



## REPRESENTING POST-STRUCTURAL PERSPECTIVES AS A THEORETICAL CATEGORY INTO THE MAINSTREAM NATIONAL SECURITY DISCOURSE

Sanusi Aminu Hayatu\*<sup>1</sup>, Muhammad Fuad Othman<sup>1</sup>, Mohd Dino Khairri Bin Shariffuddin<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup>School of International Studies, College of Law Government and International Studies, Universiti Utara Malaysia.

### ABSTRACT

The objective of this paper is to by way of appreciating the shortcomings of earlier schools and theories on national security, to introduce and propose the integration of post-structural arguments and perspectives into the mainstream theoretical discourse on national security so as to fill in the existing gap in the national security discourse. To achieve this, the paper utilizes literature review as a secondary source of its data. The study is relevant because its ability to reconstruct and enrich the existing discourse on national security will not only help researchers and scholars alike with an enriched and focused representation of the theoretical perspectives on the concept of national security, but also expose and increase the explanatory power of the post-structural perspectives in understanding security issues wherever they arise.

**Keywords:** Discourse, Theory, Mainstream, and National Security.

### INTRODUCTION

For far too long, the marginalization of the post-structuralist arguments on the phenomenon of national security has created a wide lacuna in the theoretical discourse of the concept. This is inspite of the acknowledgements of the shortcomings of existing schools and theories like classical and securitization and human security approaches.

But because the notions of post-structuralism are usually labelled as being destructive rather than constructive, many of the security problems of the contemporary society would have found their solutions in the deep-rooted analytical capacity of the post-structural arguments and perspectives.

Being one of the oldest concepts in human life, the concept of security (later national security) has endured through different re-constructions that tend to make it mean different thing for different subjects in different circumstances and conditions. According to Muthiah Alagappa, (1987)

*From Hobbes to Weber down the lane to contemporary thinkers, the concept of national security is a broad concept which means different things in different circumstances. While some see it even as ambiguous with hardly any specific origin, the concept is as old as social contract and eventually nations, and nation-states themselves. This is because the concept is a product of the desire of and by nation-states to be secure and free from both internal subversion and external aggression in terms of the core values of national security and territorial integrity.*

However, the arguments and debates about the origin and nature of security could be said to be as old as human existence on earth, but no meaning could be derived from such inevitable reality unless the subject matter is reduced to the period when conscious attempts to conceptualize the term, were made.

There are different perspectives with regard the origin of the discourse on security and its very nature. There is no divided opinions however, on the fact that the discourse about security originated from its concerns through oral debate and eventually developed to become documented, but the major bones of contention is usually about when, where, how and by whom the discourse was originated.

While this is left for a broader research framework like conferences issue-based symposia etc, this research confines itself to a snappy review of mainstream security frameworks of the three schools of Classical, Copenhagen, and Human Security. Most importantly however, it represents some Post-structural perspectives on national security of as a form of protest for the realization of its relevance in addressing security questions in the contemporary global system.

## **RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

The research uses secondary sources of literature. This is by way of reviewing existing literature ranging from books, journals, articles, thesis, and other relevant periodicals. This is because the study is by its very nature a review of extant literature.

## **SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY**

This conceptual paper on the concept of national security is important first because it capitalizes on the lapses of mainstream schools of national security by suggesting the incorporation the post-structural view as an independent category in to the mainstream theoretical discourse as an important tool with deep-rooted, wide range issues coverage and realistic understanding of security issues in our increasingly insecure world.

## **FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION**

### **Classical/Traditional Security School**

Classical security approach also referred to as traditional security is the oldest among all schools of thought on national security. Its central premise is the assumption that power is the centre of gravity of international politics; therefore it is important for each nation-state to build its military power in order to protect its territory from external aggression by other nation-states. This is clear as they see security as a freedom from any objective military threat to the state survival in an anarchic international system. (Šulovic2010.)

Earlier works like that of Sun Tzu, Carl Von Clausewitz, and later Hans Morgenthau, have dedicated their talents to the explanation and understanding of security from the angle of completion between countries in the international system to protect their territories from external threats through the expansion of their military might and capabilities. Much of these works were what had formed the basis for the theorization of international politics as realism based on power acquisition, maximization and threat protection. The classical approach is

criticized for being too mechanical by ignoring other factors, forces and interest that can be equally threatening.

### **Securitization Approach (Copenhagen School)**

Also known as the Copenhagen school, the securitization approach is nevertheless an integral part of the classical school. However, because of its transcendental claim over the traditional school, of integrating and broadening the nature and scope of national security, securitization approach recognizes that

*...the impact of intra-state conflicts is in terms of degeneration of the environment, sweeping demographic changes and the rapidly burgeoning cyber-warfare arena have replaced inter-state wars as the main threats to a nation's security in the 21st century". Srikanth, (2014)*

So securitization theory has taken a rather radical departure from the way we use to think about security because when we talk about security we tend to assume that there must be things out there are things out there that are security threats and take the word security and go around to fix those security threats. (Buzan, Waever, & Wilde 1998)

This is tantamount to assuming that the task of security analysts is basically to assess what are the biggest threats and how to go about dealing with them. But the point of securitization theory is actually the other way round.

For Buzan, B., & Waever, O. (2003), it is about saying that there are existential threats outside the normal bounds of political rules that negatively affect the referent objects that have to survive which if identified becomes necessary to deal with through securitization moves in the form of going to war, keeping secrets, invasion of countries, controlling violence, wars, entering into international treaties etc by the state by doing what it ordinarily otherwise couldn't do through the consent of the legitimate audience.

In spite of the importance of the securitization theory, it is not devoid of gray areas which tend to project it as we can begin to study how different securitizing actors want to make different referent objects the centre of attention, focus on different threats, different extra-ordinary measures etc

### **Human Security Approach**

This approach is a development of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP). It seeks to find alternative to the widening global insecurity despite the practice of existing security approaches. The human security has identified that security would have been meaningless without the individual being secure from the needs of fear and want. For this reason the approach lays its emphasis on the need for nation states to pursue the security of their territories through the securing of their citizens against the fear of want and security. (UNDP 2014)

The human security approach is a total soft power approach and therefore tends to ignore the reality of the possibility of foreign invasions or internal crises which needs hard power to control.

## Post-Structuralist Perspectives

To advance beyond the current discourse on classical, securitization and human security approaches, post-structural perspectives will promising especially in explaining the maximalist nature of nation-states security and the consequences of such on security of the individual and the state itself. To begin on a safer note is to trace some of the earliest writings on security that fits into the structural argument.

Foucault's Discipline and Punish and Govern mentality for example, has hammered very well on the issues of Panopticism, surveillance, control, domination, dataveillance etc where they have tried to demonstrate on varying point of views the way and manner in which the individual as being over surveyed by the state apparatus of government and the tools of *conduct of conducts* (conduite de conduits) (Foucault, 2008).

Being that panopticon is a *socio-material template for institutional orders of all kinds ranging from prisons, to schools, to factories, to hospitals, it is a diagram of a mechanism of power and behavior control reduced to its ideal form* (Foucault 1977:205), the individual is first of all being made to feel unsecure, secondly; he is made to deliberately act in a way to deviate from social norms and procedure. This for Foucault and other supposed structural scholars is a Big-state tendency that ends up creating more security problems for both the state as well as the individual.

This shows that apart from population and its welfare, identified as forms of power, Chamberlain (2014: 395 - 397) pines that:

Foucault notes that two other forms of power, sovereignty and discipline, are tied up with the development of the power of a population-focused form of governance, with its concern for the *conduct of conduct*, to enable the promotion of the security, health, wealth, and happiness of individual subject-citizens.

It is in this light that Foucault would see a possibility that outside the benefits of societal control and organization and security, the security of the individual in terms of his freedom and natural privilege to partake or wish not to partake in political organization and arrangements is the other way endangered hence security of the state.

Even later structuralists like Barry Buzan for example, would understand the various roles of the state; either to ensure the security of the individual or endangering him. There are still extreme cases where according to Buzan the maximalist state ends up taking security measures that serve as a threat to it. If the state employs stringent security measures which by extension infringes on the rights and privileges of the individual.

This phenomenon according to Buzan causes what he termed as political order threat, but a situation where the security laxity of the state leads to disrespect for law and order as well as the abuse of the rights of others then this phenomenon is best described by Buzan as political disorder threat.(Buzan, 2008)

This understanding however, perfectly fits into the broader discourse of the post-structuralist scholars.

## CONCLUSION

This study by drawing from the advantages of the post-structural arguments on national security concludes the importance of post-structural arguments cannot be overemphasized and should be considered as a matured approach that should take its independent position in the mainstream discourse on national security.

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