Should governments prioritize human security over military security?

Humanitarian Economics and consciousness: Peace & Conflict Resolution.

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Abstract

The 21st century has witnessed a marked shift in state priorities from welfare schemes, human security to increasing the defense budget, providing more military security. Global powers like Russia, the United States of America, among other state actors have started to engage in conflicts bringing in more priority to the military and defense of a country rather than to the individual security. Recently, the Iran – US-Israel war has also caused enormous destruction to the lives and properties of individual. When a state engages in war, military security is accorded a higher priority and there is a visible decline in concern for the ordinary citizens of the state whom the government has the need to protect. This militarization of priorities has lowered the citizens to a secondary priority as compared to the security and priority provided to the military. This paper aims to investigate the idea of whether the governments should prioritize human security over military security which is clearly a question relevant in the current geopolitical era. This paper takes on a multi-method approach combining qualitative methods such as comparative case-studies and drawing on inferences from the pre-existing data of public opinion to examine the growing tension surrounding the prioritization of military security over human security. Thus this paper contends that prioritizing military security over human security poses a fundamental threat to democratic governance and individual welfare and that there is a strong requirement for a human-centred security framework.

Introduction

The ongoing global trend of engagement in wars and conflicts have taken a toll on the safety and security of human beings. Men, women and children are being used as pure tools to cause havoc and achieve individual goals. Humanity and tenderness found in humans have now been taken over by selfish needs and atrocious actions. Even when the century has developed with the idea of modern governance, the minds and attitude of the people have turned cold and grave. More the world gets developed, more the selfish it has become. This selfishness has uprooted the global friendship shared among nations leaving the world, unquestioned and undisputed with an explicit exploitation of human security.

In traditional sense, 'security' means protecting the state from external threats or aggression mainly through the enforcement of force and power. Government's place extra care and focus to the defense of a state to protect the borders, preventing invasions and maintaining national sovereignty. However, in contradiction to this has risen the concept of human security. In the current global scenario, having a strong military set up does not imply the guarantee of human security. *"In line with the expanded definition of human security, the causes of insecurity are subsequently broadened to include threats to socio-economic and political conditions, food, health, and environmental, community and personal safety."* (Jolly & Basu Ray, 2006, p. 5). They include poverty, economic crisis, living standards and much more which affects humans directly in their daily life.

Military security on the other hand is the state's ability to defend themselves from external military forces, threats and aggression, anti-national elements and even internal surges. These include physical protection, secure communications, and much more. In the current global set up, nations are prioritizing the care and focus given to the security forces to keep up with the

idea of military security. While military security focuses on the strengthening and idea of the security forces, state security encompasses the involvement of the government, the political institutions, domestic order against their risks.

Even though there is a lack of priority given to human security currently, military security plays a crucial role in the protection and maintenance of a country. This acts as a key concern for modern states as military security addresses threats that cannot be resolved through measures taken by the human security. Protecting the citizens from aggression is essential for any other form of security. Economic development, healthcare, and civil liberties all depend on having basic territorial and physical safety. States facing border dispute, invasions risk, aggression cannot shift to resources and welfare programs without first ensuring the rights of human safety. The Russo-Ukraine war exemplifies this point. Ukraine's ability to pursue any human security agenda, whether it be healthcare or education, relies on its capabilities to ward off the territorial aggressions.

Review of Literature

The connection between military security and human security have been prominent in the past few years, with its dynamics changing and gaining more relevance. Scholars, policymakers and international institutions have been held up with an important question related to modern governance: whether state security or the security of the citizens are more important and which among these should be given more priority. The concept of state security and human security have therefore been in constant conflict with each other for the past three decades. This review of literature looks into three areas of the debate: the roots and development of human security framework, critical viewpoints that challenge its usefulness for analysis and research that investigates the actual effects of militarization on human well-being.

1. **Theoretical Foundations: Redefining Security**

   One such intellectual development in security studies in the latter part of the twentieth century has been a transition from state-centric approaches to security to those that put individuals and communities at the forefront. From the time after World War II until the present day, there has always been an emphasis on concepts such as territorial integrity, sovereignty, and state capability to protect themselves against any military aggression. The realism perspective, which was based on the Westphalian concept of state sovereignty in the seventeenth century, has influenced academic debates during the Cold War era.

   The publication of the United Nations Development Program's landmark Human Development Report 1994 fundamentally challenged this. The report was curated under the leadership of the Pakistani economist Mahbub ul Haq, under the strong support of the Indian Nobel Laureate Amartya Sen. The report argued that for the longest time, the concept of security has been narrowed down to mere territorial protection, not giving significant importance to the protection of the citizens within the territorial sphere of a nation-state. The report introduced a detailed framework on human security with seven core characteristics being: food security, health security, economic security, environmental security, personal security, community security and political security. This composition shifted the narrow concept of security to a much broader one.

Jolly and Basu Ray (2006) has reinforced this significant shift in their review of human security framework and its application in the National Human Development Report across thirteen countries. According to them, the concept of human security does not lie in the new elements only but also in the failure of the conventional ideas of security to bring in the answers essential to the newly introduced threats in the post-Cold War era. Their analysis of the NHDR across countries such as Afghanistan, Latvia, Macedonia and Seirra Leone, reveals that the human security framework when implemented at the national level produces policies and laws that are both grounded in real evidence and at the same time sensitive to the specific context.

The report in regards with Latvia introduced the concept of securitability. Securitability can be defined as a combination of an individual's subjective and objective determinants of his/her perspective of security. This served as an example of how the policies would work if implemented at a national level. Therefore, in their review, Jolly and Basu Ray (2006) came to a conclusion that the findings at the country-level have strongly reinforced the value of human security as an operational approach to people-centered security with the useful policy outcomes. This theoretical premise is very much necessary for the argument put forth in this paper that human security is therefore practically possible.

2. **Critical Perspectives: Questioning the analytical utility of human security**

In spite of the idea being well-appreciated, the concept of human security had garnered much critical attention including scholarly criticism. The most significant and influential critique came from Roland Paris (2001) in his article, "Human Security: Paradigm Shift or Hot Air?" argued that the concept is explained vaguely enough for a concept that broad. He further extends hi argument stating that as human security includes all the types of threats from poverty to political oppression, the framers of the concept has not defined the important and required parameters for policy formulation. If everything poses security threat, then the concept loses its discriminatory power and its use as a guide for security action. Moreover, Paris asserts that the wide scope of human security makes it impossible for international institutions and organizations such as the United Nations Organizations to fulfill the high expectations associated with this concept.

These criticisms are significant and must be engaged with utmost seriousness. The lack of a widely agreed definition for the concept of human security makes it difficult for policy makers and the government to turn the concept into a realistic policies especially with the necessary resources such as money, infrastructure being limited. A government facing multiple problems including external aggression and internal pressures such as poverty would find it challenging and difficult to implement every aspect of human security.

Nevertheless, the empirical data indicates that even if Paris' critique is theoretically valid, it overstates the practicality of the implementation of the framework. Jolly and Basu Ray (2006) uses the examples of Afghanistan and Latvia NHDR to rebut the statement that human security cannot generate policy,

wherein these nation-states have implemented detailed policies based on their specific conditions. More significantly, Costa Rica serves as a primary example of implementation of human security. The country abolished its standing military in 1948 and redirected the expenditure used on defense to education and healthcare which brought in productive outcomes in the long run. Thus the data clearly depicts the flexible nature of human security as it does not put in limitation in policy development.

Another related critique is the securitization of development. Securitization of development refers to the act of viewing every developmental issue possessing a possibility of threat. When governments start to view issues such as poverty, education, unemployment and much more in a security lens, they tend to respond resorting to force rather than using peaceful means. This can be clearly seen post 9/11 where force was used in the name of human security which proved to be counter-productive in the end. According to Jolly and Basu Ray (2006), a significant case of misusing the concept of human security can be seen in the activities of the United States Department of Homeland Security, which protects the citizens of the country from any possible threats by threatening other countries militarily, thus violating the human security of population in Afghanistan and Iraq.

3. Empirical evidence: The Human Cost of Militarization
Apart from the theoretical discussion, a considerable amount of data studies have looked into the implication of states' choice of investing in military rather than in social welfare. It is through this evidence base that the argument of militarization as a clear danger to human security has been established.

The work of Paul Collier and others at the World Bank in studying civil war and development demonstrate that war and high levels of expenditure on defense constitutes what researchers all "poverty traps", cycles where the prioritization of military activities leads to the destruction of the social and economic structures needed for human development, thereby resulting in the conditions that sustain both poverty and insecurity. The countries in such cycles invariably suffer negative trends in exactly those aspects of human security highlighted in the 1994 Human Development Report, food security, health security, economic security and personal security all become increasingly compromised as the level of military spending rises. The significance of this finding is apparent from the situations described in this paper, the military involvement of the Saudi-led coalition in Yemen has resulted exactly in such a humanitarian catastrophe, the country where the prioritization of military needs has created a famine, collapse of the healthcare system and massive displacement. Similarly, in Russia, the rise in military spending since 2022 has been paralleled by reductions in social spending and hard times for regular Russians.

The Stockholm International Peace Research Institute 's (SIPRI) annual Military Expenditure Database which tracks the defense spending and expenses of different countries, serves as another evidence complementary the discussion. In all SIPRI studies on the matter, there is always a trend of rising military expenditures in conflict-prone countries coinciding with decreasing expenditures in social sectors such as health and education. This trend can be seen in the examples discussed in this paper.

Public opinion on this further adds an empirical dimension to the methodology of this paper. Surveys on global attitudes towards military spending, conducted by Pew Research Centres, reveals that in most countries citizens prefer and prioritize government spending in welfare of the country rather than in defense. These surveys directly reveal that the citizens of a country do not consider military security as the primary concern of a nation. This disparity between the citizens priorities and the state's allocation of resources is one of the key arguments of the paper. In the case of Latvia NHDR, according to Jolly & Basu Ray (2006), Latvian citizens identified the lack of money to finance healthcare and problems with pension system as the main security threats, this threat was even rated higher than the danger of terrorism or warfare.

4. **Identifying the gap**

When taken as a whole, the above literature provides a strong theoretical foundation on which human security can be based, responds to critiques of the concept and contains concrete empirical examples that prove the detrimental impact of militarization on individuals. However, what needs to be investigated further and elaborated upon more is how particular states deal with the choice between military and human security explicitly and how it impacts their citizens. This paper attempts to fill in this gap in human security studies through comparative analysis of cases which have been chosen to shed light on various aspects of the problem: Russia-Ukraine, which can be considered a case of militarization as opposed to human security and Yemen, which is an example of humanitarian crisis caused by military action. Through analysis of these cases, this paper aims at contributing to a rapidly-growing literature on the idea that national security is impossible without human security and that militarization of the state constitutes a threat to democracy and individuals' well-being.

Case Studies:

Case Study 1: The Russian-Ukraine War – Militarization and the Erosion of Human Security

One of the most striking cases of human security framework in the contemporary global world was when Russia launched a full-scale invasion over Ukraine on February 24, 2022. The conflict had not only revealed the nuances and impacts of a war but also the current global thought on the prioritization of military over the human welfare which leads to a war-like crisis which undermines the very reason behind military security. This case study aims to explore the concept of war through the lens of human security, paying attention to how the militarization of the states' priorities on either side has led to a tangible deterioration of various aspects of human security including economic, food, health, and personal and community security, while common people have been suffering the greatest impact of decisions taken by those who hold the state power. The Russian-Ukraine war is therefore used by me as one of the major examples, as it is more widely apprehended and understood with its wide range of evidence available.

- Military expenditure and the reallocation of state resources

The financial spending of the Russian-Ukraine war serves as the biggest evidence to the priorities between military security and human security. Global military spending was at an unprecedented high level of $2.24 trillion in 2023 (SIPRI, 2023), which is the greatest increase during one year since the Cold War era according to the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI). Military spending of Russia increased greatly after the invasion of Ukraine in 2022 to an estimated amount of $109 billion in 2023 (SIPRI, 2023),, that is 5.9 percent of the country's GDP and the highest ratio since the fall of the Soviet Union. (SIPRI, 2023)

Within Russia itself, the spending done for the security and welfare of the citizens has faced massive cuts due to the ongoing war. According to the Russian Federal Treasury and other analysts, the healthcare spending has drastically reduced as a share of the expenses in the defense has increased. The government's 2024 federal budget revealed a 29% budget allocation on defense and security, the highest after the Cold War Era, while compromising on the healthcare and education. In its 2024 federal budget, the Russian government set aside some 29 percent of the budget for defense and security-related expenditures, the highest ever in the post-Soviet period at the expense of social sector expenses on healthcare and education. This trend corresponds precisely to that found by Collier et al. in their study of military expenditure and poverty traps: the larger the military budgeting, the smaller the social sector expenditures.

However, as far as the Ukrainian party is concerned, the impact of the war on their economy was no less devastating. As noted in the World Bank's Rapid Damage and Needs Assessment for Ukraine, the amount of damage done to the Ukrainian economy and infrastructure exceeded $411 billion at the end of 2023, while the cost of its recovery is assessed to be higher than $486 billion. The economy of Ukraine contracted by about 29 percent in just one year of 2022 (World Bank, 2023), which is among the most dramatic cases of economic decline ever observed in Europe, both in times of peace and war. Although some assistance provided by other countries helped alleviate the losses, the allocation of Ukrainian government funding to military spending brought up human security problems in various areas.

- Humanitarian Consequences: Displacement and Personal Security
The most evident impact, because of the Russia-Ukraine war, was the displacement of the civilian population in a great number ever since the Second World War. According to the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), the ongoing war has led to the biggest ever refugee crisis in all of Europe. Until the middle of 2023, the number of Ukrainians who became refugees in Europe exceeded 8 million people (UNHCR, 2023). In addition to that, there were 5.1 million internally displaced people within Ukraine. It means that about 30 percent of the 44-million Ukrainian population was forced to leave their homes.

  The impact of this displacement goes way beyond the trauma of leaving one's home. Several research conducted by the UNHCR and the International Organization for Migration reports that majority of the displaced Ukrainians are facing severe financial crisis with many of them having lost jobs, their source of income, healthcare facilities and education for their children. A survey conducted by the UNHCR has revealed approximately 73% of the Ukrainians are now facing deterioration in their economic

background with difficulty in accessing healthcare and education (UNHCR, 2023). These data showcase the impacts of war and military conflict on human security.

In Ukraine itself, there have been reports of civilian deaths recorded by the United Nations Monitoring Mission on Human Rights in Ukraine. As of December 2023, the UN has recorded more than 10,000 civilians killed and more than 18,500 injured (UN Monitoring Mission, 2023) numbers that most probably underestimate the reality of the situation due to difficulties in recording in an area where military operations were taking place. Civilian targets include residential areas, hospitals, and schools, which constitute a breach of the personal and community aspects of human security. There have been 533 attacks on healthcare institutions in Ukraine from February 2022 to December 2023 as recorded by the United Nations (UN Monitoring Mission, 2023), an indication of how military activities deliberately undermine the infrastructure on which human security rests.

- Food and Economic Security
  The Russia-Ukraine War caused severe implications on the food and economic levels not just of the two affected countries but rather on a larger global scale. This illustrates hoe prioritization of military security generates widespread discourse on human security not just within the territories of the inflicting countries but also on a global level.

  Prior to the 2022 invasion, Ukraine and Russia together accounted for about 30% of the global wheats export and 65% of the global sunflower oil exports. The disruption caused by the war interrupted a major share of the agricultural production leading to a global chaos (FAO, 2022). According to the Food and Agricultural Organization of the United Nations Organization (FAO) the prices of food commodities on the international market were at an all-time high in March 2022, with the FAO Food Price Index up by 12.6 percent within just one month following the invasion. According to the estimates from the World Food Programme (FAO, 2022), the crisis has contributed to a further 47 million people experiencing acute food insecurity in 2022 (WFP,2022), people who have nothing to do with the conflict but whose food security is now threatened due to militarized state interests in Eastern Europe.

  In Ukraine itself, agricultural production fell by about 35 to 40 percent in 2022 (FAO, 2022) due to destruction, occupation, or inaccessibility of farmland caused by military activity and landmines. The Black Sea Grain Initiative of July 2022 facilitated by the United Nations and Turkey to facilitate the export of grain from Ukraine offered some respite but was unilaterally called off by Russia in July 2023. The FAO reported that food insecurity is prevalent in Ukraine itself, as about 28 percent of Ukrainians suffered from food insecurity (FAO, 2022) by mid-2023 as compared to about 7 percent before the invasion.

  In terms of economic security, the situation is equally dire for both nations. While the unemployment level in Ukraine rose from about 10% pre-invasion (World Bank, 2023) to more than 35% in mid-2022 because of the destruction of the economy and displacement of many workers, the World Bank stated that approximately 7.1 million people (World Bank, 2023) in Ukraine were living below the poverty line because of the war in 2022. The combination of economic sanctions imposed by other countries and military spending in Russia have resulted in economic insecurity among the

common people in Russia, where inflation levels reached over 11% in 2022, according to the Russian Central Bank. (Russian Central Bank, 2022)

- Health Security

  The effects of the war on the state of health security in Ukraine have been catastrophic and thoroughly recorded. Destruction of the infrastructure of health care constitutes one of the most direct breaches of human security theory seen in this situation. As mentioned above, there were more than 533 instances of such destruction according to UN records as of late 2023. According to the World Health Organization (WHO), by the middle of 2023, 30 percent of all healthcare infrastructure in Ukraine was damaged or destroyed. (WHO, 2023)

  The effects go beyond the damage of the infrastructure. The displacement of healthcare personnel, many of whom have sought refuge elsewhere, has left the surviving healthcare facilities under-staffed. There have been shortages of crucial medicines, medical supplies and blood in conflict-affected areas of Ukraine for the entirety of 2022 and 2023 as noted by the World Health Organization. This is especially true for chronic illness treatment where the continuity of care has been greatly hindered for those suffering from conditions like diabetes, heart problems and cancer. A survey carried out by the World Health Organization in 2023 found that 40 percent of internally displaced Ukrainians had not been able to access their medicines. (WHO, 2023)

  Mental well-being is another aspect of health security which has gained increased attention considering the Russia-Ukraine war. The psychological impact of continued conflict forced displacement and losses is immense and enduring. According to the WHO, about 9.6 million people in Ukraine, accounting for one fourth of the remaining population, are vulnerable to mental illnesses such as PTSD, depression and anxiety due to the ongoing war in the country. The above statistic aligns with the observations made in the case study of Afghanistan National Human Development Report cited in the work of Jolly and Basu Ray (2006). The study identifies the mental health crises in the post-conflict scenario as an important but overlooked dimension of human insecurity.

- Public Opinion and the Human Security Deficit

  This gap between the concerns of the military establishment of the state and those of average citizens in terms of their security needs is especially apparent from the survey results on the public opinion of both Russians and Ukrainians. Surveys carried out by the Levada Center in Russia, which happens to be the only truly independent organization that carries out surveys in the country, demonstrated the presence of public fear concerning such aspects as economic instability, problems with healthcare services, and the price level in the life of Russians who supported the Ukrainian military campaign. Thus, according to a 2023 Levada Center poll, economic concerns (inflation, unemployment, declining living standard) are among the top three concerns of Russian citizens next to the security concerns related to the war (Levada Centre, 2023). These results confirm the finding provided in numerous NHDR reports by Jolly and Basu Ray (2006).

  In the case of Ukrainian refugees, studies done by Pew Research Center in 2022 and 2023 have shown that for the vast majority of Ukrainians, the most significant problems were related to economic security, healthcare access, and education of their

children, which demonstrates that displacement is responsible for creating human security deficiencies of many different types. This fact proves that the thesis stated by this paper regarding superiority of the concept of human security over traditional state-based one is correct.

- Analysis
  Russia-Ukraine war presents strong empirical evidence in support of the claim that the focus on military security at the expense of human security results in a series of human welfare problems that eventually lead to instability and insecurity despite the investments made in military security. It is apparent from the data presented in this case study that there is a pattern with regard to the deterioration of all aspects of human security as military expenditure increased on both sides during the war; however, these people did not have any say in the matter of going to war.

  The 1994 HDR's point that the concept of security should be based on the protection of individuals against any dangers for their everyday life as opposed to the protection of the borders of states with military means found strong empirical support in the Russia-Ukraine case. The war did not enhance security of Russian citizens as it created problems with economy, isolation of the country and the psychological burden of long-term war with no end in sight. It did not solve the security problems of Ukraine either as it created the biggest crisis of refugees in Europe and destroyed economic progress for several decades.

  This analysis is not trying to undermine the importance of military security. No one is questioning the right of Ukraine to defend its territorial integrity. Instead, it shows how the general principle holds that while states have valid reasons to use military force against threats to their security, such action creates human security costs that states and international institutions are systematically blind to. This case between Russia and Ukraine is indicative of how, in order for a more balanced view of security to be taken, which would mean the proper utilization of the human security model, military defenses are not enough but social defenses must also be built to protect against any human security shocks that may occur due to conflict. As the numbers show, the inability to build this social infrastructure means that these individuals become food, economically, and health insecure.

Case Study 2: The Yemen Civil War – When Military Intervention Produces Humanitarian Ruin

The Yemen Civil War, as described by the United Nations Organization, is one of the best examples of humanitarian catastrophe in the 21st century, due to the prolonged stay of external military forces. Yemen's tragic situation serves as the best example to describe how the prioritization of military objectives without considering the aspects of human security overthrows the humanitarian aspects of the state. The war, post the Saudi-led military coalition, has faced constant famines, collapse in the healthcare system, mass displacement and economic fallout of the state which has led the country to be an example to a total human security failure. Unlike the Russian-Ukraine war, where at least one of the countries' received international support, in the Yemen civil war, the country was completely abandoned to the consequences of a military conflict. In this case study, the human cost of the conflict in Yemen is evaluated using the concept of human security, using extensive statistical

information provided by the United Nations, World Food Program, WHO and many other international agencies involved in humanitarian aid to prove how disastrous the human cost is of giving priority to military rather than human welfare.

- Background
  The Yemen Civil War has its root in a mix of complexities including political instability, economic fallout and sectarianism that characterized Yemen even before the ongoing conflict. Post the Arab Spring uprisings in 2011, the President of Yemen Ali Abdullah Saleh was deposed and replaced by his deputy Abd Rabbuh Mansur Had, in an organizational deal by the Gulf Cooperation Council. However, the country faced lack of stability leading to the Houthi movement, a Shia Muslim sect opposing the central government managed to capture the capital city of Sanaa and much of northern Yemen. In March 2015, a coalition of 9 countries led by Saudi Arabia intervened militarily to support the Hadi government.

  Military spending of Saudi Arabia in 2022, according to SIPRI, is one of the highest globally in relation to GDP and amounts to approximately $75.8 billion (SIPRI 2022), which accounts for 6.6% of Saudi GDP. The second major participant in the coalition, the United Arab Emirates, spends approximately $22.7 billion annually on military expenditure (SIPRI 2022). These numbers show how much the two states are investing into their military endeavors, not under the pretext of any real threats but purely on the grounds of geopolitics and strategy, to the detriment of Yemeni civilians. The Houthi rebels have been receiving military assistance, including ballistic missiles and other weaponry, supplied to them by Iran, thus internationalizing the crisis and its impact on Yemeni civilians.

  Total losses from the Yemen conflict for the Yemeni economy are estimated by the United Nations Development Program at more than $126 billion from 2015 to 2019 (UNDP,2019) , an amount that exceeds the pre-conflict GDP of Yemen, which is about $43 billion. Any way of looking at the problem indicates that the military aspects of the current conflict in Yemen have required so much effort that there was simply no room left for human security, resulting in a humanitarian disaster.

- Economic Security: The Collapse of a National Economy
  Yemen, even before the conflict escalated in 2015, has been one of the poorest Arab countries with almost 48% of the population living below the national poverty line with large dependence on food imports and oil revenues. The war has consistently worsened the economic condition of the country leaving majority of the masses to become poverty-stricken.

  According to figures by the World Bank, the growth of the GDP of Yemen had decreased by about 50 percent between 2015 and 2019 (World Bank,2023) , which is considered to be one of the worst economic falls seen in the world in recent times irrespective of the fact whether there was a situation of war or peace in Yemen during the time period under consideration. According to UN figures for 2021, almost 80 percent of the Yemeni population (UNOCHA, 2023), more than 24 million individuals, required humanitarian assistance; hence, it can be said that Yemen is the country whose population faced the most humanitarian issues in the whole world.

The most negative impact faced by the Yemeni public sector was the economic insecurity. Due to the occupation of the country's capital by the Houthis, the central bank of Yemen was forced to relocate from Sanaa to Aden in 2016. Since then, the Yemeni government has failed to pay the salaries of approximately 1.25 million civil servants (UNOCHA,2023), including teachers, medical practitioners, and others. As stated by UNOCHA, due to the inability to provide salaries, approximately 7 million people have been stripped of their only source of income, causing catastrophic economic insecurity among a large proportion of the population. The collapse of the salaries of public sector workers has caused a lot of harm to both healthcare and education sectors, as civil servants stopped working at their workplaces without pay or started seeking other means of support due to their inability to feed themselves and their families.

The Yemeni riyal has had a significant depreciation since the onset of the conflict; about 180 percent (Central Bank of Yemen,2021) depreciation in value relative to the US dollar was recorded in the period 2015 to 2021, according to statistics by the Central Bank of Yemen. Such an occurrence has led to an increase in the prices of imported products like foods, drugs, and fuel at a time when the earning capacity of the common person in Yemen has been most affected. The economic insecurity caused by the depreciation of the currency, lack of salaries and economic downturn has been such that most people cannot afford the basic needs of life.

- Food Security: Famine as a consequence of military priorities
  The food security problem in Yemen is arguably one of the worst examples of the consequences of placing military concerns above the welfare of humanity. Before the war broke out, Yemen was a nation that relied heavily on food imports, importing about 90% of its needs for food and fuel. The impact of this situation has been disastrous.

  Yemen is referred to by the UN World Food Programme as being the site of the largest food insecurity emergency in the world. Indeed, the extent of the problem has continued to exceed the capacity of international humanitarian aid organizations to meet the needs. WFP statistics show that in 2022, some 21.6 million people in Yemen (WFP,2023) needed food aid, or about 66 percent of the population. WFP estimates that, without steady flows of humanitarian aid, 161,000 people in Yemen would starve to death by the middle of 2023.(WFP, 2023)

  There is an obvious causal link between the military actions taken and the food insecurity faced by the civilians in Yemen. The air strikes carried out by the coalitions have time and again targeted the agricultural sector of Yemen, including fishing boats and food storage markets, all of which are instrumental in the production and distribution of food but lack any military value. A report prepared by the United Nations Panel of Experts on Yemen in 2016 mentioned several strikes on farms, fishing boats, food trucks and food storage facilities, saying that in certain cases it appeared as though the strikes were deliberate and aimed at targeting the food production and distribution infrastructures that civilians depended on. The naval blockade placed by the Saudi-led coalition on Yemeni ports, particularly the port of Hodeidah which accounts for 70% of Yemen's food imports, has further exacerbated the problem of food security as it has restricted the flow of food and humanitarian aid to the country.

- Health Security: The Systematic Destruction of Healthcare

  Yemen's healthcare system, from before had been fragile and constantly deteriorating due to the continuous military operation which has led to financial struggles to support and ended the payment of the civil servants. Thus the impact of the deteriorating healthcare on an average Yemeni has been devastating.

  Based on WHO statistics, about 50 percent of health institutions in Yemen (WHO,2022) had been rendered unusable or partially usable by 2022 as a result of destruction of infrastructure, lack of resources, lack of fuel, and the departure of healthcare workers who have not been paid in months or years. WHO records at least 100 cases of attacks on health institutions in Yemen (WHO,2022) since 2015 to 2022, including attacks on hospitals, ambulances, and healthcare workers, all being violations of international humanitarian law.

  The breakdown of the routine health services is responsible for secondary health crises that have become widespread on a large scale. One of the worst cholera epidemics ever recorded has occurred in Yemen since 2016, where according to the statistics released by the World Health Organization (WHO) and UNICEF, there have been at least 2.5 million suspected cases of cholera and around 3,900 deaths linked to it up until the end of 2019. The epidemic has been caused by the destruction of water and sanitation systems in military conflicts, along with the collapse of the public health system response capabilities.

  The indicators for maternal and child health in Yemen have been declining alarmingly due to the ongoing conflict. The World Health Organization (WHO) estimated that maternal mortality in Yemen is at approximately 164 deaths for every 100,000 live births (WHO,2022), making it one of the highest rates of maternal mortality in the Arab states; the war has greatly contributed to the already existing problem of accessing maternal healthcare in Yemen. UNICEF reported that the child mortality rate in Yemen is among the highest in the world, at 71 deaths for every 1,000 live births. (UNICEF,2022)

  The impact of this conflict on mental wellbeing is equally disastrous. According to a study published in the Lancet in 2019, an estimated 7 million Yemenis (UNOCHA, 2023), one-quarter of the total population, were suffering from mental health problems as a result of the conflict, ranging from post-traumatic stress disorder, depression, and anxiety. Since the healthcare facilities had been severely inadequate in Yemen even prior to the conflict, they have now almost completely been stripped away in the face of the destruction wrought by the war.

- Displacement and Personal Security

  Yemen's conflict has created one of the largest refugee situations in the Middle East, which has had dire impacts on the security of millions of Yemenis. According to data provided by the UNHCR, as of 2023, there were about 4.5 million Yemeni refugees (UNHCR, 2023) as a result of the ongoing conflict in the country, people who were made to flee their homes due to attacks, airstrikes, or the failure of the economic and

social fabric of their communities. In contrast with Ukraine's refugee situation, where there were significant flows of refugees moving out to Europe, with neighbouring countries having the capacity to cater to the needs of the displaced population, Yemen's refugees have mostly stayed within Yemen, trapped in camps without any food or water.

The situation regarding personal security of civilians in conflict zones in Yemen has been well documented as highly insecure. ACLED has documented over 25,000 conflict events in Yemen from 2015 to 2022, including airstrikes, battles and explosions impacting civilian zones (ACLED,2022). The UN Panel of Experts on Yemen has noted several cases of airstrikes targeting civilian infrastructures such as schools, hospitals, markets and residential zones where there is not enough proof to confirm the legitimacy of military targets to allow these strikes in accordance with humanitarian law. These incidents are a clear violation of personal security as outlined by human security principles, the right of individuals to be free of violence and the risk of harm.

- Public opinion and International Responses

  The divide between the strategic interests of the parties to the conflict in Yemen and the security interests of average Yemeni citizens is significant and clearly documented. Humanitarian organizations that have conducted surveys among displaced Yemenis, as well as communities caught up in the fighting, always show that food security, access to health care and economic survival, human security factors top the list of interests of the people concerned, while the political and military factors motivating the conflict mean nothing to them.

  The same is true for international public opinion data. Surveys by Pew Research Center of attitudes towards the Yemen conflict in coalition countries showed that knowledge of humanitarian implications of the war was far less common among people than knowledge of military and geopolitical implications of the conflict, an evidence of the fact that official and media discourse tended to emphasize military security implications of the situation rather than human security implications. In addition, YouGov polls in the UK, one of the main suppliers of weapons to the Saudi Arabian coalition, revealed that most Britons, when made aware of humanitarian implications of the arms supply to Saudi Arabia, supported limitation of those supplies which implies that properly informed public opinion prioritizes human security over military or commercial interests.

- Analysis

  Yemen has its own place and significance in the comparative analysis presented in this paper. While the case of Russia-Ukraine shows how the trade-off in terms of human security can be used in relation to a major conflict between two important military forces, the case of Yemen shows the outcome when there is military intervention by outside forces which have an overwhelming force, but with no accountability with regard to human security at all. As a result of such intervention, according to the statistics shown in this case study, there is no real security left at all but rather the destruction of human security in every sense possible.

In this regard, the case of Yemen becomes a strong evidence for the claims put forward in this paper as it proves that military security and human security are not just two opposite approaches; they are completely incompatible. The military actions carried out by the Saudi-led coalition have not secured Yemen and its neighbouring countries. On the contrary, they have led to famine, disease, displacement and economic ruin, which created additional threats to the stability of the region and undermined human security of those individuals who had nothing to do with the war. On the other hand, the Houthi movement has managed to strengthen their positions with the help of the humanitarian crisis created by the war.

This analysis carries great significance with respect to the theoretical framework provided within the literature review. In 1994, HDR argued that security should be viewed in the light of protection of individuals from threats posed by those factors which have direct bearing on their everyday life. In terms of empirical validation of this theory, the case of Yemen stands out with utmost severity. Military spending by Saudi Arabia, UAE and other countries in the coalition has done nothing to guarantee the security of people of Yemen. Instead, it has resulted in the creation of the worst humanitarian crisis ever witnessed along with malnourishment of an entire generation of Yemenis, destruction of the healthcare system of the country and displacement of the whole population, a scenario wherein human security deficits would take many decades to be resolved. The case of Yemen turns this argument into a morally urgent one wherein the issue of human suffering on a massive scale can be expected to arise as a result of military spending over human security.

Public Opinion and the case for human centred security

From the case studies presented earlier about the war between Russia and Ukraine and the civil war in Yemen, it is evident through empirical evidence that the emphasis on military security over human security has resulted in disastrous results for the ordinary citizens, results that are reflected in all dimensions of human security as defined by the Human Development Report of 1994. What the case studies also highlight is the existence of a very clear pattern that is more general than just the context of the particular wars, which is the gap that exists between the security priorities of states and the security needs of the citizens whom these states claim to represent. In this section, we will discuss available data on public opinion from global and regional surveys to show that ordinary citizens around the world, irrespective of the cultural, economic, and political background, always give priority to human security issues rather than military security issues.

- Global attitudes towards military spending

  The most comprehensive database on opinions related to security priorities from around the world is the Pew Global Attitudes Survey conducted by the Pew Research Center, which has been gauging public attitudes towards governmental budgeting priorities, defense spending, and welfare for more than twenty years in many different nations. This research data is incredibly consistent regardless of the country and relates directly to the thesis of this paper.

In a Pew Research Center survey conducted in 2023 among 24 countries, it was shown that majorities in most countries surveyed favoured government spending on health care, education and social services over spending more money on the military (Pew Research Center, 2023). The preference in countries directly or indirectly impacted by military conflict was even stronger implying that direct exposure to conflicts makes people prefer investments in human security over increased military spending. When it comes to the European countries which responded to the war between Russia and Ukraine, although a majority was in favour of sending military aid to Ukraine, at the same time a majority in the very same survey was worried about the effect of high defense budgets on social spending domestically.

The World Value Survey, which captures the opinions of more than 80 nations making up almost 90 percent of the global population, is an additional source. In the different waves of this survey, people always place personal economic security, access to health services, and security of their family members at the top of their priorities, while military threats from outside have little importance in most countries (World Values Survey,2022). This is true for both those nations whose governments spend much money on the military and who have real security issues.

The Gallup World Poll results further support the observations made above, with special relevance to the case studies analyzed in this essay. When polled across various Middle Eastern and North African countries, countries either directly affected by or engaged in the Yemeni war, the people consistently stated that economic insecurity, employment, health care and food security were the issues that concerned them the most (Gallup,2023). Military security and external threats were issues of concern as well but did not outweigh human security issues in terms of the everyday experience of the individual. This observation perfectly corresponds with the Latvia NHDR results reported by Jolly & Basu Ray (2006) in which the Latvian population listed access to health care and economic security as their main security issues, despite the increased tension in the region.

- Public opinion in conflict affected contexts

Opinions of those affected by the conflict situation provide the strongest argument for the hypothesis put forward in this paper. The fact is that no matter how insecure the population may be in terms of security issues, people always list human security issues as the top priorities in their lives. In other words, there is no correlation between insecurity and military security priority.

In Ukraine, the series of opinion polls undertaken by the Kyiv International Institute of Sociology during the course of the war show that there is a complex situation regarding the prioritization of security among the population of Ukraine. While vast majorities of Ukrainians (above 90 percent in each survey carried out in 2022 and 2023) agree on the need for military resistance to the Russian invasion, the same proportions prioritize economic security, availability of medical services and the well-being of displaced family members as their key concerns (Kyiv International Institute of Sociology, 2023). These figures demonstrate the important differentiation which is made in this paper, that the support for military resistance in case of foreign aggression does not mean the acceptance of military security over human security as a

model of governance. Ukrainians defend their country while suffering and voicing the issues of human insecurity which the military conflict causes.

In the case of displaced populations in Yemen, a survey conducted by UNHCR and humanitarian organizations shows an even more drastic situation. When surveyed regarding their concerns as internally displaced Yemenis, people consistently identify food security, access to healthcare services, economic security and education of children as the key priorities of affected populations, while the goals behind the conflict are perceived as totally foreign to their everyday life. According to the results of UNOCHA survey in 2022 among the population affected by the conflict in Yemen, 84 percent identified food insecurity as the most important issue, 71 percent identified the lack of access to healthcare services and 68 percent identified economic insecurity as the key issues (UNOCHA,2022). The issue of military security defined as the protection from armed attacks was mentioned by a smaller number of participants, despite the fact that the population lived in the area of the ongoing military conflict. This fact perfectly proves one of the core ideas of the human security approach, namely the idea that the problems of security of ordinary people, including the areas of ongoing military conflicts, are the human security problems rather than the military security of the state.

- The Democratic Legitimacy of Human Security

  The survey results presented in this section have implications which go beyond simple descriptions to the very essence of the argument being made in this paper. In any democracy, and indeed in the larger context of a form of governance which the international community, through organizations such as the United Nations, seeks to promote, governments derive their legitimacy from the consent of the governed, who, in turn, are primarily interested in their security concerns. The common result obtained through all the global public opinion surveys, which show that citizens give precedence to human security over military security, has clear implications in terms of a democratic mandate which is not fulfilled by state allocations of resources.

  Such an assertion gains additional validity from the structural relationship between military expenditure and democratic accountability. Military expenditures are usually undertaken by small political and military elites with little democratic oversight, especially in cases of authoritarian or semi-authoritarian regimes such as Russia and Saudi Arabia, where the decision to go to war is not subject to any form of popular accountability. The human costs of such decisions, however, are paid for by all members of the society, millions of ordinary people who did not have their security considerations taken into account in making the decision to go to war, according to public opinion data. This disparity in decision-making processes with regard to military security on the one hand and bearing human security costs on the other hand is an evident flaw of democracy, which can be corrected by adopting a human security approach.

Conclusion

This paper aimed at analyzing an issue of great importance to the current geopolitics: *"Whether states should place emphasis on human security rather than military security?"* Using a multi-method approach involving qualitative analysis, comparing two wars, the war

between Russia and Ukraine, and the Yemen civil war, as well as the results of research into public opinion and literature on human security provided in the 1994 Human Development Report, this paper has come to the conclusion that the answer to the stated question is clearly positive.

What is most impressive about the evidence in these two case studies is its overwhelming consistency. In the Russian and Ukrainian states, militarized national policies have led to economic collapse, forced migration, breakdown of the healthcare system, food insecurity and Europe's largest refugee problem, all of which have been created overwhelmingly by regular people who had absolutely no say in the matter when it came to going to war. In Yemen, the ongoing militarized efforts of the Saudi Arabian-led coalition has led to conditions that have been called "the world's worst humanitarian crisis", a breakdown of food security, health security, economic security and individual security for an entire nation, which have been caused by the pursuit of military objectives that benefited foreign nations while harming human security in Yemen. In both instances, the data reveals not just that human security was compromised through prioritizing militarized strategies but also that the military goals themselves were ultimately unsuccessful.

The survey results discussed in this paper also offer an additional and equally important dimension to this argument. People in all sorts of different countries and cultures, from Europe dealing with the Russia-Ukraine crisis to people affected by conflicts in Yemen, always consider issues related to human security as their top priority even in times of active military operations. Such preference forms a mandate from democracy that current trends in government spending do not recognize and which is precisely what a human-focused security policy needs to rectify.

The conceptual framework that was established by the 1994 HDR and elaborated by the writings of Jolly and Basu Ray (2006), Paris and Collier (as cited in the literature review part of this paper), constitutes the intellectual basis for this change of course. In terms of the theoretical framework put forward by the 1994 HDR, human security is people-centered, multi-dimensional, inter-related and universal. In other words, it is recognized that security of states is intrinsically tied to that of the individuals that make up those states and that no matter how technologically advanced it is, military power can never compensate for the absence of human well-being that real security demands.

It follows from this discussion that the preference of military security over human security is a direct challenge to democracy and well-being, a challenge which is not speculative but has empirical proof and, which is not theoretical but is an actual challenge in the lives of many millions of people around the world today. The need for a human security approach is not an idealistic appeal but is an imperative conclusion based upon the data presented in this paper with respect to displacement, famine, health care breakdown, and economic devastation; and, the consistent view of ordinary people all around the world that security is not defined by military strength, but by the capacity to feed one's family, to have access to health care, to educate one's children, and to lead one's life without fear of conflict, poverty, and governmental neglect.

The road to this kind of approach will be possible through political will, institution-building and a total change in how security is viewed and measured by the states. This will involve the use of international organizations like the UN to apply the human security framework not only as an analysis tool but as a way of assessing state conduct and making them accountable

to this framework. It will also require ordinary citizens who care about the same priorities when it comes to security as outlined in the human security framework.

It does not take much imagination to see how the 21st century has already shown us the human toll that can come from the lack of reorientation towards a human-centered approach. The examples presented in this paper, taken from the real-life experience of millions of displaced people from Ukraine, malnourished children from Yemen and economically impoverished civilians from both conflicts zones, show clearly that such a change needs to be made not out of preference, but due to moral obligation and political necessity. The question is not anymore about whether we need to reorientate our thinking and actions towards a human-centered model, but if we have the political will to do so.

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