

Security Misperceived in Nigeria

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Introduction

Human beings are generally self-centred, always seeking to maximise own interests more than showing liberal or benevolent disposition toward others. The desire to satisfy self is naturally more in human than the contrary; yet, many seek to usurp the rights of others for personal or corporate reasons, especially if there are no stiff restrictions (Stirk and Weigall, 1995; Appadorai, 2004). The natural disposition to usurp the rights of other members of the society is exacerbated by incompatibility of interests as well as unequal endowment of natural cum social resources in the members of the society. Such resources include among others, physique, intelligence, sex, status, race, wealth, power, knowledge, opportunities, and several others. Since members of the society are not equally endowed with most of these necessary human attributes, those who have or have more of them tend to abuse the exhibition of these natural endowments. More often than not, the rights of others who have less or are not equally endowed are never acknowledged or respected; rather they are suppressed by those who are in privileged position. In a totalitarian society for instance, the impact of the abuses are better imagined than experienced as the few privileged individuals and groups tend to be despotic and coercive. Even in rationally or democratically organised societies, where clearly written rules guiding relationship as well as implementing agencies exist to perform clearly defined roles, the same virtues are often used to circumvent approved standards of interpersonal relationship.

Consequently, the interests of the less privileged and vulnerable members are not always protected in most societies, as conflicts arising from clash of interests abound even among the highly endowed and privileged individuals or groups (Vold, 1986). In essence, human societies are always overtaken by threat, conflicts and violence. Most of the times, these threaten the peace, development and sometimes corporate existence of the society. This condition necessitates the introduction of security measures (formal and informal) that

would guarantee the rights of the weak, feeble, vulnerable and the less privileged members, amidst other endowed citizens. Security therefore, exists to guarantee and brighten the possibility and or prospects of fulfillment of the dreams and aspirations of different personalities in the society. The absence of security no doubt returns the society to the dreaded atavistic epoch of human development, where social relationships were marked by solitary, brutish, nasty and short lifestyle (Stirk and Weigall, 1995 ; Appadorai, 2004).

Some Dominant Theories of Security

There are myriads of theories of security that have over the years directed and dominated global security discourses. Some of the dominant ones are discussed below with the aim of using them to mirror Nigerian domestic security.

The Realist Theory

The theory has Niccolo Machiavelli as its major exponent. It posits that global politics is driven by competitive interests of states for power and incompatible resources. Inter-state conflicts get heightened as the states are often not under any mutual authority that is capable of controlling their excesses (Tripp, 2013). This breeds confrontation among world powers and the attendant destruction of lives and property through military exploits. The theory present states as the most influential actors in international security. States are either aggressive over their interests or obsessed with threats to security and thus get engulfed in security dilemma. Realism which enjoyed international relevance in the later part of 19th century began to lose its potency after the emergence of security threats from within states. To explain the ravaging domestic security challenges of states, security scholars have since began to look beyond realism.

The Copenhagen School (CS)

With Bill McSweeney as its major exponent, the Copenhagen School emphasises on sectors of the society as possessing and or incubating threats to human security. Such sectors include politics, environment, military, economic, etc. The sectorisation of the society is to CS a robust way of studying security dynamics rather than the narrow state focus of the realists. With sectoral view of society, one could understand why there are internal security threats in states without such threats necessarily having direct impacts on neighbouring states. Arising from sectors, the CS further emphasises regional security complexes or the possibility of clustering of security challenges within a society. However, the inter-sectoral relationships could exist within a state. With sectoral and regional dynamics of security, a people or sector can securitise one another, given the availability of political power/might of individuals or groups to generate the necessary audience for securitisation.

Human Security

The latest concern of security scholars is on how to deepen security studies through social concern (Human Security). Human security is concerned with the need to make individuals and groups the reference point in security studies (United Nations Cyberschoolbus, 2013). This is because the people themselves generate security threats and in the final analysis define what constitutes security and insecurity to them. What a people/group consider a security threat may not be considered by others as such. Therefore, any security design for a people must revolve around the people. This position may equally affect the intervention process by any external agency.

Although there are several perceptions, approaches and theories of security, there is a mutual agreement among security scholars that the foundation of a robust security to any person is first, the awareness or perception of threat to one's or group's security from within and without or from known and unknown sources. Unless this perception is rightly appreciated, security remains an illusion to a people or an individual.

The Concept of Security

Security is a global social necessity. Most human cultural traits like language, marriage, art, religion, etc are relative, but security remains universal and critical to the social reproductive dream of the society and to the sustenance of human culture no matter the cultural setting. All through history, man is known to have developed insatiable quest for security, either unilaterally or in collaboration with others (Bashir, 1993; Odoma, 2011a). The success of virtually every known human activity is intricately linked to security. Odoma (2011a) further argues that:

The term security is ubiquitous as it pervades every facet of human endeavours. For example, we can talk of personal security, public security, job security, food security, communication security, national security, global security to mention but a few of them.

In the same vein, Bohm and Haley (1997:430) assert that:

An orderly and safe environment is the foundation for all that happens in an institution; when the environment is not stable, everything else tends to become secondary. For that reason, security procedures strongly affect the daily activities of both staff and inmate.

Furthermore, Nwolise (2005:14) corroborated thus:

People enjoy peace when there is adequate security. Peace is a necessary condition for security, production and development; hence anything disturbing the peace of a people or nation is a threat to social or national security. It is only when there is peace that people go about their legitimate duties without fear, and events can more readily be predicted.

All the above views emphasise the relevance of security to the fulfillment of personal dreams, development and sustenance of human society and have remained ever critical to the execution of any social activity.

There is a general consensus among scholars, particularly the Criminologists that a measure of deviation by individuals or groups in society is not only inevitable, but is

equally essential social ingredient in the functioning of the social system. This is because it ensures stability, cohesion and social order through the provision of alternatives to some unpopular public policies. In fact, it has been argued that the society where every member conforms to all social norms is socially dangerous (Vold, 1986; Okunola, 2002). What Criminologists however frown at is uncontrolled violent conflicts or heinous crimes, which are considered to be anti-development. Arising from this perception, security becomes mandatory in society, so that the interests of members are adequately protected and excesses controlled, thus enhancing the achievement of cultural values and societal development. What then is security? The term security is perceived in different ways by different scholars. However, the popular perception portrays the concept as a militaristic term which implies safety or freedom from danger, and protection from external attack or infiltration, whether with reference to the individual or a state (NISER, 2005). Dzurgba (2010), present security as things that are done in order to keep someone or something safe. It could also mean a state of being protected from bad things that can happen to a being or a thing.

Furthermore, the Dictionary of Military and Associated Terms (2005) cited in Odoma (2011a) defines security as measures taken by a military unit, activity or installation to protect itself against all acts designed to, or which may impair its effectiveness or is the condition that prevent unauthorised persons from having access to official information that is safeguarded in national interest. This popular views of scholars that restrict security to the activities of formal agencies of social control such as the police, armed forces, and other quasipolicing agencies like Customs, Immigration, Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC), Independent Corrupt Practices and Related Offences Commission (ICPC) etc, have since been considered inadequate if the term (security) must be understood holistically (NISER, 2005).

The basis of the argument here is that beside known criminal acts like terrorism, robbery, assassination, kidnapping, hostage taking, rape etc, that have crippled many societies today, other factors like poverty, hunger, ignorance and injustice poses enormous threats to the peaceful existence and co-existence of citizens and can thus incubate violence and

restiveness that often inspire insecurity. Corroborating this view, Nwolise (1995:68) cited in NISER (2005) argues thus:

A country may have the best armed forces in terms of training and equipment, the most efficient police force, the most efficient customs men, the most active secret service agents, and best quality prisons, but yet have most insecure nation in the world, as a result of defence and security problems from within – bad government, alienated and suffering masses, ignorance, hunger, unemployment, or even activities of foreign residents or companies.

Furthermore, Odoma (2011a) assert that:

. . . If the greatest number of people lives in disillusionment and dissatisfaction; it then means that the security operatives have the majority of the population to contend with as delinquents/ criminals.

The foregoing therefore, imply that a good security is such that is anchored on the welfare of the majority of the citizens. It must encompass all activities of citizens, inspired by dogged belief in the system, willful commitment to the actualisation of national projects, and the synergy of all informal and formal agencies of social control to protect the state and her citizens. Any security system that fall short of this standard is no doubt bound to fail and rather breeds chains of threats to peace and development of any society.

Ironically, most societies particularly, the developing or less-developed nations of Africa and Asia tend to perceive security only from the militaristic viewpoint. Consequently, insecurity has remained the bane of the development of such societies. This is because in such societies, there have been undue emphasis on evolving formal agencies of social control, increase in funding and restructuring of security sector to make it more efficient. However, this lopsided security arrangement has not yielded the expected results. The misperception has kept societies from these continents far from the most cherished social virtue (security) for two basic reasons. First, it directs the minds of majority of the citizens away from their civic obligations to the state, but makes them insatiably expectant of the state or its agencies to provide for them and their property with the ever elusive security.

Secondly, it makes the security operatives most of the time, to be overwhelmed with security challenges in the society. The security agencies apparently lacking the needed synergy of the citizens and necessary logistics often end up confused without adequate remedy to the onslaught of criminals (NISER, 2005; Ajayi and Aderinto, 2008). The aftermath of this approach to security by less-developed nations has been accusations and counter accusations of security failure between the citizens and security operatives, while threat, restiveness, insecurity and backwardness remain pervasively unabated. When such societies have failed to provide self with security, the tendency is often to seek same from developed nations of the world.

There is no doubt that, nations have survived and enjoyed sustainable growth and development through bilateral and multilateral ties with others (Odoma, 2012), but a total dependence of any society upon developed ones for provision of security or for the provision of security 'road map' is deceptive and destructive for several reasons. First, culturally, no two societies are exactly the same even when they share common boundary. Consequently the security arrangement that is considered adequate for a society may not necessarily fit into the socio-cultural lives of the other. This is because a people's security is closely associated with their socio-cultural terrain, values and norms. Therefore, a wholesale adoption of an alien security system may be the greatest undoing of the copying society. This explains in part, why the development of many postcolonial African states has been sluggish (Akinola, 2011:37).

Secondly, complete dependence of a society upon another for security provision kill domestic initiative. The best security arrangement is such that is a product of social or cultural experience of a people. When a society for whatever reason(s) wait to adopt what has been designed and refined elsewhere, their creative ability is retarded. Worse still, they are only protected as long as the foreign provider remains faithful and suffer grave insecurity for any failure to keep faith with the contract. It is in line with this viewpoint, that Albert (2011) rekindled the age-long postulation for African countries to look inward and design workable solutions to the plethora of African problems. He succinctly argues thus:

. . . we cannot be borrowers and imitators alone. Foreign aids in ideas and other wherewithal will not suffice unless they are supplementary to a main menu of approaches developed in the context of our immediate predicament. (*Source: Albert, 2011*)

Furthermore, most independent nations of the world today, gained political freedom from their colonial masters after a long and tortuous struggles and wars for which many of their citizens paid the ultimate price of their lives. To many of these nations, political freedom was not gained on the platter of gold, as the colonisers were not keen about their freedom. To some others, the foot-dragging in their development efforts is caused by the colonial legacies bequeathed them (Toure, 2003 ; Yousouph, 2010). Therefore, a return to the erstwhile colonisers or their allies for wholesale adoption of their security system, no doubt provide the colonisers the opportunity to reclaim what they reluctantly lost politically and would seek to gain same from economic front.

Equally critical is the fact that, there is no such thing as technology transfer between two different societies. Every known technology is developed at a cost. The cost could be monetary, lives, material, and environmental degradation, to mention only a few. Due to the huge cost of production and packaging, the usage or consumption of such technology is not always free, not even to members of the society that developed it. Such cost is not only for the discovery, but also for the maintenance and or subsequent refinement of the technology, to keep it relevant. If therefore, such technology is needed elsewhere, it is only logical that it is paid for. The recipient societies no doubt pay the heaviest price. Bilateral and multilateral relation of nations does not make the transmission/transfer and consumption of such technology free either. Security systems are based on one form of technology or the other. When a people depend on other society to provide them with security or security 'road map', it is certain that they cannot avoid the cost either in cash or in kind.

Finally, any security provision that evolve from the society is bound to enjoy the complement and support of the citizens. Since they are the source of the security arrangement, they will no doubt develop a dogged belief in the potency and or credibility

of such project and thus will do everything possible to support, sustain and refine their product (Odoma, 2011a) either for consistency with changing realities or for export. In the light of this, the best route to achieving sustainable security is for every society to be inward looking to draw support from within, while collaborating with others where necessary. The earlier the developing countries of Africa and Nigeria in particular realise this, the better and faster the evolution of a sustainable security system. Security is not achieved on the platter of gold, neither is it inherited wholly from forbears. An individual or a people is secured if they so wish. In fact, their totality, commitment, resources, wisdom, time, spirit and soul are channeled into the acquisition of the kind of security they want.

The Cost of Security

Discussing the cost of security to individuals, groups and the entire society is no doubt a herculean exercise. It is like investigating the cost of producing or raising a single individual member of the society. It will possibly not be out of place to state that, security is as costly as gold. The cost of gold is directly linked to its quality and quantity. Gold is no doubt the most costly article of ages ever desired by man. However, as costly as gold may be, if it is not secured, it becomes worthless. It is therefore, safe to further state that security is of more costly value than gold, since gold cannot protect itself from theft, corrosion and destruction. It is equally right to still suggest that nothing ever desired by man is as costly as security.

The cost and relevance of security to mankind is rightly captured by Bohm and Haley (1997:340) thus:

An orderly and safe environment is the foundation for all else that happens in an institution; when the environment is not stable, everything else tends to become secondary. For that reason, security procedure strongly affects the daily activities of both staff and inmates.

No activity of man ever succeeds in the absence of security. This however, suggests why no nation ever toy with the security of its citizens. Odoma (2011a) have argued that countries like the United States of America and other developed nations devotes on an annual basis a large chunk of their budgetary allocations to the security sector. Succinctly, he argued thus:

The centrality of security to the development of nations has made it a toast of nations in their annual budgetary allocations. For instance, the budgetary allocation for security alone in America since 1990s is in billions of dollars . . . The experience of 11 September 2001 attack on the World Trade Centre has made American devotion to security more interesting (Odoma, 2011a).

Again, to the United States of America, its position on some key sensitive global issues has made some nations, particularly those from the Arab world, to be antagonistic to its policies. The attacks on American Consulates in some Arab countries on 11 September, 2012 provide a good instance. To stay afloat as a power broker in the unipolar world, America has to invest heavily in security to stem the tide of insecurity from within and without the shores of the United States of America. This exposes the global giant to yet a greater cost of security.

Yet, for countries of third world and particularly nations from the continents of Africa and Asia which have not been able to sanitise their polity of corruption, not to talk of giving the provision and maintenance of social services a priority, they have no greater social challenge than security problems. These have assumed endless dangerous dimensions. For instance, in Nigeria, a nation considered by many as the most populous of black nations of the world as well as the geopolitical and geo-strategic pivot of the continent of Africa (Kolapo, 2006; Akintola, 2007), has security challenges which have overtaken every other thing in the country (Bohm and Haley, 1997). Virtually all the six geo-political zones of Nigeria have in recent times had so much security problems to contend with (Imam, 2004; Albert, 2012). The worst of such security embarrassments have been the issues of youth's restiveness in the Niger Delta region, the kidnap factory in the east, the National Union of Road Transport Workers (NURTW) factional crisis in the

west, ethno-religious crisis on the Plateau and the Boko Haram insurgency in the north. These instances seem to have defied every known security solutions. To Nigerians of the 21st century, anything can be given away in exchange for security and corporate existence of the most populous nation of the continent of Africa. Nigeria's experience presents a good example of what happens in most countries of Africa and this show how valuable security can be to a people.

The demand for security negates the economic principle of the influence of market forces. Economically, the price, quality and consequently the demand for an article is tied to its quantity. The more of an article provided, the less the price offered for it. But security is a social article that maintains an all time high value and popular demand across the globe no matter the level of its provision. There is no amount of security provision that meets the satiety of the citizens. Even in developed societies where highly advanced security gadgets are provided and jealously guarded, cases of personal and public insecurity looms, as private and public efforts indicate that more is still expected. No amount of resources, time and quality of security will be too much for a people. This makes security to remain an all time capital intensive, and yet, attracts popular demand across the globe.

Reasons for Insatiable Security Search

As noted earlier, security is pervasive. It exists at every level of human existence and social relations. For instance, security exists at the level of individual, at private, public and group levels. At no time will man cease from thinking of security, since virtually every issue in interpersonal and intergroup relations faces threats, thus reminding him of the need to source for more security. However, one thing remains central to all the levels of human existence and that is, that security is not only a necessity but that it is provided at a cost that must be paid for. The failure or inability to pay is equally not free, but rather expensive. In other words, neglecting security matters seem more costly most times than giving attention to its provision and sustenance.

Although, security can be arranged for or provided corporately and or by the government, it still does not insulate individuals from providing self with personal security. For example, the police as an agency for formal social control exist to suppress crime and arrest criminals in the society (Alemika and Chukwuma, 1997) yet, individuals are expected to take some precautions against criminals. The fact that the police is there to provide security for the community is not enough for citizens to leave the doors of their houses open when they are away, keep their properties carelessly or stay out too late at night. This means that, individuals have a lot to do to protect self from harm even though the law enforcement agencies, government and non-governmental organisations exist, with whom he is under obligation to co-operate. Yet, one must in addition provide personal protection to self, food, job, family, health, culture, etc. On a daily basis, an individual is preoccupied with securing self and property while co-operating with security agencies to further guarantee same. In essence, having put up every personal effort to be secured, one may still not be adequately secured, without cooperating with others. Most of the time, there is the obsession of insecurity even among close relations and acquaintances. The severity of threat is even more when such person is found among strangers. This makes the quest for security endless no matter the level of its provision and cost. The disposition toward security gets more complicated since nature does not provide us with what we desire, but most of the times with what we abhor. More so, as members of the society are not equally endowed and the attendant desire of the few privileged to usurp the rights and property of others ((Stirk and Weigall, 1995) . It then becomes clear that one cannot have security well enough. As one area of social life seems safe, the insecurity of other areas begins to unfold.

However, for the purpose of sustainable security arrangement, it is appropriate for every member of the society to develop the right attitude to security. This right attitude to security is what makes people or citizens skeptical of every other person. It further means developing a feeling of insecurity every time even among people considered to be so intimate to harm us. When some people are seen as potential threats and others are not, it makes security to be elusive. This is because, people who posse greater threat to our

security are likely to be people we probably will not expect or suspect to cause harm. For instance, the Holy Bible states that:

Do not trust in a neighbour, put no confidence in a friend. Even with her who lies in your embrace be careful of your words. For the son dishonours his father, a daughter raises against her mother, a daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law, a man's enemies are members of his own household (Source: Micah 7:5-6).

The implication of the above verses of the Holy Bible is that if such persons (friends and close relations) decide to cause harm, there may not be any clue to arrest them, as they are not likely to be suspected, not even by their victims. This is because they are likely not to be seen as people with the potential to harm. Moreover, if they choose to harm, going by the closeness to their victims, they are not likely to miss target, since they know the right time and the right weapon to strike with and possibly return as early sympathisers. Such enemies are often the most dangerous. A child of five years old for instance, relied so much on his biological father whom he believed was so intimately related, such that he can never think of hurting him. The boy was however disappointed when his supposed beloved father, having been enticed by a Village head with a million Naira, beheaded him for ritual in a community in Adamawa State of Nigeria (BCOS, 2013). The murderer succeeded because, he was not seen by both the victim and the society as posing a security threat to the victim. If this is how porous security of lives and property could be with people we maintain intimate relationship, then there is a need for the development of a better model of personal and or public security that can guarantee sustainable security of the social system.

Following from the above, it can be deduced that every person in any society needs security to excel, be it male, female, old, young or infants, they all need security. Even the fetus yet unborn needs security. Where ever this is lacking, we begins to talk of premature delivery or miscarriage. No parent wants such an experience; hence everything is done to preserve the unborn children until they are fully matured to be delivered. The relevance of security transcend the living to include the dead (ancestors), and spirit. For instance, in

the ancient Roman Empire, graves of important personalities like Jesus Christ of Nazareth was secured with fully armed soldiers, to prevent his corpse from being tampered with. The need to secure the dead has become more critical in most of our cities today. Due to man's insatiable quest for materialism, graves of affluent persons are guarded for weeks after burial, to prevent thieves and ritualists from having access to their bodies that were buried with jewelries or costly caskets.

Furthermore, in Africa as in other continents of the world, the living maintains close ties with the spirit of the dead. A lot is often done by the living to maintain such relationship through religious rituals; else they lose their cultural relevance. Moreover, the spirit of man is believed to sustain the physical man, especially at the time of ill health (Proverbs, 18:14). It then means that people die spiritually before their physical death. It further means that a physically living human being owes his strength to the spirit. If he is dead in the spirit, it is sure he cannot survive in the physical. By extension, if one is not sufficiently secured in the spirit, his physical security is not guaranteed. For example, before Samuel Doe of Liberia was killed, his spiritual security was compromised. It is in this regard, that scholars have canvassed the need for spiritual security of citizens, who seek often to preserve their spirit through observance of religious rituals (Nwolise, 2012). Since security is a social virtue widely enjoyed by mankind, everyone necessarily needs to synergise to ensure its provision and sustenance. The living, the dead and their spirits must be invoked in the provision and sustenance of security. It is only then that we can talk of sustainable security in society.

A Model Consistent with Sustainable Security

The need to develop a model of a security system suitable for sustainable peace and development of Nigeria hinge on the fact that, it has been argued that the bane of widespread insecurity situation in the country in this 21st century is the general misperception of the concept of security among the citizenry. Therefore, not until security

is rightly perceived by all the stakeholders, evolving sustainable home-grown security is bound to remain elusive in Nigeria. For instance, Odoma (2010) have argued that :

A good security sector management must include proper perception of security. This will enhance the right attitude towards the provision, maintenance and sustenance of this all-important sector. Security should be seen in the right perspective as everybody’s business. It begins with the personal perception and conviction or consciousness of danger (risk) all the time, to personal efforts to curtail them and corporate action at overcoming them. This makes the stakeholders (security provider and the secured) to show genuine commitment to the provision and maintenance of security.

It is in line with this widespread misperception that a model of sustainable security is prescribed in Figure 1 below.

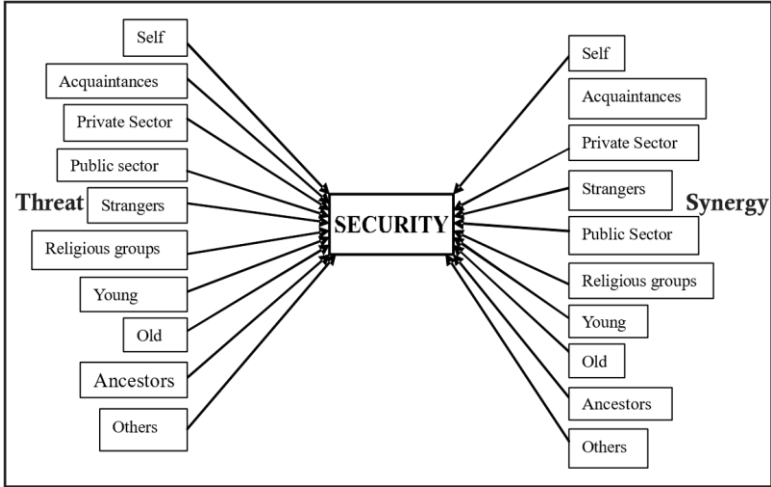


Figure 1: A Framework suitable for Sustainable Security

Figure 1 above presents the necessary social ingredients for a good and reliable security to an individual as well as the society. Security is basically inspired by the consciousness of threat to life or safety of property. Once a threat is noticed, no effort will be spared (security measures) to overcome it, as human beings are hardly comfortable with threat. Furthermore, the framework above shows that the mere perception of threat is not enough to inspire reliable security. The probability of such threat must be seen holistically. That is, coming from the sources (self, friends, strangers, religious groups, the young, old, public sector, private sector, ancestors and other sources) indicated. In other words, any of these sources including spiritual and metaphysical, must be seen as potential sources of threat, if one must be secured. In mapping out security strategy on the other hand, threat from all the sources must be envisaged, as undermining any of them might be disastrous.

Just as the acknowledgement of the sources is sacrosanct to the provision of a robust security, the synergy of the citizens with them is the necessary route to a virile security system. The underestimation or neglect of any of them may jeopardise any security arrangement. It will therefore, not be wrong to suggest that, the same forces that threaten security are critical in the design and management of sustainable security system. The dynamics of security fulfills the Newton repulsion law which states that, action and reaction are equal but in opposite direction (Physics Classroom, 1996).

Abuse of the Age-long African Communal Tradition

Explaining what keep human society together, such that it is able to reproduce itself across generations, Emile Durkheim described two forms of solidarity. They are the organic and mechanical solidarity (Wallace and Wolf, 1995; Ritzer, 1996; Giddens, 2009). Organic solidarity he argued refers to the kind of social bond existing in urban setting. The nature of work that workers in the factory for instance do, inspire their ties with others in a society. Individuals are constrained to maintain such ties basically because of known formal rules and the implications for not observing them and not

because of any personal or socio-cultural consideration. Inter personal relationship in the city is closely guided by formal rules, while mechanical solidarity on the other hand refers to the social bond often identified with the rural communities. Individuals are bounded by such social bonds as kinship or biological factors. Inter personal and group relationship in rural communities is basically guided by informal considerations. People often go out of their ways to assist others and share their burdens outside known formal rules.

What differentiate the two forms of solidarity is, while one is consistent with the urban, developed and well organised societies, the other is commonly identified with the rural, the poor, and the less developed societies. Mechanical solidarity is the 'life wire' of rural community but remains grossly inadequate for social relationship in cities. Since most African societies are generally rural, poor, and less developed, the form of solidarity that is often identified with them is the age-long mechanical solidarity, characterised by informal channels of doing things.

After the decolonisation 'wild fire' of the 1950s and 1960s, many independent African nations, capitalising on their historical past, pitched their tent with African Socialism (Tweedie, 1967). The basic idea behind African Socialism was to extend the frontier of the traditional informal social relation, where the continent of Africa has comparative social advantage considering the historical antecedent. Africans have been socialised into communal social living, co-operation and each other's burden bearers. Most founding fathers of independent African states believed that the development of their countries and the continent was bound to be faster if African Socialism was adopted (Tweedie, 1967).The virtue inherent in African culture notwithstanding, the practice of communal living in the 21st century in many African countries especially Nigeria, depicts the abuse of mechanical solidarity considered to be consistent with African societies (Odoma, 2012) . The inability of most postcolonial African countries to capitalise on the synergy that procured political independence for African societies have led to segmented rather than national leadership, which at best only create insatiable search for social identity among the citizenry (Toure, 2003). The search for social identity got fertilised easily in sectarian affiliation which often manifests in ethnic, regional, religious and peer cleavages (Anam-

Ndu, 1998; Toure, 2003). It will not be wrong therefore, to suggest that community based African socialism inherited at independence or the form of mechanical solidarity that is now identified with most African societies, have of late been propelled by ethnic, regional and religious cleavages. To some social commentators, this development is not completely surprising, especially when one considers the kind of leadership that most postcolonial African states evolved. For instance, Odoma (2011b) asserts that:

Surprisingly, after the political independence of 1960, the form of leadership that procured independence for the nation gave way to disjointed leadership which made the hitherto amalgamated nation see themselves as a people to become what Giddens and Duneier (2000) termed “state nations” instead of a nation state that they ought to remain after the political independence. Consequently, the leadership which was national in outlook and character preceding the independence quickly degenerated into segmented and regional type. This was evident in the formation and membership of political parties that were formed in the early years of our nationhood. None of the political parties was national in outlook as their presence was mostly felt at the region than at the center. The aftermath of the above was an unhealthy struggle for the control of the state power, thereby exposing the supposed leadership of the young state to blackmails, conflict and chaos, which has made the nation look as one without leadership. The citizens (followers) quickly developed divided loyalty to the national leadership. Their loyalty was first to the regional and ethnic groupings than to the nation as they possibly may have come to perceive themselves first as ethnic/regions before ever becoming a nation state. The end result was that, the allegiance of the masses to the nation was directed by ethnic/regional leaderships. Subsequent leaders started thinking first of themselves and their regions before the nation.

Corroborating the above view, Toure (2003: 4) equally asserts thus:

Over the decades the deepest attachments tend to shift more in favour of primordial tendencies, as sectarianism increasingly wins members, as clientelism has been on the ascendancy in public governance. Central to the drift towards centrifugal forces is the state and its layers of ruling classes, with the base of many regimes reinforced and maintained on sectarianism . . . Sectarianism in the political and social landscapes has been intensified, and made more complicated, by the

implementation of unpopular policies some of which are externally sponsored and imposed by imperialistic international institutions . . .

Based on the above quotes, it could be said that many social issues of national importance are often viewed by most Nigerians with sectarian, ethnic and religious lenses. This has regrettably made security management porous and extremely difficult in recent times. It has equally threatened the deepening of democratic culture in Nigeria.

Consequently, national security challenges are viewed by many as regional problems that are primarily the responsibilities of the regions where they manifest. Furthermore, such regions also are forced to localise the challenges as peculiar problems and use same to blackmail the national leadership. Region, ethnic and religious groupings consequently withdraw to self and display solidarity within groups. This makes civil/ police synergy and intelligence gathering required for nabbing many criminal activities extremely difficult. Today, citizens from regions, ethnic and religious groups are largely economical with vital information needed to arrest and or prosecute perpetrators of heinous crimes. They see such criminals as their kins, people and group members, who they must protect at the expense of national peace and security. In the face of this development, other parts of the country more often than not, tend to stand aloof from the regions, ethnic and religious groups facing the attack of hoodlums. There is therefore, religious, regional and ethnic solidarity which hinders national allegiance and co-operation. This perception has made security agencies helpless and unable to cope with the spate of crime and criminality in Nigeria. Until the perception changes through good and proactive national leadership, the country may continue to experience for a long time, chains of serious security embarrassment.

Threats to Security in Nigeria

Evolving a virile security system in Nigeria has suffered a serious setback in the recent time. Factors bordering on unresolved socio-cultural differences among the over 200

ethnic groups have continued to threaten the much cherished national security. These unsettled differences include:

Indigene-Settler Conflict

Indigene and settler dichotomy is one problem that has made many Nigerians ask whether or not their citizenship is anything they can be proud of. Although crises relating to indigene/ settler question have raised its ugly head in many parts of Nigeria over the years, the worse cases were recorded on the plateau in the recent past (Yousouph, 2010). Plateau State which is known for peace with the motto: “Home of Peace and Tourism”, has not known peace since 1994 as a result of violent conflicts bordering on the interpretation of citizenship (Obadiah and Asmau, 2010). The Hausa-Fulani who have lived for years in Jos, see reasons to lay claim to Jos North Local Government, while three other tribes- Anaguta, Berom and Afizere also lay claim to the same on the condition that the Hausa-Fulani met them there as indigene (Olaniyi and Nnabuihe, 2010). This dichotomy has claimed hundreds of lives and unquantifiable resources in the series of violent clashes and reprisal attacks. One thing that is common with the clashes is that security suffers during these unfortunate clashes as even security agents are not spared.

Religious Conflict

The general perception among Sociologists, particularly the functionalists, is that religion is a unified system of beliefs and practices related to sacred things, that is to say things set apart and forbidden (Haralambos and Holborn, 2004). This school of thought sees religion as a unifying factor and thus enhances stability and development of the society. Glock and Stark (1965) quoted by Haralambos and Holborn (2004) argue that religion, if not carefully managed, divide a people rather than bind. In other words, religion divides a people as much as it claims to bind them. The views of Glock and Stark are like a prophecy that got fulfilled in Nigeria. For instance, between independence in 1960 and

2009, over 50 cases of violent religious crises were recorded in Nigeria (Abimboye, 2009). These crises which were mostly recorded in northern Nigeria have been between Christians and Muslims, thus making that part of the country notorious for ethno-religious crises (Obadiah and Asmau, 2010). The latest and deadliest of such crises is the one orchestrated by an Islamic sect – Boko Haram. The major underlying issues is intolerance, the preference of one's faith to any other and the attempt to impose one's faith on other citizens (Kukah, 1994; Toure, 2003; Danjibo, 2013). This has greatly affected the economy of northern Nigeria as many have lost their lives and source of livelihood in the process, while others have abandon the zone for more peaceful areas (Imam, 2004; Nkruman, 2012).

The Marxists have equally criticised the unification role of religion of whatever form. To this school of thought, religion is basically an instrument of exploitation in the hands of the ruling elites, with which they conceal the subjugation of the masses of the people. Religion is used by the rulers to blindfold the ruled. In the word of Karl Marx often referred to as the major exponent of the Marxist ideology, religion is the 'opium of the people, as it divert the masses' attention away from socially created inequalities and injustices in society with the promise of what is to come in the life after (Giddens, 2009). Therefore, as an instrument of the elites, religion can be made to adopt any form in society (crisis or tranquility), so that it can continue to further the ideals and hegemony of the ruling elites. This also seems to have become a fulfilled prophecy in Nigeria (Yousouph, 2010).

Political Factor

One of the crucial issues in the Nigerian polity that seems to have overshadowed virtually every social consideration is political marginalisation. The dominance of politics among other contending issues in Nigeria is underscored by a popular view of centrality of politics in society. This is because of the relevance of politics to mankind. Politics is believed to direct, frame and reframe the fortune of other things ever desired by man in society. For instance, politics is considered to be basically concerned with 'who gets what,

when and how' (Easton, 1965). It is in this light that everything is done by individuals and groups in a society to acquire political power. It is for the same reasons that people willfully usurp or marginalise others in effect, the marginalised cry out whenever they are thus treated. In Nigeria, many ethnic groups and or regions have bitterly complained of political marginalisation (Toure, 2003; Nairaland Forum, 2013). They have argued that political power in Nigeria since independence seems to be the birth right of some specific ethnic groups or region, while others has waited till date, not knowing when it will be their turn to occupy the 'driver's seat'. To this end, they seek explanation and or interpretation to their rights in the country believed to be jointly owned. These discriminatory practices inform of marginalisation of the minority by majority groups, seem multi-faceted. The rights of the minority at whatever level must be protected. The nuances of marginalisation in Nigeria are rightly captured by Ake (1995) cited in Toure (2003:23) thus:

Oppression and domination are seen as wrong when the section or group one belongs to is affected. People complaining about majority domination turn out to oppress smaller ethnic groups in the state where they have numerical strength. The minorities at the state level go to local government level and oppress groups they are more powerful than, while the latter could in the same manner go to the district or ward levels and dominate others. Then even the clerk at the office demands subordination from the messenger or else he/she unleashes their tyranny.

Security thrives in a society where people are given and or enjoy equal rights but not where people are self-centred. This position enhances the spirit of synergy among people of diverse opinions and backgrounds. Where the rights and values of others are acknowledged, faith, dignity and self-worth of citizens are greatly enhanced, and citizens would naturally become dogged supporters and advocates of their common heritage. The ultimate destination of such society is sustained tranquility, growth and development. The resultant effect would be security of lives and property.

Resource Control

The clamour for outright resource control or derivatory percentage increase has been another issue that has agitated the minds of some Nigerians, particularly those from the Niger Delta region or the South-South geo-political zone of Nigeria (Danjibo, 2012). The demand for resource control in the Niger Delta region got intensified after the discovery of oil in commercial quantity. The proceeds from the sale of petroleum products have become the main source of Nigerian economy. The massive exploitation of oil from Niger Delta, led to the devastation of the physical environment, thereby destroying the source of livelihood of the inhabitants of the area. The devastation was however not matched by concerted effort of the government or oil companies to reconstruct and develop the area that has become the backbone of the national economy. This experience sparked repeated restiveness of youth from the zone (Olorunfemi, 2006; Albert, 2012), apparently taking their destiny in own hands by demanding outright control of the resources or increment in the derivation percentage to about 50 percent of accruable income to the nation. However, there is the reduction in restiveness after the formation of the Ministry of Niger Delta and the subsequent improvement of the Niger Delta area and the derivation percentage. Furthermore, the introduction of amnesty programme and the election of President Goodluck Jonathan who is an indigene of the zone have contributed to the reduction of restiveness in the Niger Delta area. Yet, resource control remains a topical issue in Nigeria.

Official Corruption

One of the greatest social challenges Nigeria has had to contend with in the 21st century is official corruption. Virtually every sector of the Nigerian social system is given to corruption, as there seem to be no standard for doing things in the land. The worse affected is the political leadership where conventional rules of governance are circumvented for parochial personal or group reasons. Embezzlement of public fund has become a common practice in public life. Consequently, Nigeria is rated as one of the

most corrupt nations of the world (Mabayoje, 2006 ; Federal Radio Corporation of Nigeria, 2013). The rating of Nigeria in corruption is not surprising to many, going by the fact that in the society, political sector organises and decides what happens to other sectors. Therefore, if the political leadership is the most corrupt, then every other sector of the social system will necessarily be corrupt. The implication of this official corruption in Nigeria is that no public policy is taken serious by majority of the citizens who view such policies as ploys of the government to exploit and further impoverish them. This perception gives room to lawlessness as citizens are encouraged to loot public resources with impunity to satisfy personal or group aspirations. Official corruption is taking toll of both public and private lives in Nigeria, including the security operatives and other correctional agencies.

There is also the urgent need to address the socio-cultural differences that have hindered the right perception of security by most Nigerian citizens. Instead of co-operating with one another, most Nigerians prefer to identify with own region, ethnic, religious, and peer groups, to which they believe they owe greater allegiance than the nation. If these socio-cultural differences are not quickly addressed, security in Nigeria is bound to face continuous threat. But on the other hand, if these critical contending issues are adequately addressed, Nigerians of different socio-cultural backgrounds will begin to see themselves as a people and an indivisible nation. Then the solid foundation for peace, national security and development would have been laid.

The Difference Between Secured and Unsecured Societies

If all men were conceived and born the same way after nine months, and all equally possess the potential to control their environment, then societies ought to be the same securitywise. It is however, not always the case as there is a great difference between 'what ought to' and 'what is'. Basically, what differentiates the secured from unsecured society is conviction and commitment. Conviction is a product of experience, observation and learning. Human actions are rationally based on their conviction that such actions are

worthwhile and renege them if they are not convinced of their worth. Commitment on the other hand, may be inspired by a combination or any of reward, resources, belief and conviction. Due to different levels of commitment to a cause, two individuals embarking on similar projects may end-up with different results. Therefore, a combination of conviction and commitment of a people to whatever cause of action, accounts for the differences among them. An individual or a group for instance, needs to be convinced on the need for security for him/them to give adequate attention to its provision and maintenance. Furthermore, the level of conviction and commitment of a people to security is sacrosanct to the quality of security they provide for themselves.

What therefore, separate developed societies of the west from the less-developed ones (particularly countries of Africa) is their conviction of the importance of security and of course, their commitment to the cause of security. While for example, every citizen is considered a possible threat or ally to security until proved otherwise in the western world, some are considered too holy and intimate to the extent that they cannot commit crime in the less-developed societies. The citizens, government and non-governmental organisations collaboratively invest self, time, and resources to the provision of security in developed societies. The result of this level of commitment is that security is almost always at its best. But it is considered secondary, a government project, and often grossly underfunded in the less-developed societies. No doubt, security in such societies is often porous. Security is therefore, to a people how they perceive it and what they make of it, in essence, they can only enjoy the form of security they desire and deserve.

Furthermore, developed societies look peaceful and seem ordered not just because there are no security threats or challenges. The tranquility observed by outsiders stem from the rights of others that the majority respect as they enjoy their inalienable rights. They appropriate their rights, opportunities and social advantages with the consciousness that others who are disadvantaged and vulnerable exist. This gives the socially disadvantaged citizens the opportunity to exhibit their talents and equally feel that their worth is recognised. It further enhances synergy and interdependence of citizens.

However, in societies where people think they can do and say what they want and get away with it, there are either immediate crises or postponed crisis. This is the problem of most African societies, such that it looks like the only story that can be told of the continent and its people is war and hunger. In Nigeria for instance, the democratic dispensation beginning from 1999 till date, present an unfortunate picture of the country to the world. It paints democracy to imply the freedom to do and say anything with impunity. This freedom to impunity began to manifest in virtually all the geo-political zones in the formation of ethnic militias that were unknown to Nigerians during the much discredited days of military rule. The country suddenly produced the likes of O'dua People's Congress (OPC), Arewa People's Congress (APC), Bakassi Boys, Igbesu Boys and a host of others. All these ethnic militias did not only carve empires for themselves wherein through impunity they dictated security situations of their enclaves, but quickly and unofficially partitioned the country into many segments and became the 'mouth piece' of their zones. If this is what freedom means in a democracy, then something should be wrong. But that is what ironically; we have been living with for over a decade now. I am sure Nigerians certainly have missed it. Democracy does not mean freedom, it rather mean restraints of freedom and rights. The only form of government that allow for freedom of the type Nigerians have exhibited so far is anarchy. Anarchy condones lawlessness or the freedom to live a life of impunity. I am sure we have had enough of the side effects of unrestraint freedom to desire a return to true democracy.

Conclusion

The relevance of security in relation to human existence cannot be overemphasised. Virtually all the aspirations of individuals and the society require security to be fulfilled and sustained. This explains man's endless quest for security. However, to tap into the all-time virtues of security, there is the need for all the stakeholders to develop the right perception and attitude to security. Without the right attitude, no amount of resources sunk into security provision will make appreciable impact; rather, the society would remain grossly unsecured.

In Nigeria as in many African countries, the age-long virtues inherent in African Socialism have been grossly abused. The aftermath of the abuse is the endless security challenges that have painted the continent in bad light. If for instance, one conceals peers, friends and tribesmen who today are given to criminal activities, in order to pay allegiance to the groups, there is no doubt that in their utmost selfishness, the same individuals will turn on the citizens tomorrow or destroy the same society we seek to protect. It will no doubt serve Africans better to return to their roots, while seeking to integrate the western model of security. The best way to protect the society is to jointly hallow the norms and values of the society by exposing those who deviate from its norms, no matter their status and closeness to us. Victims of heinous crimes such as rape, kidnap, assassination, robbery, corruption, etc have had to recount their bitter experiences that, the perpetrators were actually people they thought were so familiar with them, so much that they never believed will ever hurt them (Akintunde, 2002).

Insecurity is bound to be on the increase in societies where members fail to perceive security in the right way. Where for instance, some people are seen as harmless, while others are tagged security threat, citizens will perpetually be unsecured. This is because, most of the times, the greatest threat comes from people we least expect. Also, where for whatever reasons (personal or group), citizens fail to synergise with others, insecurity looms continuously.

Finally, several long standing socio-cultural issues have beclouded most Nigerians from seeing themselves as one and indivisible nation, they rather see themselves with regional, tribal and religious lenses. The earlier these contending social issues are addressed and made to form the foundation of common heritage, the better it will be for our security sector.

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