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Human Security Challenges in eSwatini (Swaziland)

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A King celebrates his birthday wearing his diamond laced sports jacket and flashing his 1.6 million dollar watch. No, this is not the King of Monaco, it is the King of eSwatini (the new name for the country of Swaziland that his Majesty King Mswati III renamed last year at the time of his 50th birthday). Royalty does have its privileges, even in this small, lower-income country that is roughly the size of New Jersey and has a population of 1.4 million people (similar to the population here in Hillsborough County).

Leadership, however, even in this case should warrant greater restraint in terms of "in your face" flash. One would expect a bit more of an understated stance, especially in this southern African nation where 70% of the population earns less than \$2 a day; where more than one in four (26%) of its adult population is HIV positive (highest HIV/AIDS prevalence in the world); where 38% of its children are orphaned or vulnerable, meaning they have lost one or both parents; and where many of the nation's children are physically stunted due to a lack of the necessary nutritional adequacy to sustain normal growth patterns expected of healthy children.

My point is not to criticize eSwatini's monarchical leadership, rather it is to set the stage to briefly discuss the research that I am embarking on, while on sabbatical leave, this coming Fall term as a Visiting Research Scholar with Indiana University's Hamilton Lugar School of Global and International Studies. In Fall 2019, I will be focusing my research efforts on the study of Human Security in eSwatini, and neighboring southern African countries, in the hopes of identifying methods for mitigating human insecurity—in particular among children who are unable to take control of their own lives to sustain levels of human rights and dignity that we all deserve.



Scholars and practitioners have usually placed their emphasis on either military security or on economic security. While both security types are necessary for the safety and benefit of societies, they are only the foundation of security needed to individuals, within their communities, with minimal levels of human rights and individual dignity. Beyond traditional forms of security, human security serves as an extension of basic human rights. It asks the question of how do we individually, as a nation, and as a global community seek to ensure basic levels of rights and protections that demonstrate the value of each human being. Human security, as identified here, can quickly become boundary-less in its scope, and certainly researchers in human security often focus on one aspect rather than "eating the whole elephant" all at once.

I anticipate that my research will address the following: food security, health security, gender rights, educational security, and freedom of association, speech, and religious beliefs. Within the scope of this research I will assess the current levels of human insecurity facing many in the "Swazi" society. Recommendations for change, in terms of reshaping public policy and prevailing cultural attitudes, will also be addressed through my research in the hopes of elevating human security outcomes and dignity of life for the two-thirds of the Swazi society currently living impoverished lives, both in traditional and human security terms.

I also anticipate a brief trip to eSwatini during the Fall term to conduct field research with Swazi government and nongovernmental officials; this research will contribute to a book I'm writing on human insecurity, and how some of the causes for such can be mitigated within the Swazi society.

A doctor in eSwatini once told me "we fight the good fight;" that sort of optimism and commitment suggests that there can be a better future in sight for this beautiful country.

