Journal of Human Security | 2022 | Volume 18 | Issue 2 | Pages 1–5
DOI: 10.12924/johs2022.18020001
ISSN: 1835–3800

Journal of Human Security

Editorial

Re-thinking Violence, Everyday and (In)Security: Feminist/Intersectional Interventions

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Published: 16 August 2022

Abstract: This special gender issue brings to the fore a renewed focus on the importance of feminist intersectional analyses in understanding violence and (in)security in the everyday. It does so through the examination of several cases across the globe. The first set of articles examines how gender is understood in the context of police reform initiatives in post-conflict contexts, where despite political peace agreements, many forms of violence and insecurity continue in the everyday. The second set of articles focuses on gender in populist movement, and particularly foregrounds an intersectional lens. The intersections of race, religion, class, caste, geographies and gender raise important questions when analyzing populist projects, including how the rise of populism may indicate a growing dissonance between the domestic and international, and how this is relevant to understanding the changing nature of violence and (in)security in this changing global era. Taken together, the two sets of articles give a rich account of the significance of incorporating a more complex understanding of gender in gaining better insight into contemporary societal processes.

1. Introduction

The concept of human security has been subjected to a variety of iterations over its almost 30- year history since its popularization in the 1994 UN Human Development Report [1]. Regularly touted as an approach that includes an understanding of the (in)securities of average people as opposed to just focusing on state security, it has nevertheless been subjected to various backlashes as reflecting eurocentric, neocolonialist claims about who defines human security and for what purpose, gender and feminist analyses about narrow understandings of a "universal man" to which the concept human security applies, or a devaluing of the concept as being irrelevant to security studies and policy whatsoever. At the same time, it is increasingly evident that human security, sometimes merged (or conflated) with "everyday" security, is targeted in gender-based violence (GBV), the exclusion of women and other groups from sufficient participation in their own communities including policing, as well as in various disinformation campaigns to foster instability and violence in society.

While feminist research on gender-based violence and (in)securities has over the last decades expanded our conceptual understanding of the complexities of gender in everyday practice [2–5], the concept of gender in wider society has nevertheless remained narrow. Gender is often understood as binary, static, and without contextual complexity, resulting in analyses and interventions which at best are unable to address the myriad of ways in which everyday violence and

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insecurities are gendered, and at worst are used to justify gendered discrimination and subordination [6].

This special gender issue brings to the fore a renewed focus on the importance of feminist intersectional analyses in understanding violence and (in)security in the everyday. It does so through the examination of several cases across the globe. The first set of articles examines how gender is understood in the context of police reform initiatives in post-conflict contexts, where despite political peace agreements, many forms of violence and insecurity continue in the everyday. The second set of articles focuses on gender in populist movement, and particularly foregrounds an intersectional lens. The intersections of race, religion, class, caste, geographies and gender raise important questions when analyzing populist projects, including how the rise of populism may indicate a growing dissonance between the domestic and international, and how this is relevant to understanding the changing nature of violence and (in)security in this changing global era. Taken together, the two sets of articles give a rich account of the significance of incorporating a more complex understanding of gender in gaining better insight into contemporary societal processes.

2. Gender in Police Reform

The first set of articles are based on research conducted under the Horizon 2020 research and innovation project ICT4COP [7]. The focus of this research was on understanding police reform undertaken in post-conflict contexts. The 12 cases chosen were studied through a human security lens, which allowed for an analysis that went beyond state security and explored the interdependencies of a wide range of insecurities as experienced by different groups and individuals [8]. An important finding of the project was that while police reform efforts such as community-oriented policing (COP) often included gender as a category, the understanding of gender was based on assumptions of binarity, and therefore unable to address the complexity of gender relations as understood through a feminist intersectional perspective. The first article provides critical reflections on gendered insecurities in community-oriented policing in post- conflict and postcolonial societies. Using the example of gender-based violence, Erika Rojas examines how the overall mandate of the police to protect everyone equally is undermined by binary assumptions of who are victims and perpetrators, and a blindness to the unequal power relations inherent in different forms of gender insecurities in society, especially those affecting diverse gender or sexual expressions. She argues for the inclusion of local social practices and knowledge in police reform processes to better incorporate the complexity inherent in gendered relations.

The second article looks specifically at the case of GBV in Pakistan, and how a shift in the way in which police deal with GBV victims in concert with local health and community workers would challenge gendered stereotypes of the causes and responses to GBV held by the police and community alike. In this article, Abda Khalid and Ingrid Nyborg explore the potential role of ICT in building the competence of stakeholders in the complexities of addressing and preventing GBV in practice. The third article looks specifically at women in the police in the cases studied under ICT4COP. Katarzyna Struzińska argues that improving gender relations within the police goes beyond their numbers to include the significance of their contribution to peacebuilding processes and gender-sensitive policies, despite their own challenges of gendered discrimination both on and off the job. A fourth article by Sarah Biecker analyzes how community policing disregards women in their daily lives, exploring how they try to become invisible in order to avoid potentially dangerous situations, and how they demonstrate their self-empowering strategies to navigate through rather unsafe everyday life conditions.

The fifth article in this section by Nyborg focuses on the conceptual underpinnings of training of police in COP. She argues that despite the focus in COP on communities, partnerships and gender, these concepts are undertheorized in COP training materials. Through examination of curriculum and interviews with international police advisor trainers, the author finds that particularly the concept of gender in police training remains binary and static, focusing exclusively on the importance of the inclusion of women in reform processes. By not being informed by feminist understandings of gender relations, the author argues that trainings on gender in COP fall short of giving police the tools they need to understand the complexity of gendered insecurities, and instead run the risk of reifying unequal gendered relations. The final two articles look at how information and communication technologies (ICTs) might contribute to addressing gender-based violence in post conflict areas of Guatemala and Kenya. Arunima Sehgal Mukherjee explores how digital interventions can engage as a tool to understand and prevent violence against women. Through the creation of unified databases, data from several institutions were combined and visualized to allow for new conversations between different government institutions, including the police. The study explores this as an innovative was to best document, address and prevent violence against women in several areas of Guatemala. In the final paper of this section, Festus Mukoya examines how digital systems are being used to mitigate violence against women in Kenya. In areas where post-election violence had for years cost countless lives, an SMS-based early warning system for conflict was designed as an integral part of the peace building process. This paper focuses on why and how ICTs can be relevant in mitigating VAWG in conflict ridden settings in Kenya, and how ICTs are fundamentally intertwined with processes of developing.

3. Gender in Populism and Populist Movements

The second set of articles examines how gender and the intersection of other marginalized identities have played an integral role in the development and advancement of

populism in different contexts. Though a contested concept (not unlike "security" or even "human security"), one relatively accepted definition claims that populism is an ideology "that considers society to be ultimately separated into two homogenous and antagonistic groups - 'the pure people' versus the 'corrupt elite' and maintains that politics should be an expression of the volonté générale (general will) of the people" [9]. The following articles examine the trajectories of gender, race, ethnicity, sexual orientation as target points for the fostering of populist ideas, particularly within the far right, but not exclusively so. The conflation of gender and intersectional categories with the reification of certain sets of values embodied within "the people" often ensures if not further solidifies cultures of violence against women, people of color, LGBTQIA2S+, people of differing abilities - in other words, populism can be seen to reinforce the "people" as the narrow but universalized constituency of the middle class, white/euro male. It is within these contexts that we see increases in violence against those communities who are often left out of these "we" communities of the people.

The rise of populism, the salience of the 'nationalist' project [10–14] and the consequences of extremism are the subject of growing research and public discourse across regions, however, the linkages between global politics, populism and extremism are still under- examined. Left wing populism has had a long history in Europe and Asia [15], but there has been an even more significant rise of right-wing populism since the 1980s [12,16–21]. The US has experienced populism reflecting a variety of economic ideologies and political agendas from the late 19th century to present day Republican orthodoxy of free market economics [22,23]. In South Asia populism has been marked by the Hindu nationalist project in India, the Islamist popular movements in Bangladesh and Pakistan, and the Sinhala Buddhist nationalism in Sri Lanka [24–26]. Latin America has had a long history of left-wing populisms too (Venezuela, Ecuador, Argentina) while several post conflict countries in Africa, such as Rwanda and Uganda have also witnessed developmental populist regimes. A 2011 Chatham House report analyzed the rise of extremism in Europe and further its links to populism, noting among other things, that a central feature of this extremist rise was anti-Muslim sentiment combined with a distrust of mainstream political parties, particularly (though not solely) amongst males in lower socio-economic groups with lower education [27]. Race, ethnicity, gender, and age play significant factors in the rise of extremism both on the European far right (eg: the Golden Dawn in Greece – [28] as well as amongst Islamist extremism [29,30]. Despite the intersectional (age, gender, race, etc.) qualities of populism and extremism, a specific gender/intersectional analysis is still largely lacking.

In today's world of globalized media and communication, the rise and effects of populism and extremism are not limited within national boundaries [31]. In a recent podcast broadcasting a roundtable session at the annual Chatham House London Conference [32], participants discussed populism as a pressing global issue, highlighting the disconnect between governments and their populaces, the rise of populism and rejection of elites, and the challenges of preventing extremism, and reconnecting political processes to the everyday concerns of average people.

Populism as a conceptual category is widely contested, with scholars like Taggart (2000) [33] who argue that it does not represent any one particular core value and agenda and is marked by a 'chameleonic character', to scholars like Laclau (1977) [34] who highlight it as a discursive approach, influencing many studies of populism today [35–37]. It has also been the subject of scholarly debate from the standpoint of an organization approach [38,39] Pierre Ostiguy's (2009) cultural (or performative) approach [40] and Cas Mudde's (2007, 2017) [12,41] ideational approach.

Most debates over these themes are generally tethered to liberal/neoliberal, Marxist/post Marxist, structuralist/post structuralist lenses for analysis, and marginalize feminist and intersectional IR research and praxis. A few exceptions to this is more recent work, by Shweta Singh and Elise Feron who underline that populist logic is discursively co-constituted, and rests on intersections of various social dimensions and factors such as race/ethnicity, religion, caste, class or gender/sexual orientation [42].The intersections of race, religion, class, caste, geographies and gender raise important questions when analyzing nationalist ideologies as part of a populist project, including how the rise of populism may indicate a growing dissonance between the domestic and international, and how this is relevant to understanding the changing nature of violence and security in this changing global era.

The papers on populism present a challenge to the concept of human security when populist notions and representations of "we" and the average or everyday security concerns of ordinary people can be used to explicitly increase human insecurity of particular marginalized groups, or in the interest of "universalizing" the concept of "the people" vs "the elite", implicitly affect or worsen human security for particular groups as a result.

The first article by Edmé Domínguez Reyes, Cirila Quintero Ramírez, and Cristina Scheibe Wolff explores the ways in which far right populism has fostered a reversal of many of the advances made in women's rights and gender equality. The conservative narratives that accompany a lot of right-wing rhetoric have included "open machista attitudes" that in various ways have threatened the political advancements of women. The article examines the ongoing results of this conservative, populist framed narrative, whereby those promoting women's and gender rights are rather framed as part of an elite pushing a "gender ideology", which the average people reject. These narratives in turn have given rise to increased GBV, particularly political violence, as a response to perceived threats to "family" values.

The focus on populism, gender analyses and human security continues in the second article by Heidi Riley, Hanna Ketola, Punam Yadav examining the construction of gender agendas in left- wing populist movements. They exam-

ine the case of the Maoist movement in Nepal. Feminist scholarship has highlighted how left-wing populism, when appealing to a generalized "people", tend to produce homogenizing discourses that erase inequalities and difference. The authors argue that this 'sameness' may become contested and utilized by women participating in the lower echelons of the movement, as the political reality shifts from conflict to post-conflict context. They develop a bidirectional approach that employs the concept of collective identity, examining the construction of populist agendas as a two-way interaction between the leadership of a movement and its grass roots supporters. Through this approach we show how the gender dimension was not merely a biproduct but central to both the construction of the Maoist movement's war time 'progressive' identity, and the fragmentation of this identity and the movement's populist appeal in the post-conflict context. Their analysis demonstrates the importance of context - through the dynamics of a populist narrative - in how human security concerns are engaged throughout different phases of a political project.

The third article by Velomahanina T. Razakamaharavo reorients the focus to the role of technology in human lives and human security. Razakamaharavo examines the ways in which technology has been used as both a tool promoting human security, particularly political engagement, but also the opposite. The author notes that some general-purpose technologies (e.g.: the internet) have been seen as positive, groundbreaking, and democratic tools for people, however these same technologies have been used to cause to people, to institutions, to nations and more. Little focus has been placed on the implications of these technologies among civilians, average people and how their agency plays an important role in relation to technology. Razakamaharavo explores the nexus between technology and security in Nigeria by proposing and adopting an intersectional view of digital human security. She further explains a more specific phenomenon emanating from the advances in technology and examining how certain forms of populism have been fueled by disinformation, acting as a threat to the security of marginalized groups of people in Africa. She reflects on the future of inclusive digital human security in security discourses and policies.

The fourth and final article on gender and populism continues the focus on technology, where Gunhild Hoogensen Gjørv explores the interaction and integration of technology into human life. People's lives are more integrated with the digital world than ever before, to the extent that it is no longer a question of being online but being in our "onlife" [43,44]. Technological developments from mechanical to digital capabilities have not only made many people's lives easier (eg reduced task time, quicker communication, etc), but have simultaneously become integrated in human life. People are living substantial parts of their lives online. Thanks to algorithms that curate people's choices on the basis of what their interests appear to be, they end up in echo chambers and down rabbit holes where the information received becomes ever-more targeted toward certain narratives and our own views are reflected back at us. As this customized information confirms and reconfirms our values and beliefs, often framing these as facts. There is already ample evidence that algorithmic information feeds are easily susceptible to disinformation because the constant tailoring of information to fuel engagement almost inevitably gravitates to that which is increasingly shocking and provokes anger, disgust, fear, or a combination of these. Populism—a political trajectory that pits "the pure people" or "us" against a manipulative or even evil "elite" has resurged as we have become more digitally dependent. People are susceptible to certain types of disinformation because of our preexisting beliefs, values, and opinions that reflect a distrust of others (particularized distrust) or society (general distrust). This generates reactions like fear, anger, shame and disgust often filtered through assumptions and prejudices rooted in gender, race, class, age, ethnicity, and sexual orientation. Drawing on theories of human security, civilian agency, (general and particularized) trust, and cognitive security, and combined with intersectional methods, Hoogensen Gjørv introduces a method of everyday security that attempts to better understand perceptions of security as products of targeted by populist-informed disinformation.

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