REPOSITIONING TECHNICAL AND ENGINEERING EDUCATION IN THE FRAMEWORK OF ACTIVE SECURITY CONSCIOUSNESS IN NIGERIA

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ABSTRACT

The paper offers a broader look at pertinent security issues ranging from the clandestine outcry of marginalization and social deprivation to acts of violent agitation and coordinated domestic terrorism. It blames lack of political will and sheer intolerance is the bane of Nigeria’s National Security issues which could easily be resolved through active security collaboration of the legislative and educational structures in the country. Active security consciousness gave a name to the process of raising security issues above mere rhetoric to reposition the country’s legislative and educational machineries in a comprehensive and sustainable participatory security framework. This paper identifies Technical and Engineering Education (TEE) as an instrument par excellence for revamping active security consciousness in the light of the national objectives of Nigeria. These objectives form the major impetus for the general objectives of education which aim at the total development of an individual to use his talents to the optimum capacity of his inborn potentialities. Thus, this paper proposed a comprehensive framework to reposition TEE curriculum and advocate for responsive legislations that will provide the most desirable platform for unparalleled development of science and its application in a secured environment.

Field of Research: active security consciousness, technical and engineering education, curriculum, national objectives deprivation, tolerance, terrorism.

1. Introduction

The classical idea of security is traced to the Latin word ‘Securitas’ which refers to tranquility and freedom from fear or the absence of anxiety upon which the fulfilled life depends (Liotta, 2002). Invariably, this idea must incorporate all inextricably intertwined dimensions of security that would suggest an unperturbed freedom, a sense of harmonious coexistence and a state of protection against any form of threat. Human being is a perpetually wanting animal whose behavior is motivated by the desire to achieve and maintain the conditions that would make it possible to satisfy his needs. These needs, according to Maslow’s well cited theory of human developmental psychology are classified into five levels: physiological, safety and security, belonging and social, self-esteem and status, and self-actualization needs (Maslow, 1943). According to Maslow, human beings seek to satisfy the lower needs (first and second levels) before considering the higher needs (third, fourth and fifth levels) which are all pursued consecutively. Lower-level needs are those basic physiological needs (intuitive drives) experienced by everyone which can be presented classically in their order of relative urgency as desire to breathe; drink; dispose of bodily waste; eat; sleep; and to have shelter, clothing and sex. Once these are satisfied the next higher order needs come to the fore, of which the first is the need for self-preservation and avoidance of injury, that is, the safety needs. The three upper-level needs are typically psychological, experienced more rarely, and by fewer people. They include love needs as level three; esteem needs as level four; and self-actualization needs as level five as typified in Fig 1.
The hierarchy suggests that people are motivated to fulfill the most basic of human needs such as the security of body, property and resources before moving on to more advanced ones. From this golden theory, we infer that it is only when people have a good sense of safety and security that they are motivated to pursue other goals. The first duty of any government is to afford protection to its citizens and that if a government fails to protect the lives and property of its citizens, it lacks the moral legitimacy to continue in other aspects of governance (Heyman, 1991). Security experts maintained that a state is characterized as having failed when the government fails to protect its citizens, or when a sense of relative safety is no longer felt by its people (Rice & Patrick, 2008). While it may be an exaggeration to agree with the Fund for Peace (Messner, 2013) that Nigeria is on the verge of being a completely failed state based on safety issues, we view the country’s low index as a matter of serious concern. Any magnitude of threat to human safety needs is a pertinent security issue which may give rise to different levels of conflicts between the contending parties. Gurr’s model on conflict postulates that relative deprivation or alienation sets in grievances that would inform mobilization for political action (Gurr, 2011). In consequence, the more mobilized an alienated individual or a group is, the greater the magnitude of the conflict and its resulting effects.

2. The Concept of Active Security Consciousness

The concept of active security transcends the conventional statist or militarist function to a comprehensive and strategic national reorientation and mass education towards participatory security consciousness. Plato, in his Republic, insists that the supreme craft of security is the art of the legislator who enforces political will and the educator who trains self-moderation (Ujomu & Adelugba, 2008.). Political will here has to do with the ability and willingness of the leadership leaders to shift from traditional paradigms that have failed us as a nation to more rational concepts. Self-moderation, which is a culture of tolerance by the followership, will aim at striking balance between two extremes of opposing worldviews in a civil society. According to (Goodman, 1972) there can be no security in traditions that failed us and there is no black market in truth. Therefore, sustainable national security should come from a better enlightenment, training and lawmakers. Active security consciousness through functional education and legislative control of the citizens, as presented in this paper, could strike at the heart of the security problem in Nigeria.
3. Role of Technical and Engineering Education

To this effect, Technical and Engineering Education (TEE) curriculum formulation and its implementation processes should be blended with a flavor of political will and self-moderation geared towards achieving Nigeria national objectives. The purpose of education in Nigeria is to serve as instrument par excellence for effecting national development and achieving its national objectives. It is instructive here to state that investment in human capital development is a precursor to effectiveness and excellence and must be treated as a national emergency, even in wartime. Reference is therefore made to the five main national objectives of Nigeria already stated in the National Development plan and endorsed as the necessary foundation for the National Policy on Education (F.R.N., 2004). These are the building of: a free and democratic society; a just and egalitarian society; a united, strong and self-reliant nation; a great and dynamic economy; and a land of bright and full opportunities for all citizens.

Repositioning the above national objectives in the light of active security provides a comprehensive, strategic, and a team approach to addressing our inextricably intertwined security issues. This idea, according to (Owen, 2004) is a broad and integrated approach that transcends the traditional concept of hard security to a total and comprehensive approach. Based on this premise, the paper proposes a comprehensive framework for repositioning TEE which systematically translates each national objective of Nigeria to a corresponding active security consciousness component as depicted in Fig 2.

4. Components of Active Security Consciousness

4.1 Freedom and Democracy

The first national objective of Nigeria sought to build a free and democratic society which guarantees security of the mind, exalts the virtues of democracy, and promotes tolerance. Meaningful national reorientation in the path of mental emancipation is likely to give birth to
intellectual security and mental emancipation. Poverty of the mind and barrenness of intellect are the most tragic diseases that a country can slip into at any time in its history (Eko & Emenyonyu, 1989). Modern interpretation of the original Declaration of Human Rights describes physical and mental liberty as a basic instinct with emphasis that all human beings are born equal with inalienable rights and fundamental freedoms (Morsink, 1999). These rights can be explained as the basic universal inalienable rights should be enjoyed by all human beings regardless of their religion, race, ethnicity, gender and status. They include the right of life, the right to an adequate standard of living, freedom from torture and other maltreatment freedom of religion and of expression, freedom of movement, the right to self-determination, the right to education, and the right to participation in cultural and political life. Infringement on any of these inalienable rights by acts of commission or omission is alienation to human safety which may give rise to pertinent security issues. In Africa and other parts of the Third World human rights have been also become a central issue of democratization, while a good human rights profiles have been made a political conditionality for foreign aid and loans by Western donor countries and international agencies (Osaghae, 1996). A good number of security issues in Nigeria, for instance, stems from the problem of definition built around narrowed influences of fundamental religious prejudices, ethnic chauvinistic legends, or worst still illusive official initiatives. These mental inaccuracies translate into detestable activities and undue anxieties that could be inimical to national objective on freedom and democracy. Typically, the most contentious areas between the government and civil liberties border on political freedom, academic freedom, freedom of the press and freedom of association and rights of vulnerable population. Accusations of excessive suppression are labeled against the regime on one hand (Ratner, 2001). While, on the other hand, certain privileges are grossly abused unprofessional conduct of the Press and ideological obsessive disorder of ethno-religious groups or individuals (Adum & Ekwenchi, 2011; Falola, 1998).

To circumvent this political constraint, countries have taken the approach of enacting laws or negotiating conventions, which criminalize specific acts such as breach of trust or unethical conduct, unlawful assembly and general acts of terrorism or violence (Perl, 2003). However, some regimes take advantage of the existing legal vacuum to legitimize certain extreme measures of self-defense (Oehmichen, 2009). Typically extraordinary rendition, enhanced interrogation, targeted assassination, military invasion or occupation and invasive surveillance of privacy. It must take a resolute effort to emancipate the mind and set it free on the path of freedom and democracy (Miller, 2002). To achieve this, the TEE curriculum should incorporate the necessary elements of moral philosophy in training a new generation of leaders having the political will to grant the led their basic liberties and privileges such as freedom of speech, lawful assembly and association; freedom to hold, profess and practice their chosen ideologies; freedom of the press; and academic freedom to learn and teach any chosen academic discipline for a common good. However, these privileges are not without either legislative or self-moderated limits to avoid unintended consequence of becoming a source of insecurity for others or the state.

Applied knowledge of logics and moral philosophy is necessary to strike the desirable balance in such situations of perceived conflict between citizens and the state. The TEE program focus should shift from the conventional theoretical instruction to a meaningful ideological and attitudinal training of principled individuals with the ability to

- Secure values and beliefs
- Explore new ideas and think creatively and independently
- Develop and communicate their own beliefs and world view
- Apply learning experiences in new situations and make reasoned evaluations

4.2 Rule of Law

The second national objective of Nigeria sought to build a just and egalitarian society which represents an epitome of the rule of the law, social justice, equity and fair play. This implies a *modus operandi* based on respect for human rights and the rule of law as opposed to what Human Rights watchdogs would call military authoritarianism. The index of Human Right Abuse in Nigeria remained unabated through its years of military rule to the present civilian administration as government agents are often accused of exacerbating crises and increasing the casualty figure by direct repression, use of force to arrest and torture largely the innocent ones, disproportionate use of force and in some extreme cases spray of extra judicial killings are meted (U.S.D.S, 2013). To aggravate the situation, post crises judicial processes are often truncated and the real culprits are seldom brought to book. Judicial commissions of inquiry were constituted only for the process to halt at either the expected report were not made public by the government or that no white paper to that effect. Where the crime perpetrators are prosecuted and convicted, you will have obnoxious clauses that would avail them endless chances to repeat their carnage. This unfortunate trend encouraged several cycles of bloodletting, displacement of lives and wanton destruction of properties to a point where everyone is afraid of his own shadow (Iduh, 2011). Nigeria lulls in uncertainty since neither the deployment of troops nor judicial committee methods of conflict management struck at the heart of the problem.

Thus, repositioning objectives of TEE in the light of active security consciousness is to guarantee the security of lives and properties through community policing rather than forcing compliance. To meet this target, TEE curriculum should incorporate the appropriate teachings in citizenship education. The major learning outcome of the program should be *training of responsible citizens* with the ability to

- Be self-aware
- Develop informed and ethical views of complex issues
- Present evidence of physical, mental and emotional well being
- Participate responsibly in political, economic, social, and cultural life

4.3 Functional Institutions

The third national objective of Nigeria sought to build a united, strong and self-reliant nation that can boast of effective institutions and protection of its territorial integrity. Self-moderation and supportive legislations are pertinent in this direction for the restoration of our refineries to function at full capacity; power plants to meet the economic needs; uncompromising custom and immigration services; repositioning the country’s military might and expertise to defend every inch of our fatherland; subduing vicious criminal forces perpetuating acts of domestic terrorism, oil bunkering, insurgencies, kidnappings, abductions, jail breaks, Bank raids, and ritual killings. Successive Nigerian governments have promoted neoliberal reforms with emphasis on the need for infrastructural and institutional development due to negligence and corruption (Ayote, 2010). This type of insecurity signifies a malfunctioning syndrome affecting most vehicles of social control that characterized the traditional African societies. It is increasingly becoming evident nowadays that all those institutions, whether as traditional, religious, or secular structures have failed to secure the desirable wellbeing of all citizens. Regrettably, since independence a notable surviving legacy of the successive political leadership both civilian and military that have managed the affairs of the country at different times has been the institutionalization of corruption to such a point which anticorruption mechanisms are often used as tools to hunt political adversaries (Ogbeidi, 2012). More than ever, Nigeria is desirous of effective and efficient institutions to attain sustainable development.
Hence, Nigeria’s future leaders should receive the minimum education in nationalism for effective protection of human and material resources and the maintenance of infrastructure in a culturally diverse Nigeria. To achieve this task TEE curriculum should integrate applied case studies in nationalism and civics education for the training of patriotic citizens with ability to

- Evaluate environmental, scientific, and technological issues
- Understand and appreciate tenets and values of our nationhood
- Develop knowledge and understanding of the world and Nigeria’s place in it

**4.4 Dynamic Economy**

To build a great and dynamic economy which represents the evolution of a responsible economy is the fourth national objective of Nigeria. Strong indicators to a responsible economy (Nurudeen & Usman, 2010) include optimum exploration and utilization of Nigeria’s natural resources; attracting foreign investors while home grown industries are being nurtured; job creation to our teeming and vulnerable youths; rebranding the trademark quality of our so called made-in-Nigeria products to compete favorably in international markets; evidence of prudence and financial discipline; and competency driven resource allocation. It must also seek to apply its resources to the struggle for national development, and the amelioration of poverty and ignorance in the country. Impact of economic wellbeing of citizens on national security could not be more topical than now when overwhelming literatures (Amaraeegbu, 2011; Ginifer & Ismail, 2005) indict poverty and abject neglect as the root cause to armed violence and in Nigeria. If an idle mind is the Devil’s workshop and also if a hungry man is an angry person, then the volatility and lethal power of unemployed able bodies is great. No wonder most of them constitute a volatile reserve of mercenary fighters capable of fermenting trouble at the slightest provocation.

There is an urgent need to further enrich TEE curriculum with a component of comprehensive and practical entrepreneurial education sufficient enough for the training of effective contributors with the ability to

- Exhibit enterprising attitude
- Demonstrate an attitude of self-reliance
- Show prudence and financial discipline
- Assess risks and take informed decisions
- Show resilience to reach high standards of achievement

**4.5 Social Cohesion**

The fifth and last national objective of Nigeria aims at building a land of bright and full opportunities for all citizens. It aspires to attain a security community which individuals believe that common social problems must and can be resolved by the processes of peaceful exchange. Nigeria provides a world class theatre of multi-ethnic state with several hundreds of ethnic groups belonging to divergent religious affiliations. However, one major issue threatening our nationhood is human insecurity which is characterized by lack of cordiality, mutual suspicion and fear, and a tendency towards violent confrontations or reprisals. This ethno-cultural heterogeneity has made the task of building a viable, functional and cohesive polity an uphill task for the different administrations that have ruled the country since independence. There existed age long sporadic skirmishes on regional discriminations and marginalization from some sections of these countries; inter-communal clashes over farmlands and border issues; ethno-religious animosity; and socio-political conflicts of indigenes versus setters (Abdullahi & Saka, 2007; Ostien, 2009). Now, even after five decades of our uneasy federation, various ethnic nationalities and their sub groupings clamor for its disintegration. Identity crises, resentments, exchange of hostilities and the widening disparity along the ethnic, religious, and political lines of divisions had forced the present administration to change its stance on national dialogue. The southern nationalities are accusing the northerners of misruling the
country for the past four decades of its independence and reaping from where they did not sow. The northerners on the other hand, consider themselves as the only true nationalists and heroic nation builders who sacrificed immensely to keep the country as one indivisible entity. The situation, according to some government sources, is so bad that there is no state in the country that is not presently experiencing one form of security challenge or the other (Adebowale, 2013). Security concerns of this magnitude culminate to social uprising through gradual processes of organized pressure groups or loner critics to press home delicate issues under the guise of improved social services, social justice, environmental conservation, and protection of vulnerable population. This latter trend is so delicate that history was made, in what the world has come to know as Arab spring, when demonstrators sent a reverberated wave of change across the Arab nations.

From the foregoing discussion, it is crystal clear that Nigeria since independence has been grappling incessant problems of ethnicity and religious intolerance which gave birth to clandestine militias as well as organized pressure groups like the O’ dua People Congress (OPC); the Bakassi Boys; the Egbesu Boys; the Ijaw Youth Congress (IYC); the Igbo People Congress (IPC); the Arewa Peoples Congress (APC); the Movement for the Actualization of the Sovereign State of Biafra (MASSOB); the Ohanaeze N’digbo; Boko Haram; Akwat Akwop; etc. With the emergence of these vicious forces the deep divide between the various interest groups has become more violent and bloody with more devastating results (Amnesty International, 2012). These unfortunate events further make our aspiration for unity in diversity still a mirage. To tackle this precarious situation, TEE curriculum should teach practical case studies in peace and conflict resolution studies or the training of confident individuals with the ability to

- Exhibit tolerance and mutual coexistence
- Ambition to pursue a healthy and active lifestyle
- Apply problem solving and critical thinking in a new context
- Create and sustain social cohesion and industrial harmony
- Create strategies for national reconciliation among the various ethnic groups.

5. Conclusion

Most national security issues affecting the third world economies are characterized by personal resentments, sentiments, anxiety, non-violent struggle, phobia, exchange of hostilities, militancy, insurgency, domestic terrorism, and imminent breakdown of law and order. With reference to Nigeria, the problem of national security is seen mainly in the inability of the various governments and state agencies to consistently and institutionally guarantee the adequate protection, peace and wellbeing of the citizens (Amnesty International, 2013; Parillo, 2008). Government has a task to legislate and to institutionalize a political will towards security consciousness. However, sustainable national security plan is a comprehensive, strategic and team approach to find effective solutions. No amount of military power, intelligence-gathering ability or even economic strength will be sufficient to guarantee national integration and sustainable development where basic ideas such as appropriate mind, skills and ethical character are lacking. This paper presented an active security framework to reposition the Technical and Engineering Education in the light of Nigeria’s national objectives. The appeal of the liberal approach has been to widen the general objectives or scope of TEE instructional delivery to see things in a new light and to work assiduously towards active security consciousness. The worth of any educational system as an investment lies in its capability to continuously serve its stakeholders better and remain relevant. To this effect, the paper has advocated for repositioning of TEE curriculum content and instructional strategies such that they provide the most desirable platform for sustainable development of science and its application to industry and technology in a secured environment.

References


