



The Qualitative Review of Human Security in South Africa: A Four Levels Analysis

Article DOI:

<https://doi.org/10.35293/srsa.v43i2.341>

Sikhumbuzo Zondi

Department of Development Studies

University of South Africa, South Africa

ORCID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-7173-3231>

Abstract

Post-1994, South Africa is founded on human dignity, equality and ensuring fundamental human rights for all, enshrined in its democratic constitution. This comes as the advent of democracy in South Africa from the apartheid past coincided with the advancement of the United Nations Development Programme's (UNDPs) reconfigured security concept from a state-centric to a people-focused ideal. The new concept of human security integrates all men's rights, needs, and security with aspirations for sustainable and inclusive development. It advocates for the protection and empowerment of people against threats to their lives, something that the apartheid state failed to do as it was the main orchestrator of human insecurity in the country. Likewise, the article is a qualitative review of human security's role in post-South Africa's policymaking decisions using the level of analysis approach. The four levels feature the individual, local/provincial, domestic/state and global analysis. These analysis levels help shed a qualitative understanding of how a single dynamic in socio-political empowerment affects another. It concludes that despite the notion of human security being widely articulated as a conceptual basis for the country's official documents, it lacks de facto operational power to shape actual policy actions.

Keywords: human security, level of analysis, actors, South Africa, policymakers, qualitative, post-apartheid, empowerment, Security

1. Introduction

The birth of democracy in South Africa following the unbanning of liberation movements, particularly the African National Congress (ANC), as a result of mounting pressures domestically but also from the global community on the apartheid state renewed hopes of achieving a country socio-politically united and equal by race and socioeconomic opportunities. A country where freedoms for all its people and not discrimination and prejudice inflicted by the minority on the majority is the order of the day. This is because the new paradigm of Security that dominated global discourse beginning in the early 1990s significantly widened the scope of Security, enlarging it from issues of state-inflicted violence, economic deprivations and human rights violations to socially focused issues pertaining to basic human well-being and rights of individuals and their local communities (Ferreira and Henk 2009: 505).

To this, the prime aspects sustaining human security are glued together; that is, 'freedom from want', which very much relates to conditions of poverty and social injustices, and 'freedom from fear', which intrinsically relates to conditions of violence and conflict (MacLean 2005: 48) and systematic discriminations. This article explores democratic South Africa's approach towards the new paradigm of human security using the four levels of analysis, namely individual, local/provincial, domestic/state and global. It argues that despite much public rhetoric surrounding the country's appreciation of the human security agenda, there is a minimum practical reflection of this enthusiasm among policy actors from the various levels of analysis when it comes to operationalizing the human security agenda.

This paper focuses on the five human security pillars that can be explored using the qualitative methodological strategy out of its seven features. Instead of being singled out one by one, they are collectively grouped to demonstrate the intrinsic connection despite these defining lines among scholars and academics. Accordingly, Thomas (2001: 160) points out that human security does not entail some unavoidable events, given that natural catastrophes, including droughts and earthquakes, undermine human security just as poverty and lack of democratic participation do. Also, for reasons that even within a particular locality, they do not undermine everybody's Security the same way.

Having said that, the framework of analysis in the social sciences that is under

scrutiny emanated from Kenneth Waltz's 1959 book entitled *Man, the State, and War* and remastered in J. Singer's *The Level-of-Analysis Problem in International Relations*. Although it is commonly a subject of debate, it appears surprising to note that not many scholarly articles use the framework (Hu 2015: 8). The present article borrowed the analysis model from international relations scholarship to demonstrate transdisciplinarity within the academic field of development studies. In addition, the four levels of analysis underpinned in the study do not describe every effect of the point of contestation, and there are complex dynamics influencing policy actions between the four primary ones. Having mentioned that, the levels of analysis will provide us with a qualitative means-ends analysis that will help us understand how one force in socio-political empowerment affects another. Generally, empowerment is the concept that integrates all the analyses (Nau 2020). For instance, the struggle for socioeconomic and political empowerment may cause insecurity; however, the struggle for empowerment may originate in the individual actor's greed for power. The greed for power is tasked for the individual level of analysis, while the struggle for empowerment is local and domestic.

2. Paradigm Shifts in the Security Regime: Unpacking the Real Conceptual Meaning of Human Security

According to Marczuk (2007: 40–42), an early indication that a paradigm shift in the security discourse was on the way became vivid in a noteworthy publication written by Richard Ullman, entitled *Redefining Security*, in the first half of the 1980s. In the publication, the author made a typical claim for enlarging the idea of Security, and it argued that non-military menaces are growing more than ever before, and these menaces, according to Ullman, were threatening the political freedoms of nation-states and individuals with a potential to deprive him also of life's fundamental necessities. Likewise, the breath-taking political transformations that swept South Africa beginning in 1991 corresponded with the global calls for enlarging the scope of Security from its finite realist state-focused view to a multipronged people-centred perspective or human security. This required the envisioned new South Africa to design strategies to cope with the wider historically entrenched political, social, Security and economic obstacles (Bah 2007: 2).

Adapting to the new Security thinking meant acknowledgement by new South Africa, which emerged from the early 1990s democratic dispensation of the major challenges that posed serious threats to the pragmatic realization of human security, including healing and redressing historic social injustices and its resultant unequal socioeconomic landscape that continue to plague the country today, and restoring human dignities to the previously marginalized people whose human rights and honour were grossly violated by the previous regime. Now, as South Africa and the world were no longer preoccupied with the notions of preserving national sovereignty and securing national borders, scholars, actors and academics from across the world continued the push for new thinking in the security establishment that values the protection of people and the well-being of their respective communities (Ferreira and Henk 2009: 501).

Their perspectives of Security were now informed by social, economic, political, and environmental concerns, something that the traditional models were particularly defective at recognizing. This could be attributed to their inability to capture the well-being of individuals at a qualitative face value. In this regard, the notion of human security came into being as part of the comprehensive paradigm of human development formulated in 1994s UNDP by Mahbub ul Haq, with a strong influence from Amartya Sen (Ferreira and Henk 2009: 503).

The UNDP's 1994 Human Development Report (HDR-94) became a global instrumental document to phrase out 'human security' in conceptual terms with calls for policy and action (Jolly and Ray 2007: 463). Spijkers (2007: 5–8) adds that human security is first phased out as individual safety from grave threats, including poverty, disease, and political repression. And second, from the UNDP (1994: 1), it denotes protection from unprecedented and hurtful disruptions in the patterns of daily lives — whether in homes, in jobs or communities.' In accordance, Spijkers (2007: 6) asserts that human security is illuminated as a people-focused approach, one that seeks understanding on how people live and breathe in society, how freely they exercise their abundant life choices, how many available channels they possess to social opportunities and whether they live under conditions of turbulence or goodwill.

3. What is Human Security?

There is no clear-cut, or one size fits all definition of human security. However, as a starting point in defining what is meant by human security, Zondi (2017: 187) identifies certain features found around the discussions of human security. For purposes of this study, only four are identified, and these include that:

- First, human security is about empowering people to take full control of the means designed to improve their capabilities, protect their human dignity and strengthen their well-being.
- Second, it pertains to protecting the vital core of human beings: the acceptable quality of life, social equality, and enhanced human relations.
- Third, it ensures that individuals are free and safe from violence, related fear, economic want, poverty, and ill information.
- Lastly, in the case of South Africa, human security is a concern about the state and the market exercising their power in agreement with the people (democratic governance) and for promoting the good of the people (inclusive development). In addition, it is about the smarter concerns of Security, among them national reconciliation and restorative justice, post-conflict management and humanitarian assistance.

It is said that the causes of individual insecurity are eventually widened to encompass threats to political and socioeconomic conditions, health, ecological, personal and community safety (Jolly and Ray 2007: 465). In addition, human security is also perceived as a notion and a paradigm established to address pressing issues, including the moral imperatives emanating from the insecurities confronted by human beings from all corners of the world (Kamidohzono, Gomez and Mine 2016: 207). In a nutshell, the Commission on Human Security (2003: 4–6) states that human security implies protecting basic freedoms, freedoms that are the cornerstone of human life. It also denotes protecting individuals from pressing and prevalent threats and situations. It also entails using the processes that develop from people's strengths and ambitions. Still again, it denotes establishing social, ecological, cultural, economic, political, and militaristic systems that jointly provide people with livelihood, dignity, and survival mechanisms.

Nonetheless, like any other debate involving academic and policy actors, the human security discourse has also encountered opponents or sceptics who

argue that the notion suffers from the shortage of accuracy and agreed-upon definition. It is also accused of being too broad and vague, like a shopping list for research and policymaking (Nugraha and Madu 2013: 74), which results in no well-defined limit-line and an arrangement of properly established theoretical foundations ways of achieving Security of the individual. Thus, Paris (2001: 25) incredulously infers that ‘if human security entails almost everything, then it essentially implies nothing’. Below is a closer look at human security from the levels of analysis informed by South Africa’s socio-political landscape. We begin by defining what is meant by levels of analysis and then ensue by classifying the various levels and their main actors regarding South Africa’s approach to the human security agenda.

4. Methods and Approach to Analysis

The paper compresses secondary data from a longer version of an exploratory literature review by providing a critical qualitative analysis of printed and electronic documents. This analysis is pre-tested with the patterns and trends identified in the literature review. A qualitative approach was chosen given that issues such as insecurity, poverty, protection of individual human rights and free participation in social life are sensitive matters because those who feel excluded by the status quo are poor and disadvantaged, which would have been daunting (despite being feasible) to gather data using a reductionist approach (Xaba 2016: 109). The province of Gauteng is used as an embedded case study of the level of analysis, meaning it is a subunit of the reviewed local/provincial level of analysis.

According to Thomas (2001: 160), human insecurity emanates precisely from existing socio-political and economic power dynamics that determine who benefits from Security’s privileges and who does not. These dynamics can be pinpointed at various levels, ranging from the individual, local/provincial, domestic/state, and global. This article explores democratic South Africa’s approach towards the human security agenda, focusing on the four levels of analysis. The idea of using the levels of analysis to review a qualitative development perspective draws from Goldstein (1994: 12), who defines a level of analysis as a perspective in the social sciences, especially in political science and international relations, that is founded on a set of similar actors or processes that suggest possible explanations to the social problem. It also enables researchers to qualitatively track the socio-

political cause of action modifications to diverse actors and their activities and associations. Figure 1.1 below introduces a pyramid-like sketch of the levels of analysis approach.

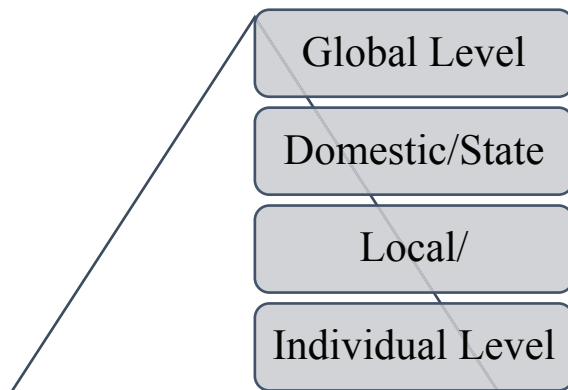


Figure 1.1: Levels of Analysis in South Africa’s Social and Political Landscape.

Source: Author’s compilation

The individual level of analysis is the primary and lowest level of analysis. At this level of analysis, scholars are concerned with personal characteristics such as perceptions, choices and activities of each human being ranging from the average citizen to the head of state. To clarify this assertion, this level analyses a particular situation or phenomenon concerning individuals as causes or solutions to that particular issue (Ogunnubi and Uzodike 2015: 23). The paper identified three prominent figures, namely former presidents Nelson Mandela, Thabo Mbeki and Jacob Zuma, as individual actors responsible for human security-related policy activities in South Africa from 1994 to 2018 when Jacob Zuma was removed from office.

4.1.1 The Nelson Mandela Affairs

Democratic South Africa presents possibly the most important case study of successful, locally driven human security and post-conflict reconciliation. Fervent training and mentoring of the country’s political leaders in mediation,

negotiation and peace-making supported the much-observed transition from racial apartheid to political democracy (Schirch and Mancini-Griffoli 2012). Immediately following his release from prison, he spent 27 years with former president Nelson Mandela and his predecessor FW. De Klerk collaboratively organised a Convention for a Democratic South Africa (CODESA) which paved the way for the adoption of a new Interim Constitution in 1993, thus officially putting an end to the systematic structures of apartheid (Ferreira and Henk 2009: 508–511). In his inaugural address to the nation in 1994, the new incumbent, Nelson Mandela, committed his administration to a seriously important reconstruction project and outlined the programme through which the reforms would take place:

The task at hand will not be an easy one. But you (the people) have mandated us to transform South Africa from a country in which the majority lived in insecurity with little hope, to one in which they can live and work with dignity, with a sense of self-esteem and confidence in the future. The cornerstone of building a better life of opportunity, freedom and prosperity is the Reconstruction and Development Programme (quoted in McLean 2005: 51).

Moreover, following his inauguration as South Africa's first democratically elected president in April 1994, one of the groundbreaking initiatives of his ANC-led government was the dissemination of a White Paper that significantly reorganized the mandates of the country's intelligence community. The second one concerned the establishment of a civilian defence secretariat to maintain a harmonious relationship between civilians and the military (Ferreira and Henk 2009: 506). Mandela committed himself and his government to transform the South African social, economic, and political landscape in ways that conform to the human security paradigm. During the early stages of Mandela's presidency, there was an even greater need for the country's new leaders to come up with strategies that would give hope to the majority who were previously marginalized and excluded from much of the country's socioeconomic privileges and at the same time ensure human flourishing for all citizens irrespective of race or gender.

The Mandela administration tried to promote equity in the construction of social conditions meant for long-term improvements in providing basic social

necessities such as education and health services, and other public goods as part of the broader package of social and political transformations (McLean 2005: 52). This equity in socio-political and economic conditions was purposefully steered to inclusively benefit the people whom his majority ANC-led administration regarded as the real custodians of government benefits and opportunities. Indeed, Mandela played his leadership part during South Africa's first years into democracy in promoting a social environment conducive to the entrenchment of human security values and principles among the political elites, civil society, and ordinary people in the country.

4.1.2 *The Thabo Mbeki Affairs*

The second prominent individual to feature in this analysis is former president Thabo Mbeki, under whom South Africa's engagement and compliance with the global call for promoting human security was heightened. We know that on 21 May 2003, the Speaker of the National Assembly, Dr Frene Ginwala, presented a Human Security Report to the Parliament of South Africa in Cape Town, where various initiatives were made by the country with regards to human security were highlighted. These included public deliberations on human security that were assembled during the 26 August – 4 September 2002 occasion of the World Summit on Sustainable Development (WSSD) held in Johannesburg and an Africa-wide civil society consultative assembly in Pretoria, which was arranged by the Africa Institute of South Africa (AISA) (Ginwala 2003). This move proved profound for South Africa as it battles some of the issues of insecurity that continue to undermine its democracy to date.

The Commission called for global leadership, including countries including the South African ruling elite under President Mbeki, to adopt a holistic understanding of human security, which necessitates establishing systems that serve as the cornerstones of people's survival, livelihood, and dignity. It required a multi-sectoral approach that prioritises protecting people from pressing and pervasive menaces and conditions and building on their strengths and aspirations (Ginwala 2003). This Report on human security was timely for South African society and the Mbeki administration. It came when the country was monitoring its social, political, and economic progress a decade into democracy and from a history of state-perpetrated human insecurity and vulnerabilities.

Accordingly, Africa (2015: 186) applauded the Mbeki administration for giving significant attention to administrative outputs and performance, in which related government ministries and departments were required to consolidate their activities formally. His strategy proved successful in enhancing accountability and transparency of government organs to improve public services and protection of people by the state.

However, the greater focus on growing an efficient regime left many civil society structures with a passive perception. They felt that the administration viewed them as a nuisance instead of being its social partner in promoting human security and mitigating societal risks and vulnerabilities. For instance, during the Mbeki tenure, there were conflicts of interests between the government, the Treatment Action Campaign (TAC) and other social organizations over the distribution and access to anti-retroviral vaccines (ARVs) by individuals infected with HIV/AIDS disease (Africa 2015: 187–188). The contention between the Mbeki government and civil society over the accessibility of life-saving treatment became a vital human security concern for the country that perhaps became one of the reasons that contributed to the downfall of President Mbeki. It became clear that civil society organizations are a force to be reckoned with, particularly in human security matters. The Department of International Relations affirms this view, and Cooperation's (DIRCO) online newspaper stated that 'civil society organizations play a crucial role in identifying and determining positive responses to the complex challenges of human security' (Pandor 2019).

4.1.3 The Jacob Zuma Affairs

The third prominent individual actor regarding the contemplating human security in South Africa is former president Jacob Zuma notable for many scandals surrounding his administration approach; however, the paper is only interested in handling the human security agenda. Having mentioned that, former president Zuma was arguably one of the leaders in the country most enthusiastic about promoting and ensuring human security for all. His address attests this to the 67th Session of the UN General Assembly, where he stated: 'The promotion and protection of human rights and vital freedoms should be placed at the pivot of our collective desire to resolve international disputes through peaceful means' (DIRCO 2012).

As such, President Zuma is said to have marshalled strategies during his tenure in office that were geared toward delivering the people of South Africa from the shackles of deprivation, want, inequality, marginalization and social exclusion, along with the countless human suffering and distress that had been a persistent reality even prior to the dawn of democracy in the country (The Presidency 2018). It is worth noting that social exclusion, poverty, and economic insecurity constitute the country's most pressing human security threat. To make things right and favourable for the well-being of all people in the country, the Zuma administration sought to embrace human security as a fundamental strategy for policy action. In this way, it acknowledged that addressing the holistic meaning of the human security concept demands coordinated interventions across society that would eventually transform the country beyond existing action models (Pandor 2019).

During his time in office, former president Zuma openly recognised underdevelopment, malnutrition and disease, poverty, and competition for scarce resources as the main drivers of human insecurity among people in the country. To address these social pitfalls, Zuma promised that his administration would sough-after the promotion of gender equality as well as the empowerment of women to leverage an effective people-focused strategy to reduce poverty, ways to combat lack of opportunities, and poverty and to stimulate an actual inclusive, sustainable development model (DIRCO 2012). Nevertheless, despite the much amusing public rhetoric of this administration, Zuma's leadership divided the country between ordinary people and the corrupt political elites who manipulated the populace, irrespective of the fact that the country's democratic constitution stipulates that the will of the people should assume centre stage in the nation's socio-political landscape (Alence and Pitcher 2019: 16). This undertone about the reality of the Zuma administration appears to contradict the human security values and principles that it claimed to be holding high on its agenda.

4.2 The Local (Provincial) Level

According to O'Riordan and Voisey (2001: 26), in the field of humanities and social sciences, the phrase locality has spawned arguments concerning how it should be interpreted, particularly with regards to scope. With locality being

mashed up to ‘community’, social science scholars commence by asserting that the numerous terminologies of the local (locality, localism, and localisation) all indicate a region or a place, and ultimately by its very nature, to the exceptionality of that region. Thus, in this paper, the phrase ‘local’ is used for this particular sense of designating the exceptionality of a locality (Hadju 2006: 39).

In support of this view, Christmas and de Visser (2009: 109) point out that in South Africa, the local government consists of 283 municipalities, varying in size, population, and resources from extremely disadvantaged rural municipalities to world-class metropolitan areas centres are locally known as ‘metros. They add that within all realms (spheres) of government in South Africa, local government it can be said, from the democratic Constitution of the Republic of South Africa possesses an even more compelling developmental task of realising the ideal living condition for the communities it serves (Christmas and de Visser 2009: 107).

This level of analysis entails a situation where the interactions of national actors congregate on a provincial or local level. Central to scholarly concerns at this level is the influence of civil society and metropolitan actors on the outcomes of individual provinces. For instance, this level of analysis focuses on the roles of provincial actors such as Premiers, local civil society organizations, government institutions, community administrators and individual activists. The local level of analysis explains outcomes from a provincial wide level that includes all metropolitan areas and their localities. It considers both the position of provinces within the domestic system and their interrelationships.

4.2.1 *The Case Study of the Gauteng Province*

The Province of Gauteng was chosen in this article among the nine provinces of South Africa because it is the empirical case site of our broader research project. The 2012 OECD country report on South Africa’s socioeconomic and political conditions defines the Gauteng Provincial-Region as not only the most populous and urbanised region in South Africa but also the wealthiest province in the country, accounting for more than a quarter of the nation’s gross domestic product (GDP) (OECD 2012: 17). This perspective is profound if one considers the socio-political and economic insecurities that persistently impact the daily lives of the segment population found on the province’s margin areas.

As in the case of the Gauteng Province, urban spaces are seen by scholars as settlements in which the masses of people have better opportunities for political participation and become involved in non-agrarian livelihoods, including industrial engineering, wholesaling, retailing, artisanship and in various lines of socioeconomic empowerment (Clark 1986 cited in Mulugeta 2008: 9–10).

As a result of population increases and rural-urban relocation to metropolitan regions, the Gauteng Province is witnessing a boom in social challenges that are facing South Africa at large. This comes as scholars have become alarmed by what they term an '*urbanization of marginalization scenario*', which compromises the social well-being of poor and marginalized persons and communities due to excessive instances of urban unemployment, poor provision of public services, insecure livelihoods, and inopportune urban dwellings (Arndt, Davies and Thurlow 2018: 1). However, for the Province to address and mitigate human insecurity in its space, the Gauteng provincial government, guided by the ANC policy framework, has since the advent of democracy in South Africa in 1994, established a plan of action as its primary priority seeking to gratify all peoples' basic wants and ensuring that people fully hold the capacity to put into action their unwavering constitutional rights, relish the complete dignity of freedom cohesively and sustainably; develop inclusive, safe, secure and sustainable communities; create human resource capabilities and proliferate the capabilities-base in order to guarantee inclusive socioeconomic development and progress (Gauteng Growth and Development Agency 2016: 18–21).

Likewise, given that under the umbrella of the human security agenda, economic Security is a priority pillar that advocates for broader societal driven improvements or enabling actions on the capabilities of people and communities concern to give them resiliency from economic downsides as a way of empowerment (Commission on Human Security 2003: 30), the Gauteng local government has qualitatively embarked on socioeconomic initiatives such as the *Gauteng Tshepo 500 000* which is a multi-capabilities initiative that was instituted in December 2014, to enhance individual Security and social well-being by creating suitable conditions for entrepreneurial development, generating sustainable employment opportunities and improve youth, women and people with debilities' empowerment (Gauteng Provincial Treasury 2016: 49).

The overall objective of this strategic empowerment initiative is to expand the Provincial government's commitments to improving the capabilities, skills, and

well-being of all the province's people. This puts the Province of Gauteng in line with the overall commitments of the ANC government to promoting human security, even though in a much practical manner South Africa is committed to promoting the human security discourse on paper. This is because of social injustices in housing and land redistribution, people's right to adequate basic public goods such as water and freedom from wanting to continue to undermine the country's democratic foundations to date.

From this view, scholars argue that human security denotes security from physical violence and food security, political security, livelihood security, environmental security, health security, and energy security. It challenges traditional notions of Security by making individuals and communities the proper referent of Security rather than states (O'Brien and Leichenko 2007: 3). It is on this basis that contemporary security scholars contend that poverty and economic insecurity play a vital function in qualitative analyses of human security as they inevitably impact the capabilities and strengths of the poor and those individuals having tough times with socioeconomic marginalization to resist other threats to their physical and social Security (Eadie 2005).

4.3 The Domestic (State) Level of Analysis

This is the third level of analysis, and it concerns the authoritative decision-making units of national governing parties, their alliances as well as the collections of individuals such as interest groups and political organizations within a country that help shape both domestic and international events (Ogunnubi and Okeke-Uzodike 2015: 20). At this level of analysis, the objective is to locate actions in the character of the domestic system of specific states, locating South Africa's domestic socio-political debates that have unfolded between 1994 to 2018. Similarly, this level of analysis pays attention to the domestic system where states are observed as actors in their own rights, so to say they were vividly afforded as entities with certain preferences, and accordingly, focus on their actions and decisions to find solutions to our analytical problems.

4.3.1 The South African State Affairs from 1994 to 1998

It is argued that beginning with the success of the democratic transition, which

officially put an end to a long history of systematic separate development, the South African state constructively embraced human security as one of its fundamental post-apartheid aspirations. Here, domestic leadership motivated by the supposed developmental promises of democracy surmised that the society's greatest sources of insecurity emanate from the destabilizing socioeconomic obstacles of poverty, social exclusion, unemployment, deficiencies in public education, healthcare, housing, social services and high levels of crime, inequality and violence (Ferreira and Henk 2009: 502). Making human security a part of the operational life of the new democratic state was essential to ensure sustained government commitment to the people and redressing past injustices. During this epoch, the pro-poor strategy of the Reconstruction and Development Programme (RDP) served as a hallmark of the nation's attempt to promote a sustainable and inclusive human security environment for all citizens.

Moreover, in order to address these structural stresses that were inherited from the now-defunct apartheid system, South Africa's ruling elite sought to integrate the country's domestic and foreign policies with human security thinking, and their formal documents frequently highlighted the government's solemn dedication to the Security of people (Ferreira and Henk 2009: 503), which was seen to encompassing far beyond mere physical security threats. To add to this domestic analysis, Esterhuysen (2016: 33) argues that in the South African context, with its long legacy of systemic discrimination and violence, societal dysfunctions and human rights violations under colonialism and apartheid, the novice ANC-led government instituted a conducive environment for the realization of novice compulsions of the human security agenda.

Between the period 1994 and 1999, South African leaders embarked on a developmental oriented social cohesion approach to redress historic injustices by promoting social harmony, domestic stability, and development using a human security discourse that firmly relied on a conceptual base formulated by home-grown scholars and academics and reflected on the country's 1996 Democratic Constitution (Ferreira and Henk 2009: 504). Moreover, the initial decimal period of democracy in South Africa was used to spearhead a holistic human security perspective across all state institutions and undertakings. It is thus safe to say that democratic South Africa's policy strategy signalled a functionalist stance premised on assumptions that institutional norms should inform structures of public sector engagements geared for achieving certain outcomes (Ferreira and

Henk 2009: 505). In this regard, domestic institutions were required to display and promote human security values for the overall good of society.

4.3.2 The South African State Affairs from 1999 to 2008

The culmination of democracy in South Africa came as a result of a political settlement between liberation movements led by the ANC on the one hand and the apartheid regime on another. The main priority for this negotiated settlement was ending apartheid and replacing it with a novice constitutional democracy founded by principles, values and norms that gave prominence to humanity, social reconstruction and national reconciliation (The Presidency 2019). As the country deepens its democratic commitments after the success of 1994, human security from a South African context necessitated, according to Ferreira and Henk (2009: 507), the protection of society's cultural, economic, political and social rights, as well as basic human needs in order to guarantee freedom from want and fear. Domestic policymakers during this period intensively rolled out massive initiatives of human and economic development in which they also outlined numerous commitments across the broader human security conundrum. To this, intensifying the fight on historical socioeconomic, political injustices, and violence were shortfalls that specifically demanded resolution going forward (Ferreira and Henk 2009: 508).

Likewise, under the ANC-led democratic government, South Africa continued its course to enhance human security in the country by identifying and seeking strategies aimed at mitigating inequalities and poverty in society and backing social programmes in education, human settlement, gender equality, and many more (MacLean 2005: 66). Almost half a decade into democracy, domestic priorities of the state became more focused on economic and human development, something that was reflected in the Growth, Employment and Redistribution (GEAR) approach (whose programme ran from 1996 to 2001). The novice approach prioritized market growth and employment for all, redistribution of the nation's gains with a particular focus on opportunities for the poor and historically disadvantaged members of society. It further acknowledged that supposedly in line with human security demands the need for popular access to adequate social services, including education and health, thus raising a flag on the significance of ensuring essential Security for persons, livelihoods,

and adequate settlement (Ferreira and Henk 2009: 510). Nevertheless, social and human security commentators openly disapproved of the GEAR strategy because it demonstrated a sharp shift in focus from the socially-oriented programming of the RDP towards a neoliberal focus of strengthening macroeconomic stability (Magubane 2002: 96; Maclean 2005: 60).

On the domestic front, one might point out that there are clear lines of commitment by the state to the course of human security, as is vividly articulated by the domestic policies and approaches adopted by the ANC government of the time. Due to its history of systematic marginalization and human rights violations, the South African state is keen to enhance the political freedoms that came with democracy and freedoms from want and fear, which relates more to societal well-being and people's rights and participation in governance. Lewis (2001: 3) supports this perspective, who contends that though South Africa is almost a decade into democracy, the transition from state-sponsored insecurity of apartheid is not yet over. Given that what lies ahead is the formidable task of ensuring that the country's abundant human and natural resources are efficiently utilised to benefit all, promoting sustainable livelihoods, improving social conditions, and mitigating poverty and inequality. Once the domestic government can ensure the full realization of these tasks, can human security be fully established in policy and practice.

4.3.3 The South African State Affairs from 2009 to 2018

A quick recap of the context of the article is that human security is premised on human agency. This means that human security views people as rational beings capable of dealing with their own adverse situations provided adequate and equal opportunities are offered. In this way, human security is considered an analytical tool for human empowerment. This potential is often overlooked by social conditions that systematically render the human being vulnerable to threats and shocks (Zondi 2017: 199). For this reason, the current domestic period is the lengthiest of the three domestic epochs and arguably the most controversial one regarding threats to people's freedom from want due in part to how domestic affairs and decisions in this epoch are managed and executed by those in power.

Scholars have contended that beginning at least in 2009, a class of 'securocrats' (almost like the one experienced in the country's domestic affairs

during the 1980s) have emerged in the domestic management of South African affairs in ways that seemed to contradict the country's initial commitment to the promotion of human security (McKinley 2013; Duncan 2014). They argue that the state has become extensively iron-ruled in recent years in handling the demands of the local populace for access and opportunities to basic rights and civil freedoms. In this regard, political analysts channel their claims to the re-emergence of a tradition of privacy within the state, claims of police brutality, the unfounded use by the state of the instrument of coercion, legal clauses that militantly contradicts the established democratic principles and values, and lastly a weakening of legislative oversight formations that serve as evidence for such trend (Africa 2015: 185). In the hope of addressing and amending the structural challenges that impede the full realization of the principles of democracy and human security values on the domestic front, the government launched its long-term strategy document to fill all pitfalls, the National Development Plan (NDP), in 2012 which according to government acknowledges the pitfalls that have engulfed the country's domestic political and socioeconomic landscape (National Planning Commission 2012).

Accordingly, Africa (2015: 186) further points out that during this era in South Africa's contemporary history, the nation witnessed heightened domestic policy opposition from several vested parties, including labour groups, organized business, and political pressure groups. In return, this has made it rather challenging for the government to make domestic decisions concerning how to effectively steer its second-stage transformation agenda for sustainable and equitable growth, which has been part of its national election pledges in 2009 and again in 2014 (Africa 2015: 188). Indeed, despite the controversies that engulfed the country during much of this period, the state made significant attempts to deliver its people from the shackles of inequality, penury, unemployment, socio-political exclusion in public deliberations and so forth (The Presidency 2018). This utterance is supported by former Minister of Higher Education when she states:

We have made endeavoured great success with regard to public access to education in South Africa. This marks a significant milestone for our democracy and given the inadequate provision of basic education on our continent, particularly Sub-Saharan Africa and other emerging nations

worldwide, one would imagine our country of South Africa has achieved heightened human security, especially through education (Naledi Pandor 2019).

The above utterances by leading domestic politicians and scholars highlight the mixed reactions to the complete operationalization of the human security discourse in South Africa and calls for further research about human security domestically.

4.4 Global Level of Analysis

This is the final level of analysis, and it is concerned with explaining international outcomes that transcend the interactions of states. Global factors can be the outcome of individuals, interest groups, states, non-state actors or even natural conditions. Nonetheless, they cannot be referred to as the actions of any single state or perhaps a group of state entities. For instance, the United Nations (UN), which was founded in 1945 following World War II by 51 ‘peace-loving’ nations’ is mandated, according to liberal scholars, with maintaining global peace and security, promoting human rights, and assisting member nations with finding permanent and sustainable resolutions to political, cultural, and economic challenges (Griset and Mahan 2003: 280). In short, at this level of analysis, we are forced as scholars and researchers to focus our attention on issues from a global perspective. Most contemporary issues now have more to do with the quality of life than concerns for war, peace, and economic equality; for instance, the focus is on human rights, good governance, security and stability and sustainable development (Holsti 1995, 17).

South Africa’s fascination with promoting a sustainably human secure world for all comes from the conviction that it is feasible and a historic obligation to create an alternative, better world, a global landscape of prosperity and peace in which all nations share the fruits of the earth. Thus, the democratic South African government of the ANC has untiringly championed the cause of human security and social justice in the international political economy (The Presidency 2018). Pivot to South Africa’s global human security outlook is its government’s self-driven awareness of well-being, and inclusive development, which underpins the optimism that Pretoria could never successfully develop

singularly for long whilst the continent of Africa remains trapped in protracted civil disorders, conflicts, penury, instability, gender-based violence, shortage of skills and formal education.

Notwithstanding, political commentators have pointed out that weak leadership in post-1994 South Africa has culminated in the country's disempowered citizens being unable to link their experiences of economic insecurity and poor governance with the experiences of fellow African peoples on the continent. According to Africa (2015: 187), this creates room for some profound questions that ought to be asked and mutually addressed, such as security for whom, delivered by whom, and for whose interests?

In addition, as one of the pioneers of the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) through the leadership guidance of former president Thabo Mbeki, South Africa was among the major envisions for Africa's common development and security plan. This is because, among other things that NEPAD sought to achieve, it placed the responsibility on African states to establish enabling economic and political conditions for democracy, peace, economic sustainability, and good governance to take roots on the continent. In this regard, NEPAD aimed to find a meaningful equilibrium between adequate economic growth and enhanced physical security to realise a sustainable human development path. This demonstrates the New Partnership's inherent human security foundations, as its policy programme and plans provide the groundwork for economic and social dimensions of the human security agenda on the African continent (Zondi 2017: 195).

In a nutshell, on a geopolitical scale, South Africa transformed from being a source of insecurity to its regional partners to being a champion for Security and development on the continent, assuming a strategic mediation role in some of Africa's most protracted conflicts such as those in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), the Sudan, in Burundi and Lesotho. Yet, on the domestic front, the country has not fully overcome the apartheid inherited structural poverty, economic insecurity, and the frequent incapability of government institutions to efficiently provide basic wants of all people, to note some few shortfalls (Africa 2015: 178).

5. Conclusion

In summary, one has noted the dynamic function that Security has played in South Africa from the apartheid era where it was driven by state ambitions for territorial integrity and preservation of white minority privilege, which came to an end when new thoughts surrounding Security were gaining prominence on the global flora alongside calls for emancipation and freedoms for the masses of South Africa's people were inevitable. This new security regime of human security is people-driven and prevention-oriented as it advocates for holistic protection and empowerment of people as an enabler of social well-being and a guarantor of vital freedoms from want and freedoms from fear for all. Since the advent of democracy in 1994, South Africa has been among the most enthusiastic countries to promote the people-oriented human security approach, and most of the country's official documents and state activities have referred to the paradigm. In our qualitative inspection of human Security in South Africa, we used the level of analysis method, which does not give a detailed explanation of events due to the wide array of levels between the four key ones: individual, local/provincial, domestic/state and global. On the contrary, the level of analysis proved significant for the article because it enabled our qualitative exploration to follow up on changes in socio-political cause of actions by a complex network of actors and their respective undertakings and associations. At the individual level of analysis, we reviewed the activities and attributes of three prominent figures in the country's post-apartheid era, namely Nelson Mandela, Thabo Mbeki and Jacob Zuma. These figures were the mainstay of policy action with respect to the promotion and practical application of the human security agenda in South Africa between 1994 and 2018. At the local or provincial level of analysis, our interest was on understating the operationalization of human security by various groups of actors, to mention a few be it the Premier of the province, a Provincial Review Committee or community-based agents and organisations. At the domestic or state level of analysis, the focus was on official documents and policy actions that sought to promote and enhance human security among South Africa's democratic society. The fourth level of analysis looks at how democratic South Africa engages with the rest of the world on human security issues. Our main reference at this level of analysis was examining how Pretoria interacts and addresses human security concerns on the African continent. All in all, one

might infer that despite many deliberations on policy and keynote addresses, the country still has a long way to go before all the freedoms associated with the human security discourse can be practically realized.

6. Funding details

This work is part of my PhD study fully supported by the National Institute for Humanities and Social Sciences (NIHSS) of the South African Department of Higher Education and Training (DHET).

References

- SAfrica, Sandy. 2015. 'Human Security in South Africa'. *Strategic Review for Southern Africa* 37 (1):178-189.
- Alence, Rod, and Anne Pitcher. 2019. 'Resisting State Capture in South Africa.' *Journal of Democracy* 30 (4): 5-19.
- Arndt, Channing, Rob Davies, and James Thurlow. 2018. 'Urbanization, structural transformation, and rural-urban linkages in South Africa.'
- Bah, Alhaji MS. 2004. *Toward a regional approach to human security in Southern Africa*. Kingston, Ont.: Centre for International Relations, Queen's University.
- Booth, Ken, and Vale Peter. 1995. 'Security in Southern Africa: after apartheid, beyond realism.' *International Affairs* 71 (2): 285-304.
- Cawthra, Gavin, André Du Pisani, and Abillah H. Omari, eds. 2007. *Security and democracy in Southern Africa 2*, IDRC.
- Christmas, Annette, and Jaap de Visser. 2009. 'Bridging the gap between theory and practice: Reviewing the functions and powers of local government in South Africa.' *Commonwealth Journal of Local Governance*, 2: 107-119. <https://doi.org/10.5130/cjlg.v0i2.999>.
- Commission on Human Security. 2003. *Human Security Now*. United Nations Publications.
- Department of International Relations and Cooperation (DIRCO). 2012. Statement by President Jacob Zuma of the Republic of South Africa to the General Debate of the 67th Session of the General Assembly. New York, 25 September.
- Duncan, Jane. 2014. *The rise of the Securocrats: The case of South Africa*. Johannesburg: Jacana Media.
- Eadie, Pauline. 2005. *Poverty and the Critical Security Agenda*. Routledge.
- Esterhuysen, Abel. 2016. 'Human security and the conceptualisation of South African defence: Time for a reappraisal.' *Strategic Review for Southern Africa* 38 (1): 29-48.
- Ferreira, Rialize, and Dan Henk. 2009. 'Operationalizing' Human Security in South Africa.' *Armed Forces & Society* 35 (3): 501-525.
- Gauteng Growth and Development Agency. 2016. 'Gauteng Accelerating Growth and Development'. Johannesburg: Gauteng Government.

- Ginwala, Frene. 2003. 'Ginwala: Presentation of Human Security Commission's report to Mbeki. Polity.
- Goldstein, Jonah, and Jeremy Rayner. 1994. 'The politics of identity in late modern society.' *Theory and Society* 23 (3): 367-384.
- Griset, Pamala L., Sue Mahan, and Pamala L. Griset. 2003. *Terrorism in perspective*. California: Sage Publications.
- Hajdu, Flora. 2006. 'Local worlds: rural livelihood strategies in Eastern Cape, South Africa.' PhD diss., Linköping University Electronic Press.
- Holsti, Kalevi J. 1995. 'War, Peace, and the State of the State.' *International political science review* 16 (4): 319-339.
- Hu, Shaohua. 2015. 'Small state foreign policy: The diplomatic recognition of Taiwan.' *China: An International Journal* 13 (2): 1-23.
- Jolly, Richard, and Deepayan Basu Ray. 2007. 'Human security—national perspectives and global agendas: Insights from national human development reports.' *Journal of International Development: The Journal of the Development Studies Association* 19 (4): 457-472.
- Kamidohzono, Sachiko G., Oscar A. Gomez, and Yoichi Mine. 2016. 'Embracing human security: New directions of Japan's ODA for the 21st century.' In *Japan's Development Assistance, 205-221*. Palgrave Macmillan, London.
- Lewis, Jeffrey D. 2001. *Reform and opportunity: The changing role and patterns of trade in South Africa and SADC*. World Bank.
- MacLean, Sandra J. 2005. 'Human Security as 'Freedom from Want': Inequities and Health in South Africa.' *Policy and Society* 24 (1): 48-72.
- Magubane, Z. 2002. 'Globalisation and the South African Transformation: The Impact on Social Policy'. *Africa Today* 49 (4): 89-110.
- Marczuk, Karina Paulina. 2007. 'A Conceptualization of the Human Security Doctrine in the Post-Communist States in the Balkans.' *Croatian International Relations Review* 13 (46/47): 39-46.
- McKinley, Dale T. 2013. 'State security and civil-political rights in South Africa.' *Strategic Review for Southern Africa* 35 (1): 105-118.
- Mulugeta, Emebet, ed. 2008. *Urban poverty in Ethiopia: The economic and social adaptations of women*. Addis Ababa University Press.
- National Planning Commission. 2012. 'National Development Plan 2030: Our future-make it work.'

- Nugraha, Aryanta, and Ludiro Madu. 2013. 'Human Security: Contending Perspectives of Liberalism, Critical Theory and Postcolonial Theory.' *Media Journal Global Strategies Nursing: A Rapid Appraisal*. National Nursing Research Unit, Kings College, University of London.
- Nau, Henry R. 2020. Perspectives on International Relations: Power, Institutions, and Ideas. Cq Press.
- O'Brien, Karen, and Robin Leichenko. 2007. 'Human security, vulnerability and sustainable adaptation.' *Human development report 2008*: 1-2.
- OECD. Publishing. 2011. *OECD Territorial Reviews: The Gauteng City-Region, South Africa 2011*. Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD).
- Ogunnubi, Olusola, and Ufo Okeke-Uzodike. 2015. 'South Africa's foreign policy and the strategy of soft power.' *South African Journal of International Affairs* 22 (1): 23-41.
- Pandor, Naledi. 2019. The role of civil society in advancing human security. *Opinionista, Daily Maverick*. 27 November.
- Paris, Roland. 2001. 'Human security: paradigm shift or hot air?.' *International Security* 26 (2): 87-102.
- Robert, Harvey. 2003. 'The Fall of Apartheid: The Inside Story from Smuts to Mbeki.' *Journal of African History* 44 (3): 542-542.
- Schirch, Lisa and Mancini-Griffoli, Deborah. 2012. South Africa: Building Capacity for Human Security. *The Alliance for Peacebuilding: University of Notre Dame Press*.
- Spijkers, Otto. 'From state security to human security.' *In Contemporary Challenges and Future Trends in International Security*, Graduate Student Conference of the American Graduate School of International Relations and Diplomacy. 2007.
- Tim O'Riordan and Voisey, Heather. 2001. 'Globalization and localization.' *Globalism, localism and identity: Fresh perspectives on the transition to sustainability*: 25-42.
- The Presidency of the Republic of South Africa. 2018. Achievements and milestones during the tenure of President Jacob Zuma. Pretoria, 15 February.
- The Presidency of the Republic of South Africa. Historical and Political Context. 2019. Available at: <http://www.thepresidency.gov.za/content/historical-and-political-context> (Accessed on 13 August 2020).
- Thomas, Caroline. 2001. 'Global governance, development and human security:

- exploring the links.' *Third World Quarterly* 22 (2): 159-175.
- Treasury, Gauteng Provincial. 2016. 'Socio-Economic Review and Outlook 2016.'
- Xaba, Mzingaye Brilliant. 2016. 'A qualitative application of Amartya Sen's 'development as freedom' theory to an understanding of social grants in South Africa.' *African Sociological Review/Revue Africaine de Sociologie* 20 (2): 102-121.
- Zondi, Siphamandla. 2017. 'Comprehensive and holistic human security for a post-colonial southern Africa: a conceptual framework.' *Strategic Review for Southern Africa* 39 (1):185-210.