Differences between traditional and critical security studies essay

Introduction:

Security refers to the protection of life from any force or factor that is threatening to it. Traditionally, security has been viewed from militaristic approaches that are related to the avoidance of conflicts between States and Nations of the world (BRAUCH, 2003). The traditional approach to this issue has majorly focused on studying the threats in our world and using or controlling military forces to address the issue. Since the cold war ended, there has been a distinct shift from security studies and international relations in addressing security approaches. The world super powers are no longer the sole determinants of international security issues globally. Issues that were formally neglected in international diplomacy like economic security, environmental degradation, natural resources and energy are currently being addressed in the new critical security approach model that calls for the participation of all Nations across the globe. The critical security approach model does not view economic and military strength of Nations as the main keys to achieving global security in the international arena (HILL, 2011). This approach encompasses ethical issues like environmental degradation, energy and economic security. Traditional security approach is the approach that was used in the pre cold war era. The approach had a realistic view that stated that individual Nations were to act as the main organs of security. The pursuit of ethics and ideals was not prioritized. Security was viewed as a Nations ability to acquire arms, build a strong military foundation and build its economic strength. All the policies that were formulated under this view (A state centric view) were only intended to meet the needs of individual states and the state's instituitions while ignoring the

interests of humankind as a whole. Critical security studies refer to all security approaches that are realistic approaches as opposed to traditional security approaches. Critical security may also be defined as a unique approach to security that has a commitment to the theory of emancipation. This paper will analyze the two security approaches, compare and contrast the two from a unbiased perspective and then analyze which one of the two approaches provides a more persuasive approach for studying security in the era of the post-cold war.

The main difference between the two security studies is that traditional security studies mainly focuses on the state. The traditional security is a realistic view that uses the nation state as an object of reference in terms of security and motivation. It does not focus on ethics and ideals of people. The policies in the traditional security target the requirements of the state instead of the interest of people (BOER & WILDE, 2008). Currently, some analyst still argues the threat from the military is high than it was during the cold war. However, it is controlled by the military balance of power for many years that ensures individual and state security protection. The threats of power are not the only problem to the lives of people presently. There are other challenges that affect the lives of people and they involve famine and diseases, environmental destructions and poverty. In comparison, critical security came after the traditional security during the remarkable end of the Cold War that was combined with an increase in environmental degradation, globalization and international security. Traditional security approach is limited to the state while the critical approach of security goes beyond any

limitation. Security threats to critical approach involves challenges of the well-being and survival of people and states that comes from non-military forces such as environmental degradation, climate change, natural disasters, infectious diseases and food shortages (GOUCHA&CROWLEY, 2008). The next difference between the two, that is the traditional approach of security and critical are the threats affecting them. The critical security threats are non-military in making, transnational in view and they are neither interstate nor domestic. They are transmitted very fast due to communication and globalization change (ANTHONY, 2013). The critical threats are more intimidating and serious than the traditional ones since they require national cooperation of all leaders to form political and social reforms. The manner in which these challenges are being discussed worldwide shows their enormity. Diplomatic maneuvering, military deterrence and short-term political organizations are not adequate to deal with the non-traditional issues. The issue requires non-military means like comprehensive economic, social and political reforms.

Traditional security study has its referent being the state where the main role is to ensure survival of the state by the use of the basics of power. These basics of power include political power, economic power and diplomacy (COLLINS, 2013). A nation state utilizes diplomacy to secure allies from other nation states and isolate impending threats to a particular state. A nation state utilizes its economic power to enable or induce cooperation with another nation state especially one with the weaker economy. By the use of these power basics, a nation can therefore protect itself by implementation of civil defenses and ensuring emergency preparedness in

case of an attack, implementing strategic intelligence services to ensure detection and avoidance of various threats, and marshaling of counterintelligence services and secret police that ensure the nation is protected from both internal and external threats. Nation states that have strong economies are better positioned to protect themselves from any external threats in comparison to nation states with a weak economy. Huge financial resources mean they can afford to maintain an effective and well trained armed force. With a strong economic power, such nation states can manufacture their own weapons and purchase others from other nations. This ensures that their armed forces are fully equipped to fight off any threats to the nation. Nations with strong political power can protect their states better by ensuring critical platforms are laid down to maintain flexibility and redundancy of the critical infrastructure needed for development and normal running of the nation's daily activities.

On the other side, critical security studies have their referent being an individual where the main role is to ensure there is integrity towards people. Critical security studies focus on ensuring the safety of the individual by considering numerous factors that include economic, personal, communal, health, food and political. Political security is involved with ensuring that individuals are living in a culture that respects their elementary human rights. Human rights are more likely to be violated when a society experiences periods of political unrest. Personal security in critical security studies wants to ensure that individuals are protected from all forms of physical violence whether from violent people, states and external states. It also aims at protecting sub-state actors from any forms of domestic abuse or

predacious adults. Critical security studies also want to ensure environmental safety for individual. Their aim is ensuring that people are protected from artificial threats in nature; short-lived and long-term effects of nature and decline of the natural environment.

Critical security studies want to ensure health security of an individual. Their main aim is to guarantee maximum protection of individual from unhealthy ways of life, diseases and infectious disease causing agents (VAUGHAN & PEOPLES, 2013). By controlling the main causes of diseases such as infectious and parasitic disease causing agents, unhealthy foods and lack of healthy diets, critical security studies aim at achieving maximum protection of individuals from diseases and illnesses. Critical security studies aim at ensuring economic security of individuals; they want a situation where each individual is assured of a basic income usually from productive work. This implies that critical security studies look into the employment of individuals, which is the only sure way of ensuring economic security for people. Critical security studies also deal with food safety for people. Their main aim is ensuring that people have physical and economic access to basic food commodities. This implies that they focus on ensuring equal distribution of foodstuffs and offering of relief to those individuals who cannot afford to purchase food.

Traditional security studies are aimed at main factor, which is the state. They assumed that the safety of the state is the ultimate key to security. Critical security studies are modern and more evolved. The present world presents numerous security challenges in comparison with cold war era when security challenges were few and clearly defined. Current security challenges are

numerous and not clearly defined. Critical security studies try to discover all the current forms of security challenges and then redefining them in such a way that security forces can handle them. Traditional security studies focus on one main form of security. They usually view military security as the main form of security as it is the one tasked with ensuring the safety of a particular nation state. Military security is responsible for defending the nation and stopping any kind of attack aimed at nation state. Traditional security studies view a strong military security as the key to other forms of security for a given nation state (BUZAN & HANSEN, 2009). In contrast, critical security studies view all forms of security as different entities and know that each security entity should lay down its structure to ensure security in a particular sector. The combination of all these security entities is what finally the security of the nation state becomes. These entities include political security, economic security, military security, environmental security, cyber security and natural resources security. Political security is one of the key entities, which ensure the security of a given nation state. A politically secure nation state will have a stable social order. Political security entity is tasked with ensuring that any impending threats to the sovereignty of a particular nation state are handled expertly to avoid any damages to the state and its relations with other nation states. Environmental security entity is tasked with ensuring environmental issues that pose any kind of security threat to the nation are handled. Although it is difficult to quantify the range and kind of threats posed to national security by the enviroment, critical security studies trying to come up with various ways of classifying and handling environmental threats. Natural resources security is a very

important entity. For a nation to progress in its development of industry and economic power, availability of natural resources is a very important factor. Therefore, critical studies include environmental security as one of the key entities which ensure the security of the people and the state. Traditional security studies deal with security issues of the cold war era while critical security studies involve all security issues including the most recent. This is why cyber-security is viewed as one of the key entities in ensuring security of the people and the nation. Cyber-rimes are capable of easily crippling the security state of any nation easily since electronic information can be easily altered if strategic security platforms are not laid down. Any unauthorized access by state or non-state entities, to important nation infrastructures such as electrical systems can cause serious security threats to the people and the nation at large (LÓPEZ et al, 2012). The security study that presents a more persuasive approach in the post-cold war era is the critical security approach. It does not encourage the use of military force and economic strength in addressing security issues. This is a big advage to the approach because use of military force leads to more wars. This was as evidenced in the first and the second world wars where Nations created an arms race in order to secure their positions as the most secure countries. The arms race created tensions that later led to war. The cost of the two wars on life and property was enormous. Therefore, in the post-cold war, an approach that has formally led to war cannot be adopted. Another reason why the critical security approach is the most persuasive is that it addresses ethical issues like energy and natural resources, environmental degradation and use of diplomacy in conflict resolution. By addressing an issue like natural

resources, the study avoids conflict between nations that would end up into war over natural resources. Kuwait's invasion by Iraq was a war fought over natural resources (CHEW, 2008). International intervention that made it clear that Iraq had no right to take Kuwait's oil ended the war and no further invasions have occurred. North and South Sudan are two countries that are currently fighting over natural resources. Once the issue has been sufficiently addressed, the two countries will cease-fire. Had they been fighting to prove economic or military strength as provided for in the traditional approach, the war would probably never come to an end until one side was damaged beyond a ' militaristic repair'.

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