



Human safety and security for sustainable and inclusive settlements

Adegbola Ojo*

ABSTRACT

The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development was adopted by all member states of the United Nations (UN) in 2015. One year later, Habitat III, the first UN global summit to adopt the sustainable development agenda, took place in Quito, Ecuador. Habitat III served as a forum for discussing the planning and management of human settlements for promoting sustainability. Global stakeholders are increasingly acknowledging that Agenda 2030 must embrace people-centred approaches to address the interconnectivity of today's challenges in order to deliver its transformative promise to human settlements. To this end, human safety and security, which is concerned with whether people live in conflict or peace, provides an effective programming framework for promoting inclusive and sustainable human settlements. This paper explores the nexus between human security and the sustainable development of human settlements. Drawing on a broad range of literature, the paper begins by considering the conceptual basis of sustainable development through the lens of inclusivity. This is followed by a detailed explanation of why human security is central to promoting the sustainability of settlements. The paper also offers some insight into measuring and modelling human security for the purpose of sustainable settlement programming. The paper concludes by offering some thoughts about why statutory public safety stakeholders should work with communities and civil society in order to secure and sustain positive gains for human settlements.

Key Words Sustainable development; inclusion; human settlement.

INTRODUCTION

The concept of sustainable development is not new, as it has invoked numerous intellectual debates over the decades. Many of these debates are situated around global environmental politics (Haas, 2002), which examine relationships between global political forces and environmental change. The politics of the environment also focus on the implications of local-global interactions for environmental management, as well as the implications of environmental change and environmental governance (Backstrand, 2006). Despite diverging perspectives about the concept of sustainable development, there is some convergence around the notion that it is centred on environmental politics (Scoones, 2016).

In 1980, the concept of sustainable development appeared for the first time in World Conservation Strategy (WCS) (IUCN, 1980). The WCS defines four main factors in natural resource destruction. These include poverty, population pressure, social inequalities, and international trade conditions. By 1987, the Brundtland Commission published its landmark report entitled *Our Common Future*. It has been argued that the fundamental basis of that publication was to establish the

links between economic development and the maintenance and sustenance of the physical environment (Langhelle, 1999). Furthermore, for the first time, the concept of sustainable development was defined as a development mode that fulfils the needs of the present generation without compromising the ability of future generations to fulfil theirs. While numerous definitions of the concept abound, the most often used definition of sustainable development is that proposed by the Brundtland Commission (Cerin, 2006; Dernbach, 1998; Dernbach, 2003; Cruickshank et al., 2012).

Sustainable settlements are expected to display and promote certain values and philosophies. Although one of the popular frameworks used to diagnose the sustainability of settlements is the triple bottom line model, which focuses on the balance between environmental, social, and economic issues (Elkington, 1998; Elkington et al., 2004), the use of economic growth as a primary pillar of sustainable settlements is contestable. Furthermore, economic growth does not seem to feature as a central tenet of the vision subsumed within the Brundtland Commission report. Based on insight drawn from the report of the Brundtland Commission, Daly (2007) and Hoyer (2000) identified eight important primary and

Correspondence to: Adegbola Ojo, School of Sociology and Social Policy, University of Leeds, Leeds LS2 9JD, United Kingdom. **E-mail:** A.A.Ojo@leeds.ac.uk

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secondary attributes that should underpin settlements for the purpose of sustainable development. These eight attributes are illustrated in Figure 1.

In order to understand the concept of inclusion, it is important to initially explain its opposite. Exclusion happens when settlement dwellers are directly denied access to what they should normally be entitled to. If members of a settlement find themselves in a situation where they are unable to fully participate in economic, social, political, and cultural life, as well as the process leading to and sustaining their settlement, such persons can be described as excluded (Silver, 1994).

Conversely, inclusion involves a deliberate process of systemic reforms in order to overcome the barriers of exclusion and to provide everyone with an equitable environment and opportunities that best correspond to their needs (Martin & Cobigo, 2011). Inclusion should be viewed as a deliberate process and a goal for settlements that want to do well. The goal is to improve the terms of participation in society for people who are disadvantaged on the basis of their age, gender, disability, ethnicity, background, religion, and other aspects of socio-economic status. To achieve this, settlement dwellers must become more encompassing and welcoming of all persons while also embracing greater equality and tolerance. Evidence from several studies across the world shows that inclusive settlements are potentially more cohesive (Worldwatch Institute, 2016). This portends well for the sustainability of such settlements. Nevertheless, it should be mentioned that some cohesive societies may systematically exclude segments of their population.

How do the processes and goals of inclusion help to promote sustainable settlements? One way to address that question is by revisiting the principles that underpin the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. Essentially, the Agenda

is reinforced by the notion that all settlement dwellers should be able to reap the benefits of prosperity and basic standards of well-being. The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) are designed with the intention of freeing all segments of society from poverty and hunger in order to guarantee healthy lives and access to education, modern energy, and information. Furthermore, inclusivity should be considered as an essential plank for fulfilling Agenda 2030 since the SDGs subsume targets that are aimed at promoting the rule of law, ensuring equal access to justice, and broadly fostering all-encompassing and participatory decision-making (Colglazier, 2015).

There are many local and global hazards that threaten the sustenance and existence of human settlements (Leal et al., 2020) and the recent outbreak of COVID-19 is only one of example. An important lesson from these recent events is the realization that the nature of risk across human settlements has changed dramatically. Human-centred activities have become the dominant influence on the environment. A key element of this is the requirement for urban and rural settlements to provide security for their residents, businesses, and visitors. The objective of human settlement security is to safeguard the vital core of all human lives from critical pervasive threats in a way that is consistent with long-term human fulfilment (UN-Habitat, 2018). If this objective is unmet, settlement insecurity can entail substantial human and economic risks. However, if addressed, the safety and security of settlements can be used as a mechanism to facilitate how urban and rural dwellers create more sustainable ways to live. Although there is a plethora of literature about the links between inclusivity and sustainable development, there is minimal understanding about how the safety and security of settlement dwellers can be used to facilitate the long-term sustainability of such settlements. The remainder

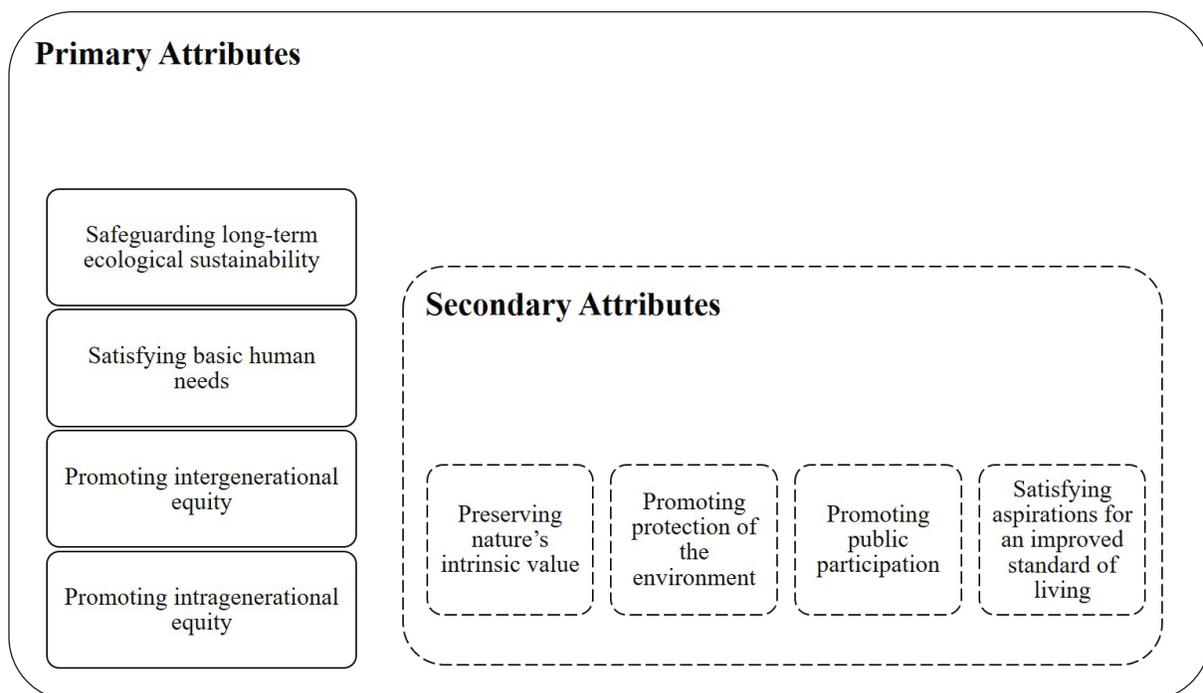


FIGURE 1 Attributes that should underpin settlements for the purpose of sustainable development

of this paper seeks to fill this knowledge gap by offering a critical examination of these issues.

HUMAN SECURITY IS CENTRAL TO PROMOTING SUSTAINABLE AND INCLUSIVE SETTLEMENTS

Human settlements can be viewed through the lens of social and ecological systems because they are characterized by complexity. Settlements exhibit this complexity in different ways depending on their composition. According to an article published in the Encyclopaedia Britannica, human settlements consist of nature, including physical geography, soil resources, water resources, plant and animal life and climate; human biological and emotional needs, sensations and perceptions, and moral values; society, including population characteristics, social stratification, cultural patterns, economic development, education, health and welfare, and law and administration; shells, or structures, in which people live and function, such as housing, schools, hospitals, shopping centres and markets, recreational facilities, civic and business centres, and industries; and networks, or systems, that facilitate life and day-to-day functions of inhabitants such as water and power systems, transportation networks, communication systems, and the settlement's physical layout (Augustyn et al., 2018).

Settlement Insecurity and its Dimensions

The complexity of human settlements generates multifaceted relationships between different settlement components. These complex relationships can often trigger chaotic outbursts which make human settlements vulnerable to disturbances that threaten to distort their stability and sustainability. Insecurity is one of the disturbances that threaten the sustainability of all human settlements. As illustrated in Figure 2, insecurity presents itself in multiple forms and dimensions (UNDP, 1994).

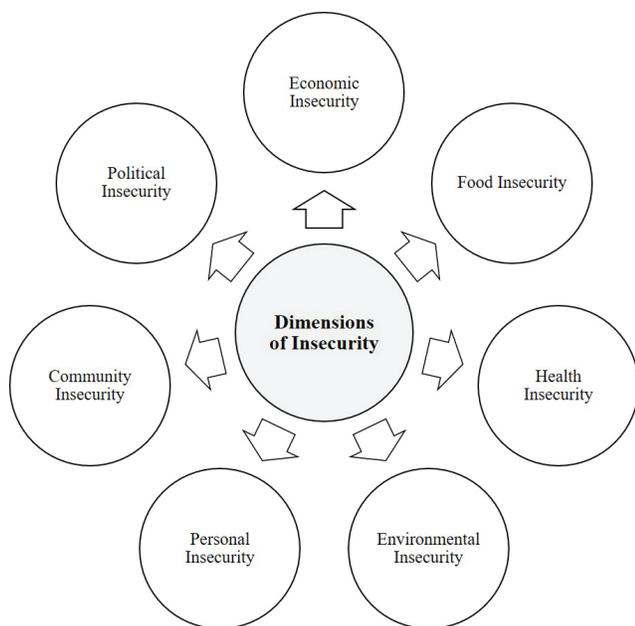


FIGURE 2 Dimensions of insecurity

These different forms of insecurity are underpinned by root causes. Economic insecurity for instance is generally associated with persistent poverty, unemployment, lack of access to credit and other economic opportunities (Western et al., 2012). Food insecurity is linked to hunger, famine, and sudden increases in food prices (Barrett, 2010). Epidemics, malnutrition, poor sanitation, and lack of access to basic health care have been associated with health insecurity (Gama, 2016). Environmental insecurity is defined from perspectives related to environmental degradation, resource depletion, and natural disasters (Prins, 1993). Personal insecurity has been associated with physical violence in all its forms, human trafficking, and child labour (Hope & Sparks, 2000). Community level insecurity arises from inter-ethnic, religious and other identity-based tensions as well as crime and terrorism (Duvall et al., 1999). Political insecurity is connected to political repression, human rights violations, and lack of rule of law and justice (Bates, 2005).

Insecurity has the potential to give rise to unbalanced settlements with distorted human demographic compositions. For instance, high levels of insecurity can give rise to settlements with high proportions of young men who are killed before they become adults (Hume, 2007). This can affect the sustainable gender balance of settlements, leading to a shortage of males or children who grow up without males.

Settlement insecurity can also give rise to families who lose a parent or have members in prison. This can create the knock-on effect of exposing families to poverty and leaving them without access to support or legitimate sources of income. Additionally, insecurity disturbs the sustainability of settlements as it increases the potential of women being subjected to violence in their homes, or at risk of sexual assault in public spaces. Furthermore, settlements with significant levels of insecurity quickly become characterized by neighbourhoods where levels of crime and insecurity have led businesses and families to cut themselves off from other citizens. Evidence shows that public life within these types of settlements is typically confined behind gates and the use of private security is generally common (Atkinson & Blandy, 2006).

Human Security for Promoting Settlement Sustainability

The concept of human security has multiple genealogies, but the definition which seems to have been widely accepted was articulated in the 1994 Human Development Report (UNDP, 1994). The 1994 report argued that the interpretation of security has been narrow, focusing on the protection of national interests from external aggression. The report therefore highlighted two major components of human security (freedom from fear and freedom from want). Human security is a people-centred framework based on shared ownership, which aims to support settlement leaders and governments in responding to threats impeding their people from living free from fear, want and indignity, while recognizing the complexity and interconnected nature of the challenges that confront settlements.

Settlements that adopt the human security approach for the purpose of sustainable development are required to embrace the five principles listed in Table 1, which should be implemented as a collective.

Long-term settlement sustainability is increasingly dependent on the ability to pre-empt and forestall disturbances like

TABLE I Principles underlying the human security approach

Principle	Description
Principle 1: People-centred	Considers the conditions that threaten the survival, livelihood and dignity of people and their communities, particularly those who are most vulnerable.
Principle 2: Comprehensive	Recognizes the complexity and interconnected nature of the challenges that confront people and their aspirations to be free from want, fear, and indignity.
Principle 3: Context-specific	Recognizes that risks to the human condition vary considerably within and across settlements and at different points in time.
Principle 4: Prevention-oriented	Drills down to ascertain the root causes of challenges and promotes the development of early warning mechanisms that help to mitigate the impact of threats.
Principle 5: Protection and empowerment	Empowers people and communities to articulate and respond to their needs

crime and insecurity (Ojo & Ojewale, 2019). Human security approaches are effective prevention mechanisms that allow stakeholders to consider current and emerging risks and vulnerabilities. The human security approach can therefore help guide efforts to bridge the gap between humanitarian assistance within settlements and longer-term dependence on external financial and material aid.

Safeguarding human settlements implicates not only those institutions that intend to promote human security overtly, but also institutions that unintentionally undermine it. The strategies that are associated with providing human security identify the threats and then seek to prevent threats from materializing, mitigate harmful effects for those that eventuate, and help victims cope.

The adoption of the human security approach ensures that settlements do not just address challenges related to human development, but it also offers stakeholders the opportunity to address obstacles of economic growth and poverty reduction. By funnelling settlement challenges through the human security lens, one can easily clarify how deprivation, social polarization, violence, and environmental degradation interact and are interconnected (Ostby, 2008). This approach also allows comprehensive and context-specific solutions to be developed.

Imminent threats arising from extreme inequalities within and among settlements are generally recognized as a major factor affecting human security (Moghaddam, 2010). Despite its significance, the security threat arising from the exclusion of different population segments is most commonly underestimated in the settlement sustainability discussion. Marginalized population segments can quickly become distressed, which is a sign of danger that threatens the entire settlement. Embracing human security principles and framework allows for greater understanding of the challenges of exclusion. The human security approach, based on its core vision to achieve freedom from fear, want and indignity, can help to address challenges stemming from inequality.

Gender parity is essential for delivering sustainable settlements. Wide gaps between the economic empowerment

and opportunity of women and men still remain pervasive across the globe (Duflo, 2012). The inequalities that confront women in multiple areas of their lives infringe upon their rights and freedoms. The human security framework can be used to counterbalance these distortions of gender parity by ensuring that women are able to participate in, contribute to, and enjoy economic, social, cultural, and political freedoms in an inclusive manner.

Settlement Security Indices for Sustainability Programming

Given the multi-dimensional nature and complexity of human security, multivariate indices are widely used to measure and model the scale and patterns of settlement security (Guzman et al., 2012). These settlement security indices (SSI) often subsume indicators that are used to give a sense of security hazards and risks (Geneva Declaration Secretariat, 2010). In general, SSIs, which are combinations of indicators, are designed to measure the overall performance or progress of settlements from a security perspective.

The use of SSIs to provide answers to “what” and “how” questions makes them important quantitative tools for measuring specific achievements, goals, targets, or outcomes (Geneva Declaration Secretariat, 2011). Settlement security indices also enable the benchmarking of performance and effective communication to a diverse range of stakeholders.

In the context of settlements, SSIs can assist in providing an evidence base to decision makers and managers to improve policy, plan-making and management by highlighting needs, setting priorities, formulating policy, and evaluating and monitoring progress towards pre-defined settlement security targets (Gilgen & Lauren, 2011).

Settlement security indices can also be part of results-based accountability systems, which can provide a way of setting baselines and targets/outcomes and evaluating progress towards them. The increasing use of SSIs is a result of the vast amount of work being done at the global, regional, national, and local levels by public, private, and non-profit organizations of all types and sizes to collect and share official statistics and/or crowd-sourced data and information.

Functions of Settlement Security Indices

Multilateral and bilateral organizations, national and local governments, as well as private and public organizations have been using SSIs to monitor and evaluate the degree to which they are meeting certain settlement sustainability goals or outcomes of their policies and programmes. The functions of SSIs are determined by the approach that was adopted when constructing them (Hoornweg et al., 2006).

Policy-based approaches: These approaches are associated with goal-based SSIs. The key objective of a security index constructed using this approach is to measure progress towards certain pre-defined goals and objectives.

Thematic approaches: The SSIs constructed from a thematic purview tend to focus on broad, multi-dimensional topics. Examples of such thematic areas include demographics, poverty and well-being, governance and competitiveness.

Systems approaches: The systems approach to developing composite SSIs dwells upon a systematic integration of indicators aligned where operators and causality between sectors are well-defined.

Needs-based allocation approaches: Indices constructed using this approach subsume a demand-led purview. The indicators selected are used to efficiently redistribute resources to those geographical areas with particular needs in order to establish targets and priorities.

Performance approaches: These are outcome-oriented SSIs. They include measures of inputs, outputs, outcomes, and efficiency and they are particularly used by public sector stakeholders to measure the performance of a programme and/or projects.

Benchmarking approaches: These measure performance in areas that need improvement. They are used for comparison with other settlements that are performing better. The overall objective is to adopt and adapt the best practices of those settlements that are performing better.

Modelling Considerations

The statistical modelling and construction of composite indices such as SSIs can be influenced by a wide range of factors. Hoornweg et al. (2006) catalogued some of these challenges.

Determining what to measure: Due to competing interests and priorities, it is common practice for researchers and policy makers to get locked up in conceptual and definitional debates about what constitutes determinants of security or insecurity.

Determining political boundaries/geographical extents: There can be significant challenges faced in the area of delineating the geographical boundaries of some types of settlements. For instance, in some countries, cities do not have any form of statutory boundary (Ojo & Ojewale, 2019)

Cost of measurement: The cost of measurement is linked mainly with data collection costs. There are weaknesses in statutory data registration systems in some developing countries, partly due to a misconception of the importance of building sustainable data infrastructure (Ojo & Ezepue, 2011). Lack of adequate ongoing data registration systems, especially at detailed spatial granularity, makes it difficult to adequately monitor trends and patterns of SSIs.

Political interference and a lack of sustained political will: Security policy decisions in some countries can be heavily influenced by the priorities of politicians (and party politics). This can have detrimental implications for the interests of

governance at the settlement level. Additionally, competition between federal and state politics can sometimes lead to conflicts of interest and attempts to suppress important statistics when constructing SSIs.

Replicability and reliability problems: It is often the case that, in order to find readily comparable data, SSIs become overly simplistic—and thus are of little practical use to policy and decision makers. However, it is also essential that SSIs not be too complex or reliant on too many sources of data, some of which may not be collected regularly; otherwise, the ability to replicate the process necessary to update the index over time will be diminished.

The construction of SSIs can broadly be summarized as comprising five stages, as shown in Figure 3. The relevance and practical application of SSIs depend upon clarity about the aims of measurement and the principles, quality, and robustness that underpin it. Design quality assurance principles could include assurance of integrity; open, sound, and transparent methodology; robust and reliable official data; serviceability in terms of a planned revision cycle over the long term; and accessibility to the SSI.

CONCLUSION

This paper has presented a discussion about the intersection of human security and the sustainable development of human settlements. The paper also presented a working definition and description of sustainable settlements in full awareness of competing explanations and the implications of inclusivity for security. The multidimensional complexity of human security requires the adaptation of data. However, the mere representation of data points or trends by itself is insufficient to facilitate analysis and inform policy-making and programmatic decisions. For this reason, sets of indicators can be fused together in the form of settlement security indices to properly understand and monitor the different dimensions of settlement security. The promotion of safe, secure, and sustainable settlements also requires government stakeholders to work in partnership with civil society and the academic community. Working in partnerships is not simple and can be time-consuming. However, it can prove beneficial for the sustainability of settlements. Effective partnerships for

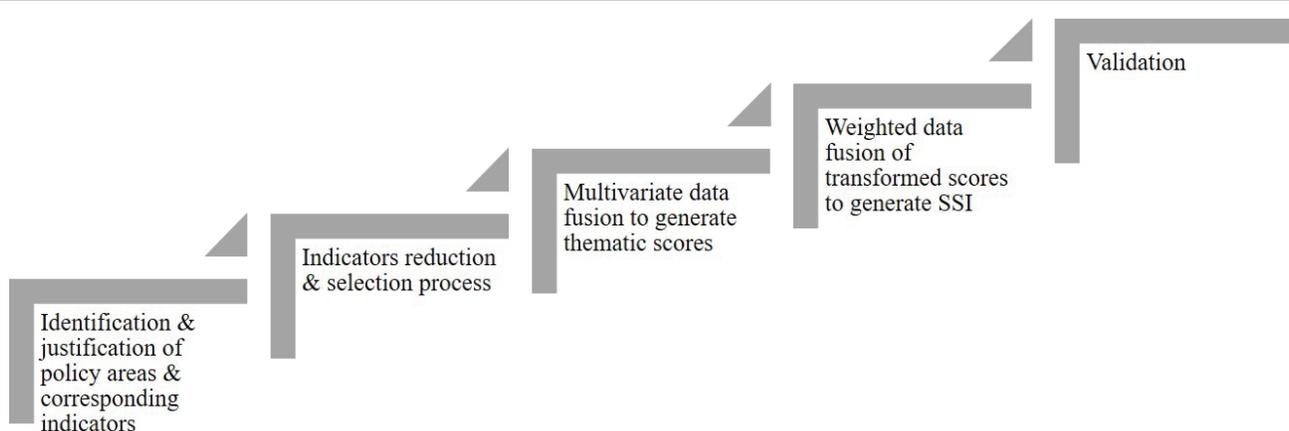


FIGURE 3 Stages of construction of settlement security indices

sustainable settlement security can be forged where there is a clear mission or purpose for the partnership, together with agreement on intended outcomes.

CONFLICT OF INTEREST DISCLOSURES

The author declares that there are no conflicts of interest.

AUTHOR AFFILIATIONS

*School of Sociology and Social Policy, University of Leeds, Leeds, United Kingdom.

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