

Insecurity in Nigeria and the Need for Philosophical Intervention

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Abstract: *There is a high level of insecurity in Nigeria, as heinous activities of Boko Haram and the likes keep increasing, in a geometric progression. This rise in terrorism is the reason for the existing ethno-phobia and security problems in the nation. It is imperative, therefore, to confront this terrorism that carries with it, the touch of destruction, to avert societal anarchy. To do this, this paper upholds that philosophers, who promote humanistic values as antidotes to sectionalism, dogmatism and regionalism have a major role to play. They are to reorientate the indoctrinated terrorists, whose ideologies are full of misconceptions and frivolities, and inject in them the ethical values that can convert them, from their world of terrorism or fundamentalism to a dialogical world, where they can converse with others, in keeping with the view that being in its unity of consciousness is transcendent and relational. Conversely, the problem of insecurity in Nigeria can be addressed, when philosophers in a Socratic midwifery autodidactic way, leave the classroom to the street, to preach to the terrorists on the values of tolerance, pluralism and human life and dignity. Analytic method was used to drive home the points of this research.*

Keywords: *Philosophy, Insecurity, Terrorism, Fundamentalism, Ethno-phobia.*

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INTRODUCTION

A nation can be appraised to be flourishing based on its level of security and values. Security, therefore, is vital, as it involves the protection of lives and properties of the individuals, communities and nations, against internal and external attacks. The incessant rise of security issues in Nigeria such as Boko Haram, banditry, kidnapping, human trafficking, ritual killing, poverty, socio-political instability, Cybercrimes, gender-based violence and weak institutions contradicts or dissipates the essentiality and instrumentality of security of life and dignity of human beings in society. The security issues above have increasingly become trademarks or hallmarks or typical characteristics of life in Nigeria ((Egwu, 2001; Imhonopi and Urim, 2012). Nigerians, based on these issues bordering on insecurity, are on a cross road with few or no sign post, as to where they are heading to. No single day passes without incidence (s) of insecurity. With this scenario, no one knows the next person to be molested and carbonized. In fact, attacks from the aforementioned terrorist groups and the likes have caused what Obadare (1999:203), called the 'problem of order'. The regular bombing, kidnapping and homicide often experienced in

Nigeria is gradually pushing the country to anarchic or Hobbesian state of nature, as many do not care about law and order or ready to be guided by the social norms and values of the society. The Nigerian security architectures and agencies that supposed to force the Nigerian populace to maintain law and order are equally being humiliated and attacked daily. This point can be substantiated by the regular attacks on Nigerian Police Station, Army Barracks, Prison and Navy Custodies and Custodians (Ezugwu et al.). This is the height of it all. If the security agencies that were to protect lives and properties can scamper or be disarmed by the so called calamitous groups then, the points that Nigeria is heading to anarchy and full of confusion are validated.

Though, a greater percentage of the blame about insecurity in Nigeria goes to the terrorist groups; government is not and cannot be exonerated. In other words, the political instability, ethnic skirmishes, herdsmen crisis, bombing, cybercrimes and ritual killings can be attributed to government and leadership insensitivity and ineptitude (Aderonke, 2015: 131; Fukuyama 2004; Achumba, et al.; 2013; Igbozor, 2011).

Oh yes, the undiplomatic and tactless government and leaders that we have today contribute, in no minimal way, to the onslaught of terrorism and fear that grapple and tussle with us personally and collectively. Government's inability to create jobs or employment opportunities, end poverty and attend to the needs of government workers, especially lecturers and teachers is the reason for the existence of most of the terrorist activities often experienced today. To address and combat insecurity in Nigeria, this paper employs and deploys philosophy, to understand the metaphysical, epistemological, logical and axiological underpinnings of terrorism and terrorist activities in Nigeria in particular and the world in general. With the help of the philosophical doctrines, which promote humanistic values and kick against sectionalism, egoistic hedonism, emotivism, regionalism and dogmatism, enmeshed in the belief of the terrorists and the likes; the moral values that seem to have been eroded in the minds of the terrorists will be restored and regenerated. When this happens, humanistic altruism, goodwill, interactivity, harmonious complementation, distributive or social justice will be enthroned or become the order of the day or the resultant effects (Ozumba, 2008; Uduigwomen, 2003; Eboh, 2005; Ekwutosi, 2006; Asike, 2017). As a matter of fact, the essence of life will be revealed more to the fundamentalists (terrorists), who do not really understand the ethics of morality.

With the high level of ingenuity and brevity embedded in philosophers, those who cause mayhem in the society will be retrained, to seeing reality as that that cannot exist without the existence of other realities. Hence, to be is to be with others and not to be alone, and everything that exists serves a missing link of reality. This paper is divided into three major parts. The first part handles the issue of conceptualization or foundation of insecurity in Nigeria. The second section unveils the causes of insecurity in Nigeria. It was of great importance to look into this, since there is 'no smoke without fire'. Thirdly, I shall bring philosophy to bear on the discourse on insecurity, in order to inject the philosophical codes in retraining and regenerating of the terrorists' moral and cultural values. The pedagogical and ethical overhauling of their belief systems, through philosophical doctrines and principles will aid in relaxing and softening their jihadist mind views, to see reality as having two or more polar values. When reality is understood in this mood and mode, the terrorists that are bifurcated in their approach to reality will be forced to be pluralistic, dialogical and accommodating, in keeping with other realities that exist.

Insecurity in Nigeria

Insecurity, as a concept, cannot be comprehensively defined or understood without a glimpse or an idea of what security is all about. Any attempt to dapple into insecurity and its meaning without reference or full knowledge of security, amounts to futility. Hence,

insecurity is the absence or lack of security. However, there are variegated definitions of security by various scholars that are lending support to each other. For Ewetan and Ese (2014), security is the existence of stability, peace and integration for national development. Big-Alabo and Ezugwu, (2022; Omede 2012; McGrew 1988; Nwolise, 2006) saw security as a "dynamic situation and the capacity of the State/Country to guard against threats to its deep rooted values and interests". In other words, an effort or practice made by the State to avert any form of threat to individuals and their values is referred to security. The duty of any country or State is to protect and provide for its citizenry. Failure to do so, such country or state is doomed, as it breeds criminals and terrorists that will in turn; distort the peace and progress of the people within the given State/Country. This paper, in line with Derian (2002:3), refers to security as a condition of being protected or unharmed, free from danger of any kind and safe from internal and external aggression or attack. More so, there are different kinds of security measures, which have not been given their rightful positions in Nigeria. Our inability to comprehend the nitty-gritty of the said measures is the reason for the existence of security issues we experience day by day. These security measures include but are not limited to (i) governmental security (ii) educational security (iii) parental security (iv) food security and (v) religious security.

a. Governmental Security:

It is the duty of the government to provide security, in order to protect lives and properties of individuals in the society. This is what it does with the help of security agencies or forces, such as Police, Army, Navy, Air force and constitution, which is seen as a guiding document, for both prescriptive and proscriptive modalities of the society. Though, this supposed to be the case, there is mistrust between Nigerian populace, and the Nigeria government, who has not been able to act or live up to the expectations of the masses. This chasm has co-opts/incites many to vent their anger on perceived enemy of the people, thereby destroying both national totems that should be held at high esteem (Onifade et al. 54: 2013). In other words, the dearth or negligence of basic amenities, employment opportunities and security, which are responsibilities of the government to provide, has skyrocketed the crime rate in Nigeria, to an extent that lives and properties of the Nigerian citizens are no longer guaranteed.

b. Educational Security:

This is another important aspect of human security that has been neglected by the federal government of Nigeria. In fact, it is due to this negligence, which can be substantiated by the way and manner, education operates in Nigeria that led to the poor scientific discovery in the nation. Lack of educational security in the country is truly

at the verge of causing brain drain, hence, it has pushed so many learned scholars abroad. Those who are still around are either planning to join those abroad or combining their teaching/lecturing jobs with other menial jobs, just to augment the stipends they receive as salaries. Furthermore, a government that does not see anything wrong with strike, or pays in pro-rata or have decided to owe lecturers for eight month and adhere to the fabricated law of 'no work no pay' is inhuman and brutish. This type of mentality often exhibited by the Nigeria government, when it comes to education is practically the reason for the bastardization of education in Nigeria. It can also be said to be the origin of ritual killings, kidnapping and yahoo businesses that have persisted and continued to thrive in the recent time.

c. **Parental Security:**

The idea of security or correctional measure is linked to parents because they have important roles to play in upbringing of children. A child can learn or be informed of the existing values or norms of the society, through the attitudinal dispositions of his/her parents. By this, therefore, parents can inform or deform their children. They can either make them to be good or evil, depending on their ethics of morality or characteristics of values. This suffices it to say that the foundations of the majority of people that indulge in terroristic activities are faulty. Few that came from good homes joined out of the strict influence of their peers or the fact that the country is not working well. Whichever way, parents are not to be exonerated from the insecurity and crises that have formed the topic of discussion, everywhere in Nigeria. Many of them have been supportive to their children; hence, they often enjoy their wealth with little or no question, as to where the wealth is coming from.

d. **Food Security**

This is a necessity of life, but due to bad governance in the country, many find it difficult to eat three square meals a day. This has contributed immeasurably to the issue of insecurity in Nigeria. After all, there is a common saying that 'a hungry man is an angry man'. A good number of people who are into Boko Haram, banditry, suicide bombing, and all kinds of horrific activities today, are hungry fellows, who joined to as members, due to the fact that they could not afford the basic necessities of life, like food, clothing, shelter and some basic amenities. Majority of them would not have thought of evil, if there were aforementioned life cover ages and relief valves.

e. **Religious Security**

No doubt, religion is an essential cord or ecumenical system that secures and unites people together. Unfortunately, in Nigeria, reverse is the case. As

it has caused disintegration, bigotry and chaos between and among Nigerian citizens. The ethno-religious clashes or conflicts often experienced between the Christian and Muslim faithfuls (Hoffman, 2006), instigate violence, and can be said to have contributed to the security issues in Nigeria.

Moreover, following all that have been said above, insecurity is simply the very opposite of what is stated as security. It is the antithesis of security (Onifade et al; 2013: 54). For Ozoigbo (2019: 271; Achumba et al; 2013), Insecurity is seen as absence of safety or presence of danger. A person is said to be in secured when s/he lacks protection or finds his/her self in a dilemmatic or uncertain situation. Causes of insecurity will be discussed in the next chapter.

Causes of Insecurity

There is need to itemize and elaborate more on the factors responsible for insecurity in Nigeria, irrespective of the ones mentioned above, in the course of my discussion on what I may tag as five cardinal security measures. This will help us to really understand the 'why' of insecurity, and the level of damages it has caused to the development and peace of the nation. The security issues we battle with can be linked to so many factors, such as bad governance, unemployment, economic imbalance and marginalization, loss of traditional and moral values, non-persecution of perpetrators of violence in Nigeria, ethnic skirmishes and Religious intolerance/extremism. Each of the above factors is addressed below:

i. **Bad Governance:** Government's inability or insensitivity to the needs and demands of the populace can be said to be the genesis of insecurity in Nigeria. This is confirmed by Adeleja et. al (2018), who observed that the insensitivity of the Nigerian government on the welfare of her citizens is the very reason for the existence of repression in the country. The corrupt practices often exhibited by the morally derailed leaders, who do not see anything good in caring for others or protecting the lives of the people, brought about anxiety, underdevelopment and frustration that we face today. Logically, this frustration is what provided the fertile ground for violence and insecurity in Nigeria (Ozoigbo, 2019: 272). It is quite unfortunate that Nigeria that is blessed with natural resources is behind other nations of the world, in terms of economic development and education. The current situation in Nigeria authenticates Hazen and Horner (2007), paradox of a wealthy nation with poor people in the majority.

ii. **Unemployment:** It is clear that unemployment is a sister to poverty and extreme poverty brings about criminality that breeds insecurity. Unemployment or lack of job opportunities in the country is the reason for the

increment in the price of tricycle (Keke) in Nigeria. As many youths who should be government workers or staff, are now on it, as the only available job in the country. In fact, lack of employment opportunities can be said to be the cause of dubious activities like kidnapping, illegal bunkery and yahoo that are now practiced, and seen as lucrative businesses. Many are involved in one illegal business or the other, due to the sensed uncertainty. However, "the reality of unemployment and poverty that comes with it makes the poor to indulge in violence and antisocial activities which threatens the security of the State", (Egbefo and Salihu, 2014). The insecurity that we are susceptible to today can be arithmetically or numerically quantified; as more than 90% of the workforces, who are the youths, are unemployed, necessarily, more than 90% of insecurity are expected.

iii **Economic Imbalance and Marginalization:** Economic imbalance is a man-made plan to be in charge or exploit the poor. A good example of this is the imbalance between ASUU and federal government of Nigeria. The federal government entered into agreement with the university lecturers since 2009, but has blatantly refused to implement it, just to be in charge, as they are afraid that increasing the lecturer's salaries will give lecturers an opportunity or inclination to challenge them in the proximate future. Lecturers cannot bear this intimidation forever, and the consequence of it is obvious-violent or social unrest. When people are marginalized or excluded from benefiting from their natural endowments, what comes to play is violence, as a way to express unhappiness and grievances (Bhatia and Ghanem, 2017), and in demonstration that no one wants to be poor. Conspicuously, poverty and poor economic conditions are motivating factors of insecurity and terrorism (Aristotle, 384-322 BC; Kavanah, 2011; Alziuwa, 2014). They are the parents of revolution and crimes, and the reason for moral decadence that the society is engulfed with.

iv. **Loss of Traditional and Moral Values:** In Nigeria, there are norms and values. These norms and values are unwritten, but are held at high esteem in the society. They are seen as ethos that guide and secure both lives and properties of individuals within a given society. These societal norms and values include: respect for life, honesty, truth, justice and fair play, integration or harmonious complementation and interdependent relationship. The acknowledgements of these superlative values made it impossible for security to thrive, not until the concepts of globalization, westernization and modernization set in. Today, criminality, adulation of materialism, kidnapping, banditry and yahoo business, replace hard work, and all kinds of vices are celebrated, and taken as ways of survival. Many people, including priests/pastors and imams, leaders of organization and institutions (public and private), teachers, students and parents cheat and live lives of dishonesty (Omede and

Abdul, 2015: 123). The eroded values in many, is therefore, the reason for the emergence of terrorism and security issues in Nigeria.

v. **Non-persecution of Perpetrators of Violence in Nigeria:** Insecurity is felt everywhere due to the fact that the perpetrators or sponsors are hardly arrested or punished following the stipulations or injunctions of the Nigerian constitution. For this reason, many social deviants and their godfathers instigate violence; hence, what determines the level of punishment one gets, irrespective of the offence (s) committed, is the size of the money at the coffer of the offender. The worst is the fact that even those who have been proven guilty are being recruited into the nation's parastatals and granted amnesty. This is evident in the way and manner, the Boko Haram members or Islamist sect members are being freed from Nigerian prison custodies and given amnesty. The criterion or modality to the said freedom and amnesty is still vague to many, as it is mainly Hausa/Fulani people that are worthy or beneficiaries of the said grants, for evil perpetrations and incitements. One could react to this point by pointing out that even the Niger Delta people were given amnesty beforehand. This is an expected reaction, but unknown to whoever that is nursing or will ever think in this direction that though, Niger Delta militants were given amnesty, their type of amnesty is quite different from the one under discussion that is usually given on ethno-religious and chauvinistic grounds.

vi. **Ethnic Skirmishes and Religious Intolerance/Extremism:** This is the last but not the list in the hierarchy of factors responsible for insecurity in Nigeria. Ethnicity and religious intolerance exist when the cordiality or mutuality that was supposed to be a bond between a social group and another is neglected. When this happens, the resultant effect is ethno-religious conflict, which was identified by Hazen & Horner (2007; Salawu, 2010), as the major source of insecurity. Furthermore, religious intolerance/extremism causes insecurity and disintegration. The fundamentalists and fanatics are threats to security. This is because they do not shift ground to accommodate others, and take life for granted in propagation of their faithless-faith. The bruises caused by this kind of belief systems are felt in various churches and mosques of the nation (Udoh, 2015: 4). To address these problems of sectionalism, regionalism, extremism and solipsism, the paper advances for regeneration of moral and philosophical values in the fight of security issues in Nigeria.

Regeneration of Moral Values and Injection of Philosophical Codes in the Fight against Insecurity in Nigeria

At this point in time, it is imperative to bring philosophical principles or normative values to bear on

discuss on security issues in Nigeria. This is because the options of using security agencies, recruitment or granting of amnesty to the repentant terrorists, payment of ransoms for the kidnapped, humiliation of yahoo business partners, have all failed us. On this note, there is need to inject philosophical codes or principles, and regeneration of moral values on those that incite violence. The regeneration and injection of the said principles and values will serve as antidote to extremism/religious bigotry, ethnic chauvinism and egoistic emotivism that have cobwebbed the lenses of so many Nigerians, and be said to be the causes of insecurity, we are entangled with today. However, the role of philosophy in combating the existing security issues in Nigeria, can only work if only if there is good governance, equity and fair play, economic balance, complementarity between the rich and the poor and the leaders and the led or followers. That is, when the government is ready to protect and provide the basic needs of the masses, such as good jobs or employment opportunities, social amenities, scholarships, and lifts up or increases the take home packages of the workers. When this happens, the citizens, who often see government and leadership as being morally bankrupt, incredibly inept, mentally corrupt and ethnically influenced (Onifade at al; 2013: 60;), will automatically change their mind views about them. It is under this ambit that the philosophical codes of tolerance, plurality, respect for human life and dignity can be said to be feasible and effectively imparted on those that breed violence that ushers in insecurity.

More so, the questions that might likely be asked as regards the proposal of this paper and its efforts to inculcating and regenerating philosophical moral values in those of them in the world of terrorism or fundamentalism are: How can philosophers perform the task of preaching morals to the hoodwinked or traitors of security, especially those of them that live in the bushes, forest or deserted areas? Can the mentality of say jihadist, who do not know or would like to hear anything called church, education, dialogue or relationship between Muslims and Christians, be changed easily? What next if those who are into kidnapping, yahoo business, banditry and Boko Haram or are warming up to join the terrorist groups decide not to continue or repent, as a result of our philosophical sensitization? In other words, who employs or cares for them, considering the bad governance and leaders at the hem of affairs in the country. The staring questions above can be treated or handled proficiently, when philosophers cultivate the attitude of not staying aloof or acting as spectator, as recommended by Pythagoras, in some issues of relevance. They are to preach to people around them and communicate to those that are far away, through internet, radio or television engagements and newspapers. By so doing, everyone will be taught of the important of respect and dignity of life, norms and human values using ethical doctrines; helped to think beyond physical, through metaphysics; reason by the power of logic; and know,

judge and understand realities and their feelings following the dictates of epistemology, which are core branches of philosophy.

Again, the notion of the extremists or jihadists can be changed when they are taught to know that to be is not to be alone, but to be with others. With this in view, they will learn to associate with others in dialogue and relationship; hence, they have undergone the pedagogical journey and are reeducated in appreciation of the needs for togetherness and interdependency that exist among realities. Government will not be left behind here. Philosophers have to lean on the 'Platonic mandate', Heraclitus' 'criticism of opposition' and 'Socratic brevity' to create awareness or put to the consciousness of the leaders the needs for good governance and job creation. With this, those who went into terrorism because of rejection or dejection will have a rethink, and will eventually convert those who are into it, for selfish reasons, to abhor and desist from it. The philosophers are to take this task of value and moral reeducation and redemption serious, since "the destruction or loss of our value and moral system, is also lost of our humanness" (Ozoigbo, 2019: 275). This journey of training or recovering of our lost moral values will be both formal and informal, as this will be of great assistance and all-embracing in rekindling of our positions as wise animals (humans). People who are involved in inciting violence and using their fellow humans as guinea pigs (experimental animals) are mostly people, whose morality and values have been enslaved by devil and wrong interpretation of life, and what it stands for. Moreover, the importance or role of philosophy in handling or addressing insecurity issues cannot be overemphasized; reason being that the knowledge of philosophy leads to new dimensional approach (es) to Problems (Abakare and Okeke, 2016). It helps in clarification and clearing of the presuppositions, prejudices and misconceptions that often conceal our sights, in examining, defining and understanding of what 'ought' and 'what is'; good and evil; blame worthy actions and praise worthy actions, in our interpretation of reality. This is supported by Omotayo and Falana, (2021), as they vehemently opine that philosophy involves clarification, evaluation and justification of our beliefs, and liberates us from prejudices. With this, what is wrong is separated from what is right and human act from the act of man.

In all, the contemporary philosophers are enjoined to come out from their argumentative rooms and take the batten that was handed over to us by the Greek Philosopher, Socrates, who saw one of the goals of philosophy as building a society ruled by ethical values. In a midwifery mood and mode, he "deplored his dialogical method in a didactic fashion to call the people of Athens, especially the youths to upright living" (Ikeke, 2014-2015: 235). He called upon them to know themselves, and to uphold truth, honesty and right living. He saw the role of philosophy in addressing human existential challenges. It is against this backdrop or

ground that this paper saw philosophers as being instrumental in the fight against insecurity. The approach that this paper advocates for, may seem to be strange and unattainable, it is the only way the long eroded or disappeared honesty, values, respect of life, justice and fairness, in moral domains, leadership and followership can be restored, and enviable serene environment, that disallows bickering and incitements, reconstructed and reinstated in Nigeria.

CONCLUSION

The findings so far, demonstrate and prove that philosophy is very instrumental, and cannot be swept under the carpet of floor in combating and addressing security issues in Nigeria. As I mentioned somewhere in this paper, the need to combat insecurity using philosophical principles and values arises, due to the failure of physical arms and other explosive devices, which have been explored by different security agencies in tackling insecurity in Nigeria. On this note, it becomes imperative to use philosophy in restructuring the minds of terrorists and all those that incite violence and cause social unrest in the country. Since philosophy is a discipline that is open to dialogue or conversation, and has ethical and human values as hallmarks, it is a good mental weapon that can change the minds of the indoctrinated terrorists and the likes that are bent on causing hullabaloo in the society. This level of enlightenment will transform the minds of both those that are into terrorism activities already and the terrorism applicants, to resist the pressure or temptation to be violent. Summarily, this paper notes that there are plethora of insecurity issues, and reveals the factors responsible for them, which include but are not limited to: bad governance, ethnic skirmishes and religious intolerance/extremism, unemployment, economic imbalance and marginalization, loss of traditional and moral values and non-persecution of perpetrators of violence.

To avert these problems, the paper insists on the need to revive and reinforce moral values and virtue ethics in the country, following the dictates of philosophy. It is only when these values, virtues and principles of philosophy are codified into the mindsets of the masses and leaders that are to protect lives and properties, provide amenities, good governance and employment opportunities to the citizenry, that the long embattled security problems in Nigeria can be addressed, and a new society created.

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