

The Nigerian Narrative on Human Security as Legitimate Security Concern in the Global South

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Abstract

It pays in all senses to consider humanitarian crisis as a contemporary security threat. Some scholars suggests that human security rethinks beyond classical understanding as non-war, expanding to address both intra and interstate causes of conflicts such as hunger, disease, crime, repression and personal crisis usually caused by decades of war especially in worst hit areas like sub-Saharan Africa. This paper therefore argues that it is not only appropriate but timely to designate international aid and humanitarianism as legitimate security concerns. To achieve coherence, this work adopted the critical theory as its theoretical framework in analysing insecurity and methodologically associating it with the concept of human security. As such the discussion is divided into four main parts beginning from introduction and then to considering two main elements of human security: freedom from want and human needs as well as freedom from fear and the role of international aid before concluding. The basis of the argument is that human security is indeed as relevant as the threats of war in centralising the meaning of security as insecurity no longer denotes a state centric phenomenon of war because it as well represents any threat to human existence.

Keywords: Human Security, Security, Globalization, Third World, Nigeria.

Introduction

In a world confronted by enormous, complex and interrelated challenges, mutual vulnerability involving not just weapons but diseases and financial instability provides a timely starting point on the redefinition of what security implies. Agreeably, as Tadjbakshsh and Chenoy (2007) noted in a bipolar world, the need to develop the perception of security beyond the prerogative of the state to defend itself from military threats to a more human oriented sensitivity is important. Present-day insecurity challenges defy the broad militarised notion to include the more a narrow human security concept that distinguishes its commitment to insecurity arising from social causes and as well examining the role of international aid in protecting the vulnerable. These new forms of security concerns have significant impact on the redefinition of world security. (Wyn-Jones 1999) noted that the demise of Soviet Union and the devastation of the cold war reinvigorated the discussion on national security all around the world and particularly in the West.

Against traditional mainstream security approaches like realism, pluralism, Marxism or alternatives like social constructivism is the choice of critical theory. The reason for the choice of critical theory is in line with Tadjbakshsh and Chenoy (2007) who argued classical security paradigms focuses on states and the use of military means to achieve maximum security in an anarchical context. Burchill (2005:55) too critiqued that liberalist security approach is influenced by classical realists and the economic challenges after the oil shocks. Although liberalism encouraged the view of democracy, political freedom, guarantee human rights and liberty and as well equality before law it stresses more on economic growth and institutional functions at the expense of individual security concerns.

As the most appropriate alternative then, critical theory attempts to think critically about security as (Wyn-Jones 1999) argued and aim to provide explicit reasons as to why human security should be the focus on global security discussions. The individual, who is crucial in liberal theory but at the receiving end of state power has become the main referent. In this human security proponents find solace. Nonetheless (Booth 2007: 41, Wyn-Jones 1999:3) share in the opinion that not all critical theories are equally useful when thinking about security since it is not a unified scholarship. To this end, consideration will be limited to the elements that have to do with human security. So consequently, this work will as in the opinion of (Devetak 2005:145) argue in relations to two core elements of critical theory vulnerability and emancipation. Emancipation explains the liberty of human beings from unacknowledged constraints.

Humans are constrained as a result of the relationship of domination or from a condition of distorted communication. In the above understanding any denial of the capacity of any human being to make their own future through their own will and consciousness becomes a threat to their corporate existence as vulnerability elucidates. These points of vulnerability and emancipation we shall expand further in the next section.

Critical Theory and Human Security

For critical theorists as (Booth 2007) clearly indicated, insecurity is a life determining condition that involves living in fear with dangers arising from one or more types of threats. These fears can be direct in form of violence or indirect but no less real threats that come from structural oppression such as poverty. Ogata (2001) noted that the rising importance of human security steered the creation of the Human Security Commission in 2001 with the aim of creating awareness of human security as an operational tool for policy formulation and implementation geared towards the defence of the helpless.

As best described by Rousseau cited in (Booth 2007:115) brief yet concise statement, human insecurity means that man is born free but is everywhere in chains. Further understanding of (Horkheimer 1972:50, Wyn-Jones 1999:25) suggests that human insecurity arises in situation where the proletariat experienced some sort of disjuncture between the provision of their basic needs and the potential to lose control over the forces of production under capitalist relations of production. Both scholars in their analysis referred to the division between the working class, the skilled and unskilled, the employed and unemployed as the basis leading to insecurity. The problem of course with strategic security understanding is that they fail to recognise imminent threats to global security from a social perspective, making them lack the vision of a more harmoniously organised non militaristic characterization of security.

The main advance of critical security claims is to explain the proletariat quiescence as a familiar feature of humanitarianism. As a condition of vulnerability, human beings physical and material wellbeing is consequently endangered. Such threats do not necessarily emanate from war; it may as well be the result may of political conflicts within or between states, hunger, and disease, trafficking, drugs, urban crime. On another hand causes range from natural disasters such as volcanic eruptions, tsunamis, cyclones to man-made disasters such as mudslides, rising sea levels, oil spillages, nuclear and chemical explosions to mention but a few (Tadjbakshsh and Chenoy 2007). Additionally, from an economic perspective as (Sen 1999) argued vulnerability may arise from the structure of the global economy where the power of decision making is highly concentrated in the core capitalist states excluding producers. Giving this economic system, billions of people are continually disadvantaged and forced to live precariously on the edge of life structured by lack of reliable access to material resources.

Building on the above argument international aid and humanitarianism becomes a legitimate security concern in view of (Thomas 2007:109) opinion that the protection of the vulnerable through lessening of risks is recognised as the common core of vulnerability in the globalising world. These critical theorists refer to as emancipation. (Devetak 2005:108) describes this emancipation as the condition of existence in which basic resources are guaranteed and there is reasonable expectation that human dignity too can be guaranteed where survival is not threatened even during crisis either natural or man-made. Kofi Annan (2005) also cited in (Thomas 2007:108) rightly asserted that human security encompasses freedom from want and freedom from fear. In the next sections these two main strands of human security will be discussed citing their relevance and the common values that underpin them.

Security beyond Survival: Freedom from Want and the Provision of Basic Needs

While insecurity threats are context specific, consequences of insecurity in one part of the world can have widespread repercussions spread across the globe. Famines, ethnic conflicts, social disintegration drug trafficking, terrorism, pollutions are no longer confined to national borders. These consequences travel the world leading to inter connectivity and inter dependence among states within the international system on one hand and mutual vulnerability among communities on the other (Tadjbakshsh and Chenoy 2007:237). UNDP (1994) Annual Report describes human security from the most appropriate context of freedom from want in that for too long the concept of security has been designed by the probability for tensed conflict especially among states.

For a long time security is the equation of militarised response to territorial protection for most states and yet, the concerns of danger for most people arise from the worries of daily life than from the calamitous world situations. Emerging concerns of human security all over the world are represented by food security, water security, job security and personal safety. To show the significance of security beyond survival, water and food as some of the basic human needs will be highlighted not only as a moral necessity but as a means for achieving global security and strengthening human rights.

- **Water**

To achieve water security, sustainable development and access to water for most people is essential. (UNESCO 2014a) noted people need to be protected against vulnerable water systems including floods, droughts and tsunamis. This is because human lives to a large extent depend on

water and lack of access to this basic resource is as equal a threat to life as any other. Explosive population growth, rapid urbanization, rural-urban migration, and densification of urban agglomerations, in combination with the global economic crisis, continuously challenge the global WASH community in provision of innovative and sustainable solutions concerning safe and reliable water supply and sanitary provision. Accordingly (UNESCO 2014b) noted that water-related hazards is now a threat in almost all parts of the world due to population growth and effects of climate change giving the increase in intensity and frequency of occurrence. For some regions the problem is flood, for others droughts or pollution. This we see clearly by the devastation of typhoon Haiyan in the Philippines. Water is therefore a multifaceted human security issue. Provision of it for daily human use is as equally important as preparing for calamity that can be caused by it. In any situation the crucial point is to save lives and improve human emancipation. Even as UNESCO (2014a) records despite rapid improvement in human access to water, the overall global result is still unsatisfactory as tons of people are still susceptible to lack of access to this resource.

- **Food**

Food is an equally important basic human need. Unfortunately, however, not everyone in the world has access to the required minimum quality standards of feeding. WFP (2014) reported that in all three major hunger complex emergencies -The Central African Republic, South Sudan and Syria riddled with war people are more threatened by a worsening hunger crisis and freedom from this hunger remains the most pressing need of the people. The WFP (2014) again noted that almost 1 billion people around the globe are threatened by lack of access to food even though the world has the capacity to generate sufficient food for everyone. Mostly, victims of these situations are from the less developed parts of the world or in conflict situations and as the report shows almost 842 million people still suffer from chronic hunger out of which around 162 million are malnourished children below the age of 5. The problem as admitted by (FAO 2014) is that underinvestment in agriculture for most of the developing nations are the main cause of hunger and malnutrition. Natural resource degradation, urbanization and climate change, high and volatile food prices are additional challenges for food security today. The repercussion is the reduced ability to fulfil human potential resulting in loss of productivity, health and well-being, decreased learning ability and the social and economic costs to society at large. Beyond ethical dimensions of this complex problem achieving food security calls for concerted efforts to adequately ensure availability and access to many in need and as well ensure stability and utilization of governance as the effective mechanisms for coordination across sectors which in the long run can make a real difference towards the eradication of hunger.

Having considered two examples of basic human needs Devetak (2005:110) posited that material sufficiency lies at the core of human security embracing civil, political, economic, social and cultural safety to ensure prosperity. Borrowing from Abraham Maslow theory of motivation, lack of access to basic human needs is as much a threat to human freedom as the fear of war or crisis. Freedom here is defined in the context that when basic needs are provided man is said to be free and more secured. Maslow (1946) famously epitomized the 5-step ascending pyramid of needs starting from physiological, safety, social, esteem and self-actualisation needs. Maslow (1946) reasoned that the lower-level basic needs must be met before progressing to a higher-level growth need. Physiological needs (food, water, breathing, sleep) he first identified as the basic human needs of life and the motivation to desire for higher needs depends on the fulfilment of

these physiological needs. This falls in place to say that human security starts from the provision and availability of the basic necessities of life.

Critical theory emancipatory understanding claim humans need some sort of release from slavery and tutelage or freedom from restraint (Booth 2007). This claim can be applied in the human security context as (Burchill 2005: 66) noted but liberalists unlike critical theory failed in their prospects for peace by considering fewer questions of basic human needs that will lead to human security and focusing more on economic conditions for peace such as trade and commerce. Former World Bank President James Wolfensohn quoted in (Thomas 2007:112) put it right that when people think about security, there is the need to think beyond battalions and borders. Arising from this contextual explanation it means to say that the challenge of poverty and inequality is long standing. (Thomas 2007:111) noted that although limited progress has been made to address specific social concerns such as increase human access to food, clean water and shelter a lot still needs to be done. To think about human security is to think about winning a different war the fight against poverty, human repression and the enthronement of social stability and positive wellbeing.

Freedom from Fear and International Humanitarian Aid

(Osler 2000:30, Thomas 2007: 113) posited that the objective behind international interventions, humanitarian relief and post conflict peace building is based on the humanitarian conception of the safety of people. (Booth 2007:56 Devetak (2005:137) support the argument stating that subsequent to 9/11 war on terror and hunger has shown among other things the unnecessary human sufferings that remain a central fact of international life and politics. Booth (2007:56) noted foremost critical theorists Linklater branded his human security methodology with a post Marxist sensibility which coincided with the growth and emergence of humanitarian intervention. Fear and insecurity generate conflicts with regional and international consequences prompting international aid.

By this view, the foundations of international aid is therefore rooted in the concept of collective security with the rationale to ensure global justice encompassing economic, food, health, environmental, personal, community and political security (Tadjbakshsh and Chenoy 2007). Critical theorists relate this to their emancipatory concept explaining international aid as the efforts directed at improving the conditions of existence in which human dignity will be realised embracing not only physical safety but going beyond to include meaningful enjoyment of the human life. In practical application (Burchill 2005:69, Thomas 2007:109) noted that during the 1990s protection the vulnerable both physically and materially gained attention from several constituencies especially the United Nations (and its agencies such as UNDP, FAO, WFP), Non-Governmental Organisations, International Financial Institutions (IFI) and middle ranking powers like Norway and Canada.

Tadjbakshsh and Chenoy (2007) assertion is conceivably right then that human security can also be considered as a framework for cooperation and complementation where different actors act together within their capacity and collective interest to alleviate human suffering. Such cooperation and international relief efforts are meant to mitigate the effects of severe hardships. Growing acknowledgement of the uneven distribution of the benefits of economic globalisation and the severe effects of humanitarian crisis drew attention to human insecurity. Significant humanitarian crisis like the genocide in Bosnia (1992-1995) where an estimated 200000 people

were killed in Rwanda (1994) about 500000 deaths Cambodia, Serbia, Somalia stressed the need for cooperation. Contemporary examples include Syria, Central African Republic (CAR), Mali and the devastation of typhoon Haiyan in the Philippines all posing growing challenge to human security has warranted emergency humanitarian intervention embodying an articulate institutionalised process on broadly organised humanitarian agenda.

Using the current crisis in Syria and relating to the concept of mutual vulnerability UNCHR (2014) noted that the consequences of the Syrian conflict have already spread beyond its borders to neighbouring North African countries putting pressure such states and their resources. Lebanon for example has witnessed massive influx of refugees increasing its population by a fifth. In Jordan, the Zaatari refugee camp has grown to become the country's third-largest 'city'. The effects are not only felt in the Middle East alone as many Syrians as well as Palestinians who had been living in Syria ply dangerous sea routes from Egypt or Libya on transit to Europe. Sadly though not all have made it to their destination and hundreds of others have perished at sea. UNCHR (2013) earlier reports noted that the world has seen the conflict generate extraordinary levels of displacement.

By the third quarter of 2013 the number of Syrian refugees had reached well over 2 million and by the last quarter as (BBC 2013) reported more than a million more people were added to the previous number. That is not all (OCHA 2014) noted that in 2014 this number have multiplied to about 9.6 million people representing almost half of the population in urgent need of humanitarian assistance. What could be more threatening than this? Many have been forced to flee their homes not necessarily because of the threat of war but because of hunger, lack of access to shelter, healthcare and personal safety. This situation have warranted for international aid in form of providing shelter, access to food, clean water and personal safety. International solidarity and burden sharing becomes even more critical at this point, although a Syrian crisis other countries are affected immensely and in the spirit of mutual support have to provide these refugees with the assistance and protection they so badly need. The situation is perilous not only for Syria, but for all and does imply that security is indeed not a simplistic militarised conception.

Building from the above discussion and working through examples (Tadjbakshsh and Chenoy 2007:242, Thomas 2007:110) noted that certain countries like Japan, Canada and the EU have for long understood the importance of the human security and have already adopted the concept in their external affairs taken as their point of departure the premise that security of other states and regions is associated with the security of people outside their borders. Yet, it is clear that human security needs also to relate to the demands of people within the industrialised nations. This is because although such countries have moved yonder the challenge of poverty and inter communal tensions, they are however not immune to natural disasters. Canadian government for example building on a long-standing national interest has paid more attention to protection of individuals from acts of violence engaging in humanitarian activities especially in developing parts of the world. One major landmark achievement as (Gwozdecky and Sinclair 2001:32, Henrikson 2005:70) noted is leading the campaign to ban anti-personnel landmines usually referred to as the 'Ottawa Process'. The Japanese heavily swayed by the consequence of the Asian currency decline of the 1990s have since then paid serious attention to threats of survival stemming from the economic insecurity placing emphasises on the need to protect people from

sudden economic downturns. In the final analysis UNDP (1994) clearly summarise the whole point of this discussion:

'Human security is a child who did not die, a disease that did not spread, a job that was not cut, an ethnic tension that did not explode in violence, a dissident who was not silenced. it is not a concern with weapons, it is a concern with human life and dignity' (UNDP 194:147)

For the directly above reason the safety of the individual is an essential ingredient of global security. It as well means any threat to the individual is a threat to international security. Freedom from fear and want must be upheld in concurrence with the seven aspects of human security- economic security, food security, health security, environmental security, community security, political security and of course personal security.

Conclusion

This work began by introducing the concept of human insecurity as an alternative to strategic security that hitherto dominated the world perception of security. Critical theory an unconventional approach was employed as the theoretical framework because of its commitment to encompassing rational and just democratic organisation of political life to include the whole of humanity beyond the level of the state only. Two elements of critical theory vulnerability and emancipation were employed to prove that consideration must be giving towards decreasing vulnerability in the world and particularly protect the most vulnerable.

Based upon the above understanding this work went further to discuss two main human security strands- freedom from want and freedom from fear as the bases on which human security lies. These emerging streams of human security share the belief that people everywhere matter and are thus legitimate focus of security. Both elements are not mutually exclusive of each other but represent two integral and interrelated components of human security emerging based on the common values that is universal to all human beings. On its own, each aspect represents a necessary but insufficient ingredient of human insecurity. As proved the core argument remained that the provision of basic human needs is a prerequisite for human security and the absence of these needs is an equal security threat to global politics as the threat of war itself. Food and water were identified as two among the basic human needs that can determine to a large extend human emancipation or intimidation. This problem as identified earlier is mostly found in less developed parts of the world particularly sub-Saharan Africa and Asia but are not exclusive to these regions alone. The industrialised world can as be impacted by these insecurities either caused by natural disasters, climate change or by the effects stemming from other parts of the world. Yet, it means to say that no one is exclusive of these problems that have in the 21st century been more disastrous than genocide, terrorism or war of any form.

The dreadful nature of human insecurity gave rise to the role of international humanitarian aid usually classified under freedom from war was discussed as a new dimension to security arising from the uncertainties of complex humanitarian emergencies. In a world where people are constantly threatened by natural disasters as well as man-made, this vulnerable group need assistance to protect them from the effects arising from unpleasant life circumstances. To this end nations within the international community must realise the importance of human security. Norway and Canada have in their foreign policy objectives given priority to the concept of

human security. Their views on human security are in relations to external parties usually assumptive of citizens not within their borders, but this work noted that people within industrialised are still vulnerable and as equally threatened by human insecurity either arising from natural disasters or by mutual vulnerability. Despite the criticism of human security approach as too broad and ambitious concept, it is a call to reason. And as advocated by the critical school protecting individuals from violent conflicts is necessary but we all have to recognize that these violent threats are intensely associated with other forms of inequalities like poverty and lack of capacity for self-defence.

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