

SECURITY AND PEACE EDUCATION IN AFRICA: THE NEXUS

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ABSTRACT

Since the end of the cold war era, the global perception on the concept of security has gradually been tilting from a purely militarized view to a humanistic one. Whereas security had always been viewed as military might, the new conception stresses the 'human angle' of the security discourse, pointing to the importance of not just dealing with the threat the state faces, but also shielding the most vulnerable people, either individuals or groups, from the threats of hunger, poverty, disease, environmental degradation and other non-military threats. The absence of security may lead to the erosion of human rights. Consequently, the utility of peace education as a mechanism for ensuring security and by so doing cultivating a platform for the protection of human rights. This study aims at examining the nexus between security and peace education. The paper is qualitative as data from secondary sources were subjected to content analysis. The study shows that the provision of good quality peace education will reduce the level of insecurity in a state. The absence of education or the provision of low quality education may lead to insecurity. Insecurity will also prompt the state to restore law and order; and this often comes with its implications including human rights infringements. Ultimately, good quality education helps to build a peaceful environment by eliminating or reducing the incentives to engage in acts that can or may threaten the security of the society.

Keywords: Security, human rights, peace education, human security

INTRODUCTION

The concept of security is both multi-disciplinary and multi-faceted. It is multi-disciplinary because there is an aspect of security in many academic disciplines. On the other hand, the concept is multi-faceted in that it has different aspects from which it can be considered, vis-à-vis, the individual, national and international. However, the concept of security will be discussed in this section from the political perspective, particularly, in relation to state. The concise definition of the concept of security has been most elusive. Indeed, there are two schools of thought on

what security actually is, and what should be its concern. These schools are the traditional or realist school and the modern or neo-realist school. However, before delving into the postulations of these schools, it is important and basic to examine the concept from its root-word, as this will set the tone for a deeper analysis which will come afterward. The concept is derived from the Latin word “*securitas*”, which implies the freedom from care. The concept entails the absence of all forms of anxiety and worry, thus making it ubiquitous. From this original conception, it is clear that the concept is limitless and open to different interpretations. Also of note in the basic description of what security is, is the fact that there are three major aspects to the concept. The first is that there is usually a threat, whether perceived or real. Defining a threat, Ullman (1983:133) says it is ‘an action or sequence of events that threatens drastically and over a relatively brief span of time to degrade the quality of life for the inhabitants of a state’. The second is that there is an object of threat, that is, the recipient, as well as an initiator of the threat, and lastly, is the means of protecting the object from the threats (Paris, 2001 cited in St.Jean, 2007:23)

Turning to the schools of thought and starting with the traditional school, Damus (cited in Akinyeye, 2001) defines security as ‘the prevention of property damage, injury and loss of lives caused by military means as well as the limitation of such damage, casualty and death in the event of war’. On their part, Handreder and Buel (cited in Akinyeye, 2001) define security as ‘the protection of a nation against all types of external aggression, espionage, hostile reconnaissance sabotage, subversion, annoyance and other inimical influences’. From the definitions above, certain common elements can be drawn, these include; the militaristic, state-centric and the external nature of threats. From the realist perspective, military prowess is equal to security. According to this school, the source of threat is militaristic, and as such military responses will be the best option. Thus, to effectively respond to all forms of threats, the military capacity of the state must be consistently built up and strengthened in order to deter the aggressor or defeat the latter should deterrence fail (Imobighe, 2010:260). Also this school holds that security issues only affect states, hence the need for states to defend their territorial integrity and sovereignty. They believe that only states are capable of initiating threats to other states. Thirdly, the traditionalists believe that threats can only emanate from outside the state; hence the emphasis that no serious security threat can come from within the state. It is also important to

note that this school has its roots in the Capitalist North, led by the United State of America. Interestingly, majority of the ruling class in Africa have also subscribed to it.

The Modernist school on the other hand are opposed to the militaristic, state-centric and the external sources of threat conception of security by the traditional school. To them, security is not necessarily militaristic. They also argued that the source of threats are not only external, but much more internal, citing the socio-economic, political, health and environmental conditions of many states as real threats to security. Also they hold the opinion that individuals and not the state, as the realists assume, are the objects of threat. For instance, at the outbreak of a war, it is the individuals who are hurt, maimed or even killed. The state itself is abstract, as it cannot be seen, and does not feel the direct consequences of military actions in war times. McNamara (1968) cited in Alli (2010) summarizes this school's viewpoint, when he wrote that 'security is not military hardware, though it may include it; security is not military force, though it may involve it; security is not traditional military activity, though it may encompass it. Security is development and without development, there can be no security'. As it may have been perceived, most of the proponents of this school are scholars from underdeveloped and developing states, with solidarity from civil society organizations and a handful of scholars from the developed world (Imobighe, 2010: 30-31).

Human Security: An Alternative View

A major concept that has emerged from the Modernist school is the human security concept. The origin of this concept has been traced to the 1994 report of the United Nation Development Programme which highlighted seven dimensions of security namely: economic, food, health, environmental, physical harm, community and political. Stating further, the report argued that there has been a neglect of the ordinary people since the end of Second World War, the upsurge in the protection of states' national interests, at the detriment of citizens' interests. The day-to-day security threats that concern individuals such as diseases, hunger, unemployment, environmental hazards have been sidelined and deprived of state attention. Consequently, many lives have been lost and are being lost, on account of these seemingly unimportant issues. Though not generally accepted, the UNDP defines human security as 'safety from the threats of hunger, disease and disruptions in the patterns of daily life whether in homes, in jobs in

communities’ (UNDP 1994, cited in Alli 2010: 75). To Emmanuel (2010: 286), human security is the reality and ability of every man and woman to live in a society where they can achieve their full Environmental, Political, Social and Economic potential without fear or threat to their human rights, life and property. In his description of the human security concept, Hutchful (2008) states that it is a departure from the traditional thinking in that, ‘it addresses principally the relations between states and their citizens, rather than the relations between states.’ It has also ‘shifted focus from the protection of regimes and states, to that of individuals and communities’. This shift in focus appears particularly important when the costs of insecurity in human life as well as on property are taken into consideration. This is particularly so in Africa where aside militarized form of insecurity, poverty, disease, starvation and others constitute serious security threat.

Africa and the Human Security Discourse

The nature of threats in African states are not necessarily external to it, indeed most of the security breaches and conflicts in post-colonial Africa are internal, manifesting in civil wars and numerous other internal wrangling. However, efforts have been made in the past by regional bodies to dissuade states from being ‘traditional’ only in the security orientation. The ‘human security’ conception of the larger security debate, after all, has its own African roots. Some of Africa’s independence leaders had espoused this concept, howbeit in different forms. For instance, Tanzania’s Nyerere promoted African Socialism, Zambia’s Kaunda, Humanism, Senegal’s Senghor, Negritude and finally Ghana’s Nkrumah, Consciencism. All these doctrines had in them, ‘the primacy of human needs, redistributionist ethos’. Looking deeper still, ‘these philosophies had their roots in natural humanism of traditional African culture, which advocated for the spiritual and psychological wellbeing, the enjoyment of good health, food security, protection from cyclical pressures such as drought, crime and violence and finally, access to essential social and community services’ (Hutchful, 2008).

The first of such policy documents on the promotion of human security in Africa, was the product of a Conference on Security, Stability, Development and Cooperation in Africa (CSSDCA) held in 1991, in Kampala, Uganda, under the auspices of the African Leadership Forum - a non-governmental organization headed by former Nigerian President Olusegun

Obasanjo. This document aimed at integrating development with concepts of security, stability and cooperation. It was adopted at the Organization of African Unity (OAU) heads of states summit held in Algiers, Algeria in 1999, and was subsequently incorporated into the OAU system, as a unit within the secretariat. The position of the CSSDCA, was that of an all - inclusive conception of security, vis a vis, the need to depart from the traditional school, forge a greater interdependent relations between and among states in the securing of the African continent particularly, the African people, in the exercise of their fundamental human rights.

The second is the African Union’s Common African Defense and Security Policy (CASDSP) which was adopted by the Heads of State of member states in February, 2004. Its conception of what security entails is stated below:

... ensuring the common security of Africa involves working on the basis of a definition which encompasses both the traditional, state-centric, notion of the survival of the state and its protection by military means from external aggression, as well as the non-military notion which is informed by the new international environment and the high incidence of intra-state conflict. The causes of intra-state conflict necessitate a new emphasis on human security, based not only on political values but on social and economic imperatives as well. This newer, multi - dimensional notion of security thus embraces such issues as human rights; the right to participate fully in the process of governance; the right to equal development as well as the right to have access to resources and the basic necessities of life; the right to protection against poverty; the right to conducive education and health conditions; the right to protection against marginalization on the basis of gender; protection against natural disasters, as well as ecological and environmental degradation. At the national level, the aim would be to safeguard the security of individuals, families, communities, and the state/national life, in the economic, political and social dimensions. This applies at the various regional levels also; and at the continental level, the principle would be underscored that the “security of each African country is inseparably linked to that of other African countries and the African continent as a whole” (CASDSP, Article 6, 2004).

This document also admits that security threats to the continent are much more internal than external, and it further states twenty - two (22) sources of internal threats as;

(i) Inter-State Conflicts/Tensions:

- (a) Situations which undermine the sovereignty, territorial integrity and independence of Member States of the AU;

(b) Incidents involving the actual use of force or the threat of use of force between and among Member States of the AU;

(c) Lack of respect for the principle of non-interference by one Member State in the internal affairs of another;

(d) Aggression or threat of aggression from a country or a coalition of countries, in violation of AU Principles and the provisions of the UN Charter.

(ii) Intra-State Conflicts/Tensions:

(e) The existence of grave circumstances, namely war crimes, genocide and crimes against humanity;

(f) Lack of respect for the sanctity of human life, impunity, political assassination, acts of terrorism and subversive activities;

(g) Coup d'états and unconstitutional changes of government; and situations which prevent and undermine the promotion of democratic institutions and structures, including the absence of the rule of law, equitable social order, popular participation and good governance;

(h) Improper conduct of electoral processes;

(i) Lack of commitment by the parties to abide by the elections conducted in line with the laws of the country.

(j) Absence of the promotion and protection of human and peoples' rights, individual and collective freedoms, equality of opportunity for all, including women, children and ethnic minorities;

(k) Poverty and inequitable distribution of natural resources; and corruption;

(l) Political, religious and ethnic extremism, as well as racism.

(iii) Unstable Post-Conflict Situations:

(m) Failure to consolidate peace in the post-conflict period as a result of the absence of effective and complete post conflict demobilization, disarmament, and re-integration and lack of sustained post-conflict rehabilitation and reconstruction processes.

(iv) Other Factors that Engender Insecurity:

- (n) Plight of refugees and internally displaced persons and the insecurity caused by their presence;
- (o) Use of landmines and unexploded ordinance;
- (p) Illicit proliferation, circulations and trafficking in small arms and light weapons;
- (q) Pandemic diseases such as HIV/AIDS, tuberculosis, malaria;
- (r) Environmental degradation;
- (s) Violent and other crimes, including organized and cross border crimes;
- (t) Human trafficking;
- (u) Drug trafficking;
- (v) Money laundering. (CADSP, 2004)

By these loads of fact, African states ought to pay much more attention to the security of their citizens as espoused by the human security proponents. Though the documents cited above indicate the common agreements adopted by states, however, it is the position of this paper that states ought to sheer legalism and be active participants in the global transition from the traditional to the modern conception of security.

The Need for Peace Education

The need for education cannot be overemphasized as it equips man with the tool to confront, manage and possibly overcome his besetting challenges. Properly structured and goal oriented-education enables man to develop his intellect to be able to critically analyze issues with a view to understanding the nature of the issues, and ultimately, to work out an appropriate solution. Education may be designed to achieve different goals and objectives. However, it has been established that education is key to the attainment of peace. In other words, to ensure proper security in a state, educating the youth, particularly the young boys or men, is very important. For instance, in its comments, Global Campaign for Education, United States Chapter (nd), notes that ‘Research has consistently found that providing good quality primary and secondary education reduces the risk of civil war. Because young men in particular are often recruited as

soldiers, male secondary school enrollment significantly reduces the risk of conflict'. The implication of this is that keeping young men out of school will translate to increasing level of insecurity in a state. Consequently, engaging the youth through good and qualitative education becomes an appropriate instrument to combat security challenges in any society.

As a concept, peace education or better still, education for peace, as defined by Harris and Synott (2002), 'is a series of teaching encounters that draw from people:

- their desire for peace,
- non-violent alternatives for managing conflict, and
- skills for critical analysis of structural arrangements that produce and legitimize injustice and inequality'.

Page (2008) on his own part sees it as 'encouraging a commitment to peace as a settled disposition and enhancing the confidence of the individual as an individual agent of peace; as informing the student on the consequences of war and social injustice, as informing the student on the value of peaceful and just social structure and working to uphold or develop such social structures; as encouraging the student to love the world and to imagine a peaceful future; and as caring for the student and encouraging the student to care for others'. It is believed to be one of five dimensions by which democratic citizenship can be inculcated into people, others being; civic, intercultural, human rights and global (i.e. World affairs) education. (Duerr 2000 cited in Jackson and Fujiwara, 2008). In the words of a former UNESCO Director-General Federico Mayor:

...Instead of focusing exclusively on rebuilding societies after they have been torn apart by violence, the emphasis is placed on preventing violence by fostering a culture where conflicts are transformed into cooperation before they can degenerate into war and destruction. The key to the prevention of violence is education for nonviolence. This requires the mobilization of education in its broadest sense—education throughout life and involving the mass media as much as traditional educational institutions.

In the extant literature, peace education can be viewed from three perspectives: as training for conflict resolution, as democracy education, and as human rights education.

Peace education, as conflict resolution training, centres on the social-behavioural symptoms of conflict, training individuals to resolve inter-personal disputes through techniques of negotiation and (peer) mediation. Learning to manage anger and improve communication through skills such as listening, turn-taking, identifying needs, and separating facts from emotions, constitute the main elements of these programmes. It aims at altering beliefs, attitudes, and behaviour from negative to positive attitudes toward conflict as a basis for preventing violence (Harris, 1999).

As democracy education, peace education focuses on the political processes associated with conflict, and postulates that with an increase in democratic participation the likelihood of societies resolving conflict through violence and war decreases. This perspective attempts to foster a conflict-positive orientation in societies by training students to view conflict as a platform for creativity and growth. The aim is to produce “responsible citizens” who will hold their governments accountable to the standards of peace, primarily through adversarial processes.

Peace education, as human rights education, typically focuses at the level of policies that humanity ought to adopt in order to move closer to a peaceful global community. The aim is to engender a commitment among participants to a vision of structural peace in which all individual members of the human race can exercise their personal freedoms and be legally protected from violence, oppression and indignity. It familiarizes participants with the international covenants and declarations of the United Nations system; train students to recognize violations of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights; and promote tolerance, solidarity, autonomy and self-affirmation at the individual and collective levels.

Indeed, in the contemporary time, states are often faced with the dilemma of having to choose between security and human rights, protection and freedom. However, in the age of counter-terrorism, a critical balance is required to ensure that the security of the state is not sacrificed on the altar of human rights or freedom. The implication is that more states are abridging rights or sacrificing certain human rights and curtailing freedom to achieve security for the majority of their law abiding citizens. Oberleitner (2003), in his comments on the need to balance human rights with security challenge in this age of global counter-terrorism contends that,

In such a world, human rights have to be limited, truncated and reduced. We have to choose between security and human rights, between safety and liberty, between protection and freedom. Human rights can be traded off

for more security, and ultimately security concerns trump over human rights. Two different sets of language are being spoken, the language of human rights and the language of security, growing apart more and more each day.

What this suggests is that human rights are best protected and enjoyed in an environment where peace and security prevails. To achieve the needed level of peace and security required for sustainable development therefore teaching and learning covering social, economic, environmental and cultural aspects of life must be given attention. As George (2012) notes, 'Education is vital to the task of acquiring the capacity to live together peacefully. It can help to prevent insecurity and conflicts from thwarting progress towards sustainable development'. Igbuzor (2011) corroborates this point when he notes that peace and security education is a critical factor in producing sustainable peace. Thus, using education to combat insecurity and in the process achieve a peaceful living environment will ultimately improve the human rights situation of the society.

Conclusion

From the foregoing, it is evident that there is a close relationship between security, human rights and peace education. The provision of good quality peace education will reduce the level of insecurity in a state. The absence of education or the provision of low quality education may, on the other hand, lead to insecurity. Insecurity will prompt the state to respond to restore law and order. This may and often come with its implications. One of the major implications is the erosion or abuse of human rights. In certain instances, certain rights may be removed, limited or suspended, depending on the extent of the threat and the means available to the state to handle the security challenge. Ultimately, good quality education helps to build a peaceful living environment by eliminating or reducing the incentives for youth to engage in acts they can or may threaten the security of the society.

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