and informational data.
- **Environmental security** focuses on the environment, its protection from pollution, and sustainability.
- **Political security** remains centered around the state.

1. The Various Dimensions of Collective Security

Collective security involves participation in family and community life with the aim of preserving cultures. It encompasses both **social security** and **cultural security**.

It can be divided into two key forms:

a. Identity Security

Social identity is considered one of the most critical constructs for understanding intergroup relations. People are naturally drawn to others who resemble them and feel more connected to those who share similar traits.

Zaki Badawi defines identity as:

“...Derived from the Arabic root ‘هو’ (he), identity refers to the essence, uniqueness, individuality, and personal specificity that distinguishes a person from others. It includes personal status identifiers such as name,

nationality, family status, age, profession, etc. Legal systems typically require individuals to prove their identity through official documents such as personal IDs or passports.”

Mohammed Amara adds:

“...Identity is the set of constants that do not change or renew; it reveals itself as long as the self is alive. Like a fingerprint, it distinguishes the person from others. Its vitality resurfaces whenever temporary obscurities are removed. It is a code by which an individual recognizes their self in relation to the social group to which they belong, and through which others recognize them as a member of that group.” Through these interpretations, the **components of identity** become clear.

2. Community Security

Community security is tied to the protection of individuals’ values and beliefs, based on the understanding that the human being is, in essence, the social capital that drives the state and ensures its security. It is closely linked to the notion of cultural diversity, where acceptance of such diversity is a key factor in achieving community security. In what follows, we explore the concept of cultural diversity and its role in protecting community security.

3. The Various Dimensions of Cultural Diversity

Diversity can be defined as the recognition, understanding, and acceptance of individual differences. It can be categorized into two main dimensions. The first includes age, gender, sexual orientation, and similar traits, which typically have the greatest impact during early interactions and help shape how we perceive ourselves and the world around us. The second includes religion, education, geographic background, and income, which may be less prominent at first but influence our confidence and self-definition. The final layer of diversity, connected to organizational

context, includes job title, rank, and workplace location. Managing diversity requires a form of organization that allows each individual to contribute meaningfully.

Based on this definition, we can conclude that cultural diversity—with its wide range of cultural expressions—reflects community identity. This identity, in turn, strengthens social networks, which foster acceptance of others and promote the values of peaceful coexistence.

Second: The Various Dimensions of Environmental Security

The environment is the spatial domain in which humans live, encompassing both natural and human-made phenomena that are influenced by and influence human life.

The 1972 Stockholm International Conference on the Environment defined the environment as:

"A set of natural, social, and cultural systems in which human beings and other living organisms live, from which they draw their sustenance and within which they conduct their activities."

This definition clearly includes natural and synthetic resources and products that fulfill human needs.

Environmental security has taken on a global dimension, especially since the “Earth Summit”—a two-week event that began in December 1989 as a planning and negotiation effort among all UN member states. It culminated in the adoption of **Agenda 21**, a globally agreed framework for environmental cooperation and sustainable development. The official declaration urged all nations to prioritize environmental concerns. Agenda 21 was based on the understanding that protecting the environment requires international cross-border cooperation and sought to reflect a global consensus while complementing

national strategies for sustainable development. It called on all countries to improve, protect, and manage ecosystems more effectively and to adopt a shared, participatory approach in assuming responsibility for the future.

According to the **UN General Assembly Vision 2030**, environmental security means protecting ecosystems and includes the following objectives:

1. Ensuring the conservation, restoration, and protection of terrestrial ecosystems and inland freshwater systems.
2. Promoting sustainable forest management and encouraging reforestation globally.
3. Combating desertification and restoring degraded land and soil, particularly in areas affected by drought, desertification, and floods.
4. Conserving mountain ecosystems and their biodiversity to strengthen their capacity to provide essential benefits for sustainable development.

Environmental security, which is often referred to as **biosecurity**, is one of the key components of human security and operates on three levels: individual, national, and global. Environmental concerns have gained strategic importance, as modern military conflicts increasingly intersect with global challenges such as environmental degradation. The growing connection between environmental issues and international security has become more evident.

As environmental deterioration accelerates, the need for adopting the concept of environmental security becomes more urgent. This is because humanity has neglected the very systems that sustain life—ecosystems and biodiversity—which provide clean water,

food, medicine, and air. The importance of environmental security lies in preserving natural resources and avoiding the threat of scarcity by using these resources sustainably, in line with the principle of **intergenerational equity** and **fairness to future generations**.

Third: The Various Dimensions of Political Security

This dimension leads to achieving sustainable political development that embodies the principles of good governance and manages political life in a manner that guarantees transparency, participation in decision-making, growth in trust and credibility, and the continuity of sovereignty and independence of society across successive generations. This dimension effectively contributes to the realization of sustainability standards across economic, social, cultural, and environmental aspects.

Political security is considered the general environment for human security, as the previously mentioned dimensions depend on the availability of political security, which in turn opens the opportunities and conditions for security. The manifestations of political security are particularly evident through the elimination of corruption in all its forms and levels, including but not limited to:

- Bribery.
- Embezzlement of public funds.
- The prevalence of officials exploiting public offices for personal gain with impunity.
- Governments' ability to contain corruption and establish effective mechanisms to uphold integrity in the public sector.
- The burden of excessive bureaucratic and routine procedures, which

contribute to expanding corruption hotspots.

- The paradox between appointments based on merit and those based on favoritism within the public service.
- Real judicial and tax prosecutions of corrupt officials.
- Providing legal protection for whistleblowers, journalists, and investigators reporting bribery and corruption cases.
- Enacting adequate laws regarding asset and financial disclosure and preventing conflicts of interest among public employees.

Political security encompasses a set of legal dimensions that guarantee human rights and duties, providing legislative and institutional protection for individual security. It also offers a secure constitutional environment that opens the horizon for freedoms and guarantees the actual practice of political and civil rights.

Fourth: The Various Dimensions of Health Security

- **Health Security from the World Health Organization (WHO) Perspective**

The definition of health in the preamble of the WHO Constitution states:

“Health is a state of complete physical, mental, and social well-being and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity.”
“Governments are responsible for the health of their peoples, which can only be fulfilled by taking adequate health and social measures.”

Health security is considered one of the dimensions derived from human security, both its tangible and intangible aspects.

- **Health Security from the State's Role Approach**

Health security is linked to the state's primary role, namely its capacity to protect individuals and society from various risks threatening their health and lives. The absence of food security is among the major causes of the failure of official institutions and bodies to provide a safe environment for food security, considering that nutrition and its quality are pivotal factors in an individual's health deterioration.

Health Security from an Ecological Perspective

Saud bin Hashem Saidan points out that the continuous increase in epidemic risks has raised the importance of early preparedness, directing investments to the health sectors, and spending on the necessary infrastructure over the long term. This is to ensure a minimum level of health security within countries and to limit the spread of diseases across borders as much as possible. Given the failure of markets to provide comprehensive health security for societies and the private sector's inability to bear the costs of public health security for states, official authorities are entrusted with the responsibility to provide health security for their populations, with special focus on the poor segments.

Spending on health infrastructure and providing better levels of local and national health security has a positive impact, as it limits the spread of epidemics that threaten human life and reduces the accompanying health and economic losses, both in the country's regional environment and globally.

Health security is linked to food security, considering that health security has two dimensions: the physical and the intangible. The connection between good health and balanced nutrition is the supporting link between health security and food security.

Fifth: The Various Dimensions of Cybersecurity

Cybersecurity is a set of practices and technologies aimed at protecting systems, networks, and programs from digital attacks that typically seek unauthorized access to information, alteration, destruction, or disruption of essential operations. In short, cybersecurity is the protective shield for institutions and individuals in the digital space.

Cybersecurity roles are diverse and exist in many fields. With rapid technological development, protecting digital infrastructure has become a top priority for companies and governments, leading to a significant increase in job opportunities in this field. Among these roles are Information Security Analyst, Network Security Engineer, Penetration Tester, and Cyber Incident Response Expert.

Based on the above, cybersecurity contributes to the flow of information and achieving transparency, which in turn opens the field for accountability. Therefore, cybersecurity supports political security.

Sixth: The Various Dimensions of Food Security

- **Concept of Food Security**

Food security is the state in which individuals in society can obtain their dietary needs according to their available income limits. It does not mean self-sufficiency in food achieved only locally depending on the country's capacity, but rather ensuring the provision of all individuals' food needs either through local production or imports. Therefore, we observe differences among countries in terms of their level of food security, according to their production surplus or deficit in their trade balance.

Design of The Researcher

The human security approach emerged from the increasing security threats, especially in the current era, which necessitated the emergence of academic and practical orientations demanding the preservation of the real wealth — human capital — and its protection through ensuring its security, whether at the health, environmental, political, community, or cybersecurity levels.

The convergence of these dimensions, thus forming the dimensions of human security, indicates their integrative nature, where none of these dimensions can be separated from the others due to the interwoven causes leading to each one.

In another security aspect, the dimensions of the human security approach represent the interdependent relationship among them, where no security dimension can be achieved in isolation from the next. For example, political security cannot be realized without the presence of a secure social environment, which is community security. The existence of a gap between society and the state impedes and even negates political security directly or indirectly.

Conclusion:

In conclusion, it can be said that the human security approach was inspired by the emergence of new security threats alongside traditional security threats, thus necessitating the formulation of a new approach characterized by expansion and deepening, capable of encompassing these various security threats.

This shift from a narrow concept of security to a broader one coincided with the emergence of new actors who rival the role of the state and its official institutions, possessing influential power in decision-making at local, regional, and international levels. This contributed to making the "human" the central focus of security at its various levels and forms.

Based on this, the dimensions of the human security approach emerged and were integrated into academic security studies, represented by community security, political security, environmental security, health security, food security, and cybersecurity. These various dimensions are linked by an integrative relationship, where a complete separation between them is impossible.

There is also a causal dependency relationship between these dimensions, where no dimension, regardless of its content, can fail to influence the next dimension. This relationship is characterized by holism and comprehensiveness.

Based on the above, the study reached the following conclusions:

- The emergence of the human security approach was not accidental; rather, it was a cumulative result of severe security threats to the present and future of humanity.
- The human security approach represents the reference framework for contemporary security orientations,

fundamentally based on the idea of expanding and deepening the concept of security.

- The relationship between the dimensions of the human security approach is characterized by interconnectivity, in terms of a correlational relationship where one dimension arises with the emergence of another.
- The relationship between the dimensions is also characterized by dependency, as each dimension depends on the strength of the next, making their complete separation impossible.
- The relationship is comprehensive, as the whole is composed implicitly of integrated different dimensions simultaneously.

Based on the above, a set of recommendations can be formulated:

- One of the features and objectives of the human security approach is to achieve security for the human being as the core of the security process, as advocated by supporters of this approach. However, practical reality does not reflect these demands, as evidenced by the wars and conflicts supported by governmental and non-governmental organizations around the world today.
- It is necessary to coordinate national and global efforts to adopt the principles of the human security approach and give them a binding legal dimension, resulting in effective sanctions for all parties without exception.

- Security awareness must be enhanced by involving non-official actors in conveying the principles of the human security approach and simplifying its meanings to enable all segments and levels of society to participate in implementing it on the ground.

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