

NIGERIA'S NATIONAL AND HUMAN SECURITY PROBLEMATIC AS A CRISIS OF VALUES: A PHILOSOPHICAL REFLECTION

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INTRODUCTION AND PROBLEM

As earlier pointed out in my book entitled, *The Idea of Spirit in African Philosophy*, “the life experiences of African people are multidimensional and multifaceted, revealing and manifesting the nature of reality to African people in their own peculiar way. While many experiences are readily comprehensible some others may seem inexplicable, particularly to non Africans.”¹ In the book, we paid particular attention to one of those seemingly inexplicable experiences of spirits and world of spirits in African Philosophy. We shall endeavor in this paper to focus on one of those apparent and controvertible problems of our time that bothers on human and national security challenges that has caught the attention of all concerned citizens of the world today. And as one whose area of special interest, is integral development of the human person, and knowing fully well that there cannot be meaningful development without security, one cannot close his eyes and ears to the national quest for immediate remedies to our security quagmire.

This paper studies in a conversational manner some key elements of the human and national security problem facing Nigeria. It seems imperative that we intensify the process of expanding the depth and scope of our national dialogues so as to stem the tide of violence, frustration, chaos, disunity, intolerance and needless fear that appears to have taken over the society. On this particular occasion we could have a dialogue on the reasons why Nigeria faces a serious problem of insecurity, violence, fear, instability, conflicts, inequity and social disorder. We may argue that the fundamental problems confronting Nigeria's nation-state project have not altered significantly in the past decades. The disorder can be summarized in the inability to tackle the basic problems of unity, security and social justice at the personal and institutional levels within the dynamics of the state. The security problem in Nigeria is easily seen in the inability of the Nigerian government and the country at large, to ensure the protection of its core values; its territories, infrastructure, officials, citizens, laws and institutions. This has ensured that the various governments and the state agencies have been unable to consistently and institutionally guarantee the adequate protection, peace and well being of the generality of the citizens. Scholars have aptly captured the essentials of the security challenge facing Nigeria. For instance, Philip Ujomu argues that the problem of security in the Nigerian nation-state is seen in the fact that the idea of security was reduced to the personal security of the ruler and that of his immediate supporters.² The security calculus of the Nigerian state failed because it was over militarized and there were conflicts of interest, undue competition and overlap of functions as well as a crisis of professionalism among the security forces. The Nigerian security paradigm did not securitize and include vital aspects of social existence in a multi-ethnic society such as social justice which correlates especially institutionalized dialogue, equity in resource distribution, anti-corruption and the provision of basic social amenities. The security problem is linked to a crisis in the system of values given that the statist militarist paradigm of Nigerian security gives so much room to the proliferation of military and militia forces and the use of brute physical force and psychological intimidation as a first choice in managing any conflict. So the statist- corporatist

paradigm or value system is a combination of values such as fear, force, violence, corruption, insensitivity, lack of social justice and inequity as directing principles of the society.³ The deficits in these critical areas have triggered feelings of neglect and abandonment by the bulk of the citizens hence creating alienated consciousness as a core value.

WHAT ARE VALUES? WHY ARE VALUES IMPORTANT TO HUMAN EXISTENCE?

The problem of value has been well discussed in the domain of economics, politics and philosophy with special reference to ethics and aesthetics which some philosophers have called axiology. "Axiology is the branch of practical philosophy which studies the nature of value in general."⁴ Put simply, value is a word that covers the whole gamut of aspects such as interest, importance, desire, choice, norms and so on. The issue of "the nature of value is one of the central and most persistent problems of human existence."⁵ Value concerns the worth of something and the way we come to attain that worth, valuation is based on the decided weighted cost-benefit of the placement of a price or primacy on something as important, desirable or interesting. In either of these ways the concrete concern is to discover how people can live in peaceful cooperation, obedience to laws, and amenability to organization and loyalty to the state. We can understand the nature of values better when we realize that every society sets for itself "an ideal form of life or an image which it seeks to attain and to which it constantly refers to in the process of going through life."⁶ More importantly, values form the basis of all cultural life, the foundation of all cognition and the categorical structure of the human consciousness."⁷ To capture the essence of the notion of value, Perry affirms that a thing or anything has value when it is the object of an interest, which is a train of events determined by an expectation of its outcome.⁸ Singer, on his part, adds an extra dimension to the conceptual analysis of values when he suggests that a "person's values are what the person regards as or thinks important."⁹ The same is applicable to the society insofar as a society's values are what it considers important. According to Ackermann,¹⁰ "values must, then, be considered in intimate connection with what could be called the "collective interests

of the very social groups that hold them.” If values are intended to make life meaningful and worthwhile, then it means that there is a need to zero in on the human person as the creator and carrier of values. According to Koch¹¹ values always involve some references to the human person, and thus are concerned with human ends. Values are understood in terms of features such as “human needs, instincts, powers to act, the natural environment, and the surrounding peoples and cultures.”¹² As Dewey says every adult has acquired in the course of his experience and education certain measures of the worth of various sorts of experience.¹³ He has learned to look upon qualities like honesty, amiability, perseverance, loyalty as moral goods. For Munker, the core values of social responsibility, caring for others are other dominant values that can make a difference in the human search for a better existential situation.¹⁴ A value system is a combination of values that come together to form a holistic way of life. For instance, capitalism is a value system built around the values of profit, exploitation of natural and human resources, private ownership, use of surplus labour dividends and other elements.

DEFICITS IN CORPORATE VALUES AS THREATS TO COLLECTIVE SECURITY IN NIGERIA

Security has to do with freedom from danger or peace and tranquility. Yet every human being or human system faces danger from real and potential events as well as threats. National security focuses on the classical view of protecting the country or state: its territory, assets, government, etc. Sometimes national security attempts to protect these values but does not succeed in protecting the population and other subsidiary interests hence there is a conflict because the actions of a government can threaten its own population or even the interests of neighboring states. Hence there could be internal or external intervention.

One important realm of the manifestation of the problem of national security has been the generally overlooked, but extremely important aspect of values. It is interesting to note that insecurity in Nigeria manifests in the form of competing values, beliefs and attitudes. Thus, central to the problem of national security in Nigeria has been that

situation in which there existed a fundamental conflict of personal and social values among various interests and groups with regard to the proper meaning of, and the proper approach to national security, national integration, peace and stability within the polity. This conflict of values and the various abuses and injustices arising from it, ensured that there were no clearly defined and established rules for harmonizing the diverse interests, needs and values of the different groups and sectors in the society in view of achieving the urgent task of national development and the sustenance of security, peace and prosperity in the country. In short, the lack of shared beliefs, attitudes and values among the rulers and the ruled, as well as between the various segments of the Nigerian society ensured that conflicts remained endemic in the nation.

Recent comments on the pervasive insecurity and disorder in Nigeria are frightening. In tracking the fundamental, perennial levity, laxity, aversion and indifference of the Nigerian state to social justice and development we note the local contexts of the incapability and lack of power of the state to eradicate poverty, corruption, ineptness, authoritarianism, abuse of human rights, tribalistic exclusiveness¹⁵ dictatorship, poor public service delivery, unreliable courts, unreliable transport and power, inefficient education, health.¹⁶

According to the Center for constitutionalism and Demilitarization 2012 annual report (CENCOD ANNUAL REPORT) “the harsh economic policies foisted on the people by the ruling elites underpin the rising social violence in the country and were accountable for the upsurge of violence and violations recorded. The *Boko Haram* sect insurgent activities increased. The northern half of the country became a battle front with waves of suicide bombing and killing of innocent citizens culminating in the total collapse of governance and institutions of government in the affected states.”¹⁷ All of these constitute a threat to national survival. In Nigeria in the last couple of years crime and criminality have reached a crescendo. The combined activities of armed robbers, hired assassins, arsonists, political thugs and abductors have unleashed terror on the civil populace, making life extremely unbearable.”¹⁸

VULNERABILITY AND MARGINALITY IN THE POSTCOLONIAL NIGERIAN STATE

Insecurity and disorder are simply the real consequences of alienated consciousness. The threats to national security arising thereof, indicate that Nigeria, as it exists, may not have fully articulated the conditions for establishing a truly humane and progressive society. The reality of a system lacking in enduring principles of trust, social justice and moral action, which can promote genuine social reconciliation, suggests that Nigeria remains a terrain of conflicting identities after decades of independence. The state remains a battleground where individuals fight for whatever resource or power they can capture. This situation is worrisome because the long period of co-existence among various groupings has not yielded genuine mutual respect, understanding and common purpose. This is a significant pointer to the potential continuation of insecurity in the country.¹⁹

We should note that certain levels of marginality are now beyond the merely ethnic factor. The insecurity of the ordinary peoples is seen in their marginality, which makes them highly vulnerable to various forms of vulnerability. The marginal peoples include the aged and neglected pensioners, the handicapped persons and poor people who have no hope of justice, the unemployed educated and uneducated youth, some of the ethnic minority groups especially of the southern Niger Delta of Nigeria and even those ravaged by religious violence and terrorism in the north, among others. The fact is that these peoples are usually disadvantaged, exploited and oppressed and their lives are associated with hardship. Evidence of the defeat of national consciousness is seen in the increasing attacks on national leaders and citizens by violent mobs, armed robbers and other criminals.

GAPS IN NIGERIA'S GOOD GOVERNANCE AND HUMAN SECURITY POLICY AS INADEQUACIES OF THE STATE

The Nigerian state could not meet the social, economic, as well as the military conditions of national security. The failure of the state and security organs to maintain national security in the country can be seen in the

inefficiency of the police force and its abysmal failure to maintain law and order and provide security for the citizens continues to create a vacuum that is being filled by auxiliary ethnic militia, vigilante groups and militant civil society vanguards. The state has employed its repressive instruments, especially the army and the police, in order to regulate and regiment the political, social and economic freedom and space for the other subordinate groups in the society. Gaps in the establishment of good governance and security reform mechanisms have opened the floodgates to terrorists, armed robbers, assassins and kidnappers, ethnic militia groups, as well as the invading rebel forces from neighboring countries to the north of Nigeria to perpetrate their acts.

Central to the crisis of security confronting the nation has been the general trend towards the misconception of the foundations of security. This has led to difficulties. The most pronounced is the deterioration of the quality of human personal and social life in Nigeria. The reality of alienated consciousness and the threats to national security arising thereof, indicate that Nigeria, as it exists, may not have fully articulated the conditions for establishing a truly humane and progressive society. The reality of a system lacking in enduring principles of social justice and moral action, which can promote genuine social reconciliation, suggests that Nigeria remains a terrain of conflicting identities after decades of independence. The state remains a battleground where individuals fight for whatever resource or power they can capture. This situation is worrisome because the long period of co-existence among various groupings has not yielded genuine mutual respect, understanding and common purpose.

SHORTFALLS IN TRUST AND TOLERANCE AND THE ROLE OF SOCIAL CAPITAL IN THE QUEST FOR SECURITY

The lack of trust between the rulers and the ruled in Nigeria ensured that there was an obstruction of national development at all levels of social existence. Furthermore, we can say that the absence or lack of operation of some core social values such as trust, cooperation, compassion, justice, tolerance, etc, among the different interests and segments in the society, ensured that the country achieved little or no

sustainable development and that the various levels of national government could not effectively and responsibly manage the nation's resources for the overall security, peace, prosperity and well being of all.

THE ROLE OF RELIGION IN NIGERIA'S DEVELOPMENT AND THE CHALLENGE OF TERRORISM

At another level, religion is a powerful tool for fostering peace and corporate existence among the members of the society. But with reference to most parts of Africa, the influx of different religions has created the fertile grounds for conflicts and instability. The abuse of religion in order to serve ethnic or political purposes has often led to severe consequences for the society and its members. This point is more significant in a multi-religious society such as Nigeria. The perversion and exploitation of the religious sentiments of the people can eventually lead to malice, disarray and violence. The reality on ground is that the problems of religions and social tolerance facing the society have been worsened by the elite, often motivated by violent struggles for benefits, power and influence within the society.

This situation has led to the vitiation of the Nigerian state in the social, political and economic realms of life. The mistrust and hatred emanating among groups, and the heightened intolerance have led to the proliferation of religiously conscious militia groupings that ostensibly claim to be social liberators. In actual fact, these militia committed to religious violence have opened the opportunity for individuals to foment tension in the society and to violate the vital laws necessary for the sustenance of order, peace and stability. This circumstance has created problems for national development and social reconciliation. Terrorism is more than anything else an attack on our sense of trust and feeling of confidence as human beings in ourselves and in the institutions that we have built to protect us and ensure our safety. It is a challenge to our values and the idea of being human. It is an attempt to place a different price on our individual and collective humanity. These threats are struggles between the forces of order and disorder, freedom and tyranny, tolerance and repression, hope and fear. They

threaten not just peoples and nations but values and ideas". This is a very important and sensitive issue for the survival of humanity and human institutions. In fact, it is the question of whether we are in need of a redefinition of civilization, security and its associated values.

RECOMMENDATIONS;

1. We strongly suggest that schools that were taken over by government should as a matter of urgency, be returned back to their original owners so that as a nation we shall once again experience the revival of moral instructions that will help in no small measure in inculcating moral and religious values into our children and our future generations.
2. Adherents of all religions should be enlightened on the need for constant dialogue, and religious tolerance considering the multifarious nature of religion and our multi - ethnic society in order to promote peace, harmony and mutual coexistence.
3. Different religions in Nigeria should identify a common ground and common values that could form the nucleus of religious and moral instructions at all levels of our education system to minimize if not eradicate the decadence and suspicion that is prevalent in our country today.
4. There should be a de-emphasis on the use of religion as an instrument or tool for wealth and prosperity, with a renewed emphasis on the values of conversion, repentance, reconciliation, holiness, love and salvation that are fundamentally parts of the major values of religiosity.
5. On the part of government, modern day military equipment and ammunitions should be procured in an appropriate manner²⁰ to arrest and combat the increase wave of terrorism and radical extremism in our country
6. Occasional seminars and conferences should be organized by government at all levels and religious bodies to enlighten leaders of various religions and their followers of the need to promote their unity despite their diversities on doctrinal issues and faith.
7. Private individuals, corporate bodies and governmental

parastatals should create employment opportunities for all cadres of our Labour force to avoid idleness that could lead to these class of people being used for violent crimes like terrorism, kidnapping, armed robbery, political thuggery with 2015 elections close at hand.

8. Government should closely monitor the movement and flow of hard currency within and outside the country through the appropriate agencies in order to avoid money laundering that could lead to the misuse of such money for illegal purchase of arms and mercenaries to promote terrorism and similar crimes.
9. We would also like to reiterate the need for axiology (the science concerned with the study of values) should be introduced into the curriculum of our senior secondary schools and tertiary institutions of learning.

CONCLUSION

In setting up a framework for the critical and discursive analysis of the national security problem in Nigeria, we are in need of seeking a new idea or vision of security that can effectively ensure the redemption and rectification of the Nigerian situation. Apart from the aforementioned recommendations, at the heart of the study of national security in Nigeria is the urgent and persistent search for the rules and patterns of action that will guarantee human survival and national integration in the Nigerian nation.

This reconstructive task is more significant, owing to the failure of existing approaches to national security employed within the country. The failures of these approaches have led to insecurity. The real context of the spectral insecurity that has continually plagued the Nigerian state which is an indication of the urgent need for a conceptual and theoretical examination of the core visions and values embedded in the idea of national security in Nigeria. As an example, there is a need to determine the unique approaches to security such as are relevant to the needs of a particular country. The good society aims at its own notion of the common good through the provision of greater opportunities for participation and responsibility among citizens. Underlying this feeling of mutual responsibility is presumably, the attitude of trust or faith in a unique pattern of

political administration and social conduct that seeks the inclusion of as many as possible in the management of its affairs. The question then is: how can we establish and sustain rules and values that can propel human actions for positive ends? This issue is more significant in the context of organizations that centre on cultural, educational and expressive functions.

Finally, behaviour is modified as a result of experiences. As individuals go through life, they strive to attain certain goals and avoid some situations. They associate many objects in the environment with either success or failure. Hence, they develop positive attitudes to objects that serve their purpose, while showing negative attitude to objects that thwart their needs. The main conditions for the change of attitudes revolve around the definition and redefinition of threats or actual deprivation of needs, creation of new needs or new levels of aspirations. Attitudinal change depends on reviewing the scope of social adjustment, the means of control, the attractiveness of the project, the courage, the reward system and credibility that go with the new vision. This essay has attempted a theoretical and conceptual interrogation of the idea of national security using the typological, philosophical and prolegomenon approaches. It has situated the problem in the context of a postcolonial setting and has tried to engage the core ideas and values required for a proper methodological conceptualization of security.

ENDNOTES

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2. Ujomu P. O, "The Bounds Of Security Theorizing: Envisioning Discursive Inputs For The Rectification Of A Postcolonial Situation." D. Adelugba D and P. Ujomu (2008); *Rethinking Security in Nigeria: Conceptual issues in the quest for social order and national integration*. (Dakar: Senegal CODESRIA). ISBN 2- 86978-211- X. 2008.
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19. Ujomu P. O, “The Bounds Of Security Theorizing: Envisioning Discursive Inputs For The Rectification Of A Postcolonial Situation.” Professor D. Adelugba D and Dr P. Ujomu (2008); *Rethinking Security in Nigeria: Conceptual issues in the quest for social order and national integration*. (Dakar: Senegal CODESRIA). ISBN 2- 86978-211- X. 2008. Pp. 35-36.
20. Governments should use recognized and licensed arms dealers in the procurement of military equipment and ammunitions to avoid mutual suspicion among members of various religious groups and affiliation. A case in point is the recent 9.3million US dollar scam involving the president of CAN which has generated a lot of controversies in our polity today.