Addressing the Insecurity Challenge in Nigeria: The Imperative of Moral Values and Virtue Ethics

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Addressing the Insecurity Challenge in Nigeria: The Imperative of Moral Values and Virtue Ethics

Onifade Comfort [α], Imhonopi David [σ] & Urim Ugochukwu Moses [ρ]

Abstract - The insecurity challenge in Nigeria has assumed a formidable dimension that not only requires a multi-stakeholder approach, as it is being touted in various quarters, in quelling this conflagration threatening Nigeria's statehood, but also necessitates a revival and reinforcement of moral values and virtues. The thirst for blood and the preference for violence in expressing pent-up frustration and disenchantment with the state, its citizens and national totems may be a pointer to the need to revive moral values and virtues within the socio-economic, political, religious and educational institutions in the country. Nigerian leaders, politicians and their amen corners must be forced to evince and uphold moral values and virtues in all their conduct in order to lead by example and to avoid heating up the polity unnecessarily by their conducts and comments which sometimes incite violence in their followers. This study advocates that the country should begin to live by the credo that no leader's political ambition is worth the drop of any Nigerian's blood. It also argues that when moral values are subscribed to by leaders, they will not be involved in the manipulation of the electoral process, official corruption and other vices which fester the deep wounds already nursed by different segments in the polity. Consequently, the security challenge in Nigeria throws a moral challenge to all and sundry to live by high moral standards that place a value on life, that seek peaceful means to conflict resolution and that promote justice, equity, fairness and empathy in the country.

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I. Introduction

Lately, Nigeria has been enmeshed in a firebox of insecurity leading to scores of deaths of innocent civilians, foreigners, some members of the nation's security personnel, elected officials and many government workers. The insecurity challenge has assumed formidable dimensions forcing the country's political and economic managers and, indeed the entire nation, to rue the loss of their loved ones, investments and absence of safety in most parts of the country. The number of violent crimes such as kidnappings, ritual killings, carjackings, suicide bombings, religious killings, politically-motivated killing and violence, ethnic clashes, armed banditry and others has increasingly become the regular signature that characterises life in Nigeria since 2009 (Imhonopi & Urim, 2012). Government has tried everything from "force-for-force" to carrot-and-stick approach to diplomacy but the problem seems to rise with greater monstrosity like the proverbial phoenix. There has also been strong advocacy for a multi-stakeholder intervention to the insecurity question rather than lean on military options alone (Imhonopi & Urim, 2013; Open Society, 2012; Ujomu, 2001), but the problem has defied the present medication it is getting. This may not be unconnected with the increasing ethnic hate, religious bigotry, political rivalry and a growing population of disgruntled citizens in the country who feel that they have been short-changed and given very limited or no access to the common patrimony. Egwu (2001) had made this observation when he argued that the primordial tendencies of various ethnic groups towards violence, the perennial eruption of various ethnic militias and the preponderant religious fundamentalism in place, given expression to by some sections of the dominant religious establishments in Nigeria, have inevitably aggravated the scale and propensity of insecurity and widened its scope in various ramifications.

Not only has the continued state of insecurity threatened the very fabric of national integration in the country and created the ecology of fear, disquiet and anxiety, it has also meted a deadly blow or what Imhonopi & Urim (2012) call "spectral bite" to industrial development. The destruction of the badly needed infrastructure has taken the country many years backwards. The government has continued to trudge on in the face of this daring challenge and has continued to evolve strategies to contain or douse this conflagration. Meanwhile, academic writers, social researchers, scholars, security experts and consultants have also not rested in making diverse recommendations and probable solutions to address this national blight. In this paper, focus is on examining the contributions moral values and virtues can make in tackling insecurity in Nigeria. This study is helped by the groundbreaking scholarly work of Ujomu (2001) where he argued that examining the moral foundations of national security was all the more significant because the trend of events in the history of military and economic growth in Nigeria, especially under the erstwhile military regimes of Babangida and Abacha, pointed to a familiar pattern of ethical degeneration and moral depravity which led to the systematic and institutionalised erosion of personal and collective peace, safety, stability and harmony within the Nigerian society. Close to this, the need for an

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examination of the ethical basis of the problematic social relations in Nigeria was accentuated by former President Obasanjo in his October 1999 National Day speech, where he drew the attention of an anxious nation to the need to regenerate the moral foundations of all actions and to continue to search for the conditions that would make Nigeria a just, free and wealthy society (Obasanjo, 1999). His statement revealed that Nigeria was yet to achieve the much desired ethical conduct requisite for sound social relations which could guarantee the maintenance of security, peace and order in the country (Ujomu, 2001). This paper therefore seeks to widen this conversation by investigating the role a reawakening of moral values and virtues in the country can play in subduing the monstrosity of insecurity in the country.

II. Conceptual Analysis

To ably define insecurity, it is pertinent to have a brief discussion on what security is. The first duty of a government is to keep its citizens safe because like Hobbes observed, only the state has the wherewithal to guarantee security and save society from anarchy (and since government represents the state), the state through its government should provide adequate security to justify its raison d'être (Gaskin, 1996). In this wise, Omede (2012) sees security as a dynamic condition which involves the relative ability of a state to counter threats to its core values and interests. McGrew (1988) holds that the security of a nation hangs on two important pillars which are (1) the maintenance and protection of the socioeconomic order in the face of internal and external threat and (2) the promotion of a preferred international order, which minimises the threat to core values and interests, as well as to the domestic order. For Nwolise (2006), security is an all-encompassing condition which suggests that a territory must be secured by a network of armed forces; that the sovereignty of the state must be guaranteed by a democratic and patriotic government, which in turn must be protected by the military, police and the people themselves; that the people must not only be secured from external attacks but also from devastating consequences of internal upheavals such as unemployment, hunger, starvation, diseases, ignorance, homelessness, environmental degradation and pollution cum socio-economic injustices. Citing Rothschild, Nwagboso (2012) argues that in the long sweep of history, security has been about people and without reference to the security of the individual, security makes no sense at all (McSweeney, 1999). Dike (2010) and Omede (2012) have taken this argument a step further by emphasising that Nigeria's security should be based on a holistic view which sees the citizens as the primary beneficiaries of every security and developmental deliverable that the state can offer. Thus, Nigeria's security will involve efforts to strengthen the

capacity of the Federal Republic of Nigeria so it can advance its interests and objectives to contain internal and external aggression, control crime, eliminate corruption, enhance genuine development, progress and growth and improve the welfare and quality of life of every citizen. As Omede (2012) pontificates further, the nation's security should include the preservation of the safety of Nigerians at home and abroad and the protection of the country's sovereignty.

Conversely, insecurity is the antithesis of security and has attracted such common descriptors as want of safety, danger, hazard, uncertainty, want of confidence, state of doubt, inadequately guarded or protected, instability, trouble, lack of protection and being unsafe, and others (Achumba, Ighomereho & Akpor-Robaro, 2013). Achumba *et al* argue further that these common descriptors point to a condition where there exists a vulnerability to harm, loss of life, property or livelihood. Therefore, they consider insecurity to be a state of not knowing, a lack of control, and the inability to take defensive action against forces that portend harm or danger to an individual or group, or that make them vulnerable. For Beland (2005), insecurity is "the state of fear or anxiety stemming from a concrete or alleged lack of protection." It refers to lack or inadequate freedom from danger. This definition reflects physical insecurity which is the most visible form of insecurity, and it feeds into many other forms of insecurity such as economic security and social security. In this paper, insecurity is conceived as a situation where human and national security of a state is compromised by internal or external forces or interests   exacerbated by the former's weak or poor economic, military and/or human resource development conditions.

III. Aetiologies of Insecurity in Nigeria

Drawing copiously from existing literature on insecurity in Nigeria, the aetiologies of insecurity within Nigeria is twofold: remote and proximate causes. The remote factors include such causes as follows:

a) Absence of Institutional Capacity Resulting in Government Failure

Fukuyama (2004) calls this the breakdown of institutional infrastructures. The foundations of institutional framework in Nigeria are very shaky and have provoked a deterioration of state governance and democratic accountability, thus, paralysing the existing formal and legitimate rules nested in the hierarchy of social order (Achumba, *et al,* 2013). This view is collaborated by Igbuzor (2011) who sees the state of insecurity in Nigeria as a function of government failure. This manifests in the incapacity of government to deliver public goods to its citizens. This lack of basic necessities by the Nigerian people has created a growing army of frustrated people who resort to violence at the slightest provocation or opportunity. Although

Nigeria has the resources to provide for the needs of its people, the entrenched culture of corruption in public service has resulted in the dearth of basic necessities, leading to what Hazen & Horner (2007) call a "Paradox of Plenty". Because of this situation, the crime rate shoots up and the security of lives and property are no longer guaranteed.

b) The Gaping Chasm of Inequality and Absence of Fairness and Justice

The perception of marginalisation by many Nigerians is informed by the ostentation showed by the political class and elite vis-à-vis the grinding poverty to which citizens are subjected. Even security has been bourgeoisified by the elite. As Egwu (2000) contends, the security of the Nigerian nation-state has been reduced to that of the ruler and his immediate supporters, thus, the security calculus of the Nigerian state has failed because it does not include vital aspects of social and national development supported by the provision of basic social, economic or even military conditions necessary for effective national security. This state of inequality, unfairness and injustice has toughened the people, forcing them to take their destiny into their hands.

c) Ethno-Religious Conflicts

Ethno-religious conflicts have been identified as a major source of insecurity in Nigeria (Ibrahim & Igbuzor, 2002; Hazen & Horner, 2007; Salawu, 2010; Igbuzor, 2011). Ethno-religious conflicts exist when the social relations between members of one ethnic or religious group and another of such group in a multi-ethnic and multi-religious society is characterised by lack of cordiality, mutual suspicion and fear, and a tendency towards violent confrontations to settle grievances. These conflicts have also revolved around who gets what and how in the state especially as it concerns the distribution of scarce resources, power, land, chieftaincy titles, local government councils, control of markets and expansion of religious territories. These conflicts have resulted in large-scale killings and violence among ethno-religious groups in the country (Adagba, *et al*, 2012).

d) Disconnect between the People and Government

Over the years, there has been a growing disconnect between the people and government. Governments, whether military or civilian, have not tried to bridge this chasm, thus creating misunderstanding, mistrust and resentment. Consequently, because the people do not understand government or have a perception that government does not care about their welfare, they become easy prey to centrifugal forces who co-opt/incite them to vent their anger on perceived enemies of the people and sometimes go to the extent of destroying national totems.

e) Weak and Poorly Funded Military Establishments

In spite of the high security vote state governments receive on a monthly basis, there is greater insecurity in many states. Some of these monies find their way into the pockets of some highly-placed private citizens and the Chief Executives of the states, leaving the hapless citizens to the mercy of criminals and sociopaths. Also the armed forces, paramilitary establishments and the police under federal control are weak institutionally, heavily politicised and poorly funded. This status quo makes it easy for the nation's security to be compromised.

f) Interagency Rivalry

The failure of security agencies such as the police, the military, state security services and paramilitary units to share intelligence information has been identified as one of the factors negating the quick apprehension of culprits (Omede, 2011). Also, the failure of intelligence gathering by the security agencies as well as the near passivity of security operatives in proactively policing the country, coupled with the non-apprehension of culprits, is also a contributory factor to the rising tide of insecurity in Nigeria. Of course, when the armed forces and paramilitary agencies are not well-tooled with modern fighting and security gadgets and their welfare is not given priority attention, they may not want to make any sacrifices for the nation. All of these factors point to a passive national security team that is not really committed to fighting crime or stopping the merchants of violence or terror envoys from having the field day in the country.

g) Non-Prosecution of Perpetrators of Violence In Nigeria

The lack of arrest and prosecution of perpetrators and sponsors of violence has encouraged many more social deviants and their godfathers to throw caution to the wind to perpetrate evil in the land. The Nigerian society has become a rigout of powerful fiefdoms controlled by feudal lords who are almost as powerful as the state and maintain a rental economy within the larger national economy.

h) Loss of Socio-Cultural and Communal Value System

The collapse of moral values within Nigeria is one critical factor to the continued security challenges that the country is faced with. The disintegration of communal value system which placed high premium on human life and despised greed, oppression and exploitation of the weak, among others, has also contributed to the unpleasant security environment in the country. New values that are zero-sum, paternalistic, narcissistic, chauvinistic and corrupt in nature and that preach that might-is-right have all taken over. Endearing social values and morals have been traded off for western values.

i) Immediate and Proximate Factors

According to Achumba *et al*, the proximate factors that have contributed to the state of insecurity in the country are porous borders, rural-urban drift, social irresponsibility of companies resulting in negative externalities which provoke social unrest within their host communities, unemployment and poverty and terrorism, among others.

All these factors combine to create the sultry security situation in the country.

IV. SELECTED AREAS OF NIGERIA'S SECURITY CHALLENGES

In existence are copious literature materials that chronicle elaborate case studies of insecurity in the country from different informed prisms (see Achumba *et al*, 2013; Adagba *et al*, 2012; Adesoji, 2010; Ibrahim & Igbuzor, 2002; Igbuzor, 2011; Imhonopi & Urim, 2012; Mijah, 2005; Nwagboso, 2012; Nwolise, 2006; Ogundiya, 2009; Ogundiya & Amzat, 2006; Okafor, 2011; Omede, 2011; Omotola, 2010; Onifade & Imhonopi, 2012). This study will not duplicate such efforts but will single out selected cases of insecurity in the country. Some of these security challenges have been briefly highlighted as follows:

a) The Niger Delta Crisis

According to Nwagboso (2012), the Niger Delta conflict arose in the early 1990s due to tensions between international oil companies (IOCs) and some representatives of Niger Delta minority ethnic groups who felt they were being exploited without due compensation from the IOCs (Osungade, 2008). Thus, ethnic and political unrest continued in the region throughout the 1990s and persisted despite the enthronement of democracy in 1999. However, competition for oil wealth in the region gave rise to agitations, violence and subsequent extra-judicial killing of Ken Saro-Wiwa and nine Ogoni leaders by the Abacha regime (Urim, 1999). This extra-judicial killing of Ogoni leaders by the Abacha regime was condemned both within the country and by the international community. This was followed by sanctions placed on Nigeria during the period. As Nwagboso (2012) observed, the inability or failure of the government, particularly during the military era, to address the root causes of the agitation (environmental problems, poverty, unemployment, lack of basic amenities, etc.), in the Niger Delta region, resulted in the spawning of ethnic militias of Niger Delta origin leading to the militarisation of nearly the entire region. Thus, the foundation was laid for the wave of insecurity that beleaguered the entire region and spread throughout the tentacles of power. Although in order to ameliorate the environmental degradation and the absolute poverty in place, the government established some institutions or agencies to douse the tension in the area such as the Oil Mineral Producing Areas Development Commission (OMPADEC), Niger Delta Development Commission (NDDC) and Ministry of Niger Delta (MND); these intervention remedies, notwithstanding, the conflicts and insecurity in the Niger Delta region persisted. In fact, the region witnessed severe security threats and the emergence of other agitating groups affiliated to the Movement for the Emancipation of the Niger Delta (MEND) like the Niger Delta People's Volunteer Force (NDPVF) led by Mujahid Dokubo-Asari and the Niger Delta vigilante (NDV) led by Ateke Tom. These groups purportedly joined the struggle to address the injustice by the Federal Government against the region and this move exacerbated the security problems not only in the region, but also in the entire Nigerian state (Nwagboso, 2012). While the leaders of the agitating groups were from the Ijaw nation, the two groups (NDPVF and NDV) eclipsed a plethora of smaller militias supposedly numbering more than one hundred in the Niger Delta region. These groups comprised mostly the disaffected young men from Warri, Port Harcourt, Yenegoa and their sub-urban areas (Aderoju, 2008). The Federal Government used a mixture of carrot-and-stick approach and force to cower the militants into accepting its proposal for amnesty which happened under the leadership of the late President Umaru Yar'Adua, who had announced the granting of Amnesty and unconditional pardon to militants in the region (Rotimi, 2009). The militants were given between August 6 and October 4, 2009 to surrender their weapons to the federal government in return for training and rehabilitation. During the 60-day period, the militants led their groups to surrender their weapons which included rocket-propelled grenades, guns, explosives, ammunition, gunboats, among others. Although the federal governments' Amnesty Programme reduced the rate of militancy in the region, the incessant kidnapping activities in the Niger Delta region eventually spilled over into some states in the South-East geo-political zone of the country.

b) Kidnapping in the South-East Zone of Nigeria

The history of kidnapping in the South-East zone of Nigeria could be traced to hostilities, conflicts and violence in the Niger Delta region (Nwagboso, 2012). Kidnapping, which is the act of abducting somebody and keeping him/her as a prisoner in order to get a ransom for his/her release, suddenly took on a whole new economic attraction in the South-East of Nigeria. This new black economy thrived in the South-East zone, especially in Abia and Imo states, where prominent indigenes and residents of the states were easy targets. Following the 2007 general elections in Nigeria, this social problem became virulent in the South-East as youths that were used as political thugs by politicians during the 2007 general elections subsequently diverted their guns, skills and energy into the ugly trade as a new means of economic survival

after the elections. As Nwagboso noted, confessions by those apprehended indicated that some politicians in these states supplied guns to youths for the purpose of rigging the 2007 general elections. Unfortunately these guns were not retrieved at the end of the elections. Consequently, kidnapping transmuted into a profitable business mostly among the youths in Abia, Imo, Ebonyi and other states in the zone. Thus, the increasing rate of kidnapping activities in Abia state, particularly in Aba metropolis, resulted in several foiled attempts to kidnap the Abia state Governor, Chief Theodore Orji, in 2008 (Nwogu, 2008). Thus, from 2007 to 2010, several prominent residents and indigenes in Aba and its environs were kidnapped for ransom. This adversely affected the economy of Abia state as many businessmen and manufacturing companies relocated to other states like Enugu and Anambra. Kidnappers went as far as abducting school children, traditional rulers, innocent citizens while attending church services or village meetings. According to Nwagboso (2012), the kidnapping of school children forced all the commercial banks in the area to close down for several days in 2010. It is pertinent to note that prior to this period, many commercial banks were robbed in Aba which is the commercial fulcrum of Abia state. To address the spate of kidnapping in the South-East zone particularly in Abia state, the federal government, by the invitation of the state government, deployed soldiers to Aba metropolis and its environs and this action minimised the reported cases of the menace, especially in Aba and its environs. This was partly as a result of intensive attacks launched by the army at the hideouts of kidnappers in Ukwa West Local Government Area of Abia State (Sampson, 2010).

c) The Jos Crisis

This is another internal security threat that started as a sectarian violence but has mutated into very radical but ugly shapes in 1999. Oladoyinbo (2010) observed that the crisis in Jos, Plateau state was a very complex one as it had ethnic, religious, sociopolitical and economic undertones. In his words:

> There is no need for some people to use all means to dominate others or use people to subjugate others ...the government in Nigeria has no courage...the government is not the solution but rather the problem...the government knows those behind all these riots, those importing arms into this country... Thus, the Jos crisis has claimed numerous lives of Nigerians and property worth millions of naira. However, the Jos crisis has resulted in several attacks on Christians by Muslims. Indeed, from 2007 - 2010, over 10,000 Christians were slaughtered during the Jos crisis. In 2010 crisis for instance, about 500 Christians lost their lives (Oladoyinbo, 2010: 15).

Precisely, the Jos crisis has resulted in unimaginable confrontations, killings, bombings and other forms of violence. Many observers have argued that the root causes of the crisis were the inordinate desire by Muslims to forcefully convert Christians in the area as Muslim faithfuls (Nwagboso, 2010). Others assert that the root causes of the Jos crisis are cultural and land disputes. Thus, whatever the argument over the remote causes of the frequent crisis in Jos may be, the fact is, it has emerged as one of the greatest internal security threats to the corporate existence of Nigeria as it had claimed the wanton killings of a large number of Nigerians. This unjustified pogrom committed by Nigerians against Nigerians must have prompted the late Libya strongman, President Muammar Gaddafi, to suggest that Nigeria should be bifurcated into two separate countries, which is Muslim and Christian. The crisis in Jos has adversely affected the economy and unity of Nigeria while available evidence has shown that the crisis in Jos which has been fought on sectarian lines, may be traced to the "sour relationship" between the Christian and Muslim communities in the area. This is crucial because as the Human Right Watch Report argues:

> ...Jos lies on the border between Nigeria's Muslim majority North and Christian majority South. Access to land resources is often determined by whether one is a native or 'indigene'... Jos is historically Christian city... Settlers are most often Muslims from the North... (Human Right Report, July 10, 2010).

d) The Boko Haram Terror Machine

This is another major security challenge in Nigeria which has adversely affected the Nigerian economy. According to Olugbode (2010), the word "Boko" is a Hausa word meaning "Animist", "western", otherwise non-islamic education; and the Arabic word "Haram" figuratively means "sin" or literally something "forbidden". The Boko Haram is a controversial Nigerian militant Islamist group that has sought to impose Sharia law or its radical interpretation of Islam on the northern states of Nigeria and then to other parts of the country like what the Malians Islamists almost succeeded to do in Northern Mali. Dunia (2010) rightly holds that the group opposes not only western education, but also western culture and modern science. The ambiguous goal of the group (and this point to their level of education) became evident when they kicked against the widely held opinions that the world is sphere and that rain comes from water evaporated by the sun (Nwagboso, 2012). The Boko Haram group also promotes a radical form of Islam which makes it "haram" or forbidden for Muslims to take part in any political or social activities in the society. This includes voting in election, wearing of shirts and trousers or receiving secular education (BBC News Africa, 2010). Founded in 2002 in Maiduguri by Utaz Mohammed Yusuf, the death of their leader in 2009 turned the group into a killing machine that has put paid to the economic development of the Northern geopolitical zones. The

activities of Boko Haram have constituted a serious security challenge in contemporary Nigeria as the group has even been linked to the dreaded Al-Qaeda terror group. It has been accepted in many quarters that the criminal and evil agenda of the Boko Haram terror envoys in Nigeria, including the introduction of suicide bombing on Nigerian soil, has not only paralysed economic and social activities in Maiduguri, Abuja, Suleja, Damaturu, Minna, among other cities, but has also made Nigeria unsafe for investment and tourism (Imhonopi & Urim, 2012; Onifade & Imhonopi, 2012; Nwagboso, 2012).

V. Theories and Discussions on Moral Values and Virtue Ethics

In discussing morality and ethics, there exists a challenge bordering on relativism or absolutism. In this sense, some theorists belonging to the Indic and Confucian school of thought argue that morality is relative and should never be treated as absolute or universal. On the other hand, western scholars including those sharing the Abrahamic faiths, i.e. Judaism, Christianity and Islam, believe that certain moral values are concepts that have and should have universal application. For instance, human dignity, right to life and value for human life are concrete rights and values that human beings are supposed to enjoy and uphold when engaging in any form of relations within society. This must have informed the content of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) by the United Nations in 1948 to deter the exercise of absolute powers by states or their representatives or by groups or individuals within them against individuals or groups within the same state. Although, the moral power of the content and ideals of the UDHR and its embracement by many UN member-nations make it the most authoritative UN text to this day, some countries such as Iran have dismissed it as a document based on secularised Judeo-Christian values (Cairo, 1990). However, the UDHR as a text advocates for the universalisation of some rights which every human being should enjoy in spite of their colour, race, language, gender or social class. Rai, Thorheim, Dorjderem & Macer (2010) have summarised the 30 articles that make up the Declaration as follows:

Article 1) All humans are born free and equal in dignity and rights; 2) entitlement to rights without distinctions of race, colour, sex, language, religion, politics, nationality, property, birth or other status; 3) right to life, liberty and security of person; 4) prohibition of slavery and servitude; 5) prohibition of torture and inhuman treatment; 6) right of recognition before the law; 7) equality before the law; 8) right to an effective legal remedy; 9) prohibition of arbitrary arrest, detention and exile; 10) right to an impartial tribunal hearing; 11) presumed innocence until proven guilty; 12) protection against arbitrary interference with privacy, family, home, correspondence, honour or reputation; 13) freedom of national and international movement; 14) right to foreign asylum from political persecution; 15) right to a nationality; 16) right to consenting marriage and protection of the family unit; 17) right to own property; 18) right to freedom of thought and conscience, choice of religion and freedom to teach, practice and worship; 19) right to freedom of opinion and expression and right to seek, receive and impart information through any media; 20) right to freedom of peaceful assembly and association; 21) access to government, public service and genuine elections expressing the will of the people; 22) right to social security; 23) right to work, free choice of employment, equal pay for equal work and trade union membership; 24) right to rest and leisure; 25) standards of living adequate for health, well-being, security and child protection; 26) free elementary education and access to higher education on the basis of merit; 27) right to participate in the arts, science and cultural life, with protection of author interests; 28) right to an international social order able to realise these rights and freedoms; 29) everyone has duties to their community and is subject to laws which respect general welfare and the rights and freedoms of others; and, 30) discouraging any act aimed at the destruction of these rights and freedoms.

The above rights as enunciated by the UDHR are driven by ethical virtues and moral values because they indicate what character or behaviour states and their citizens should have towards each other or among themselves. It is the view of the authors that only tyrannical regimes or weak states with weak institutions, where might is right and where some groups have become supreme overlords, will try to play down on the universality of the application of these principles/rights.

In this work, four theories have been adopted to give paradigmatic interpretation to the whole concept of morality and virtue ethics and the role these could play in mitigating insecurity in Nigeria. These theories are as follows:

a) Consequentialist or teleological approaches (utilitarianism)

Jeremy Bentham (1748–1832) and John Stuart Mill (1806–1873) developed this approach. Its chief premise implies that the morality of an act is to be determined by its consequences. In other words, people should do that which will bring the greatest *utility* (which is generally understood to mean whatever the group sees as good) to the greatest number affected by a given situation. For example, military contractors may be faced with ransom demands for kidnapped employees. The UK government was embroiled in such a situation in 2004 in the case of a UK citizen who was taken hostage in Iraq. His captors demanded economic and political concessions to win his release. His family pleaded with the prime minister to meet these demands. The government argued that to do so would jeopardise the

lives of many more UK subjects in Iraq and globally (Greenwood, 2002). In doing so, the government was appealing to utilitarian arguments. Critics however suggest that in practice it is very difficult to accurately determine what the maximal *utility* would be for all affected by a situation because people may not have the necessary information. Furthermore, the notion of utility is very vague because does it refer to the short, medium or long term? These may lead to differing conclusions. More questions border on what makes up a majority? Can a situation be accepted where the benefits of the majority might mean the exploitation, and suffering, of the minority? Thus, this propensity could foster huge income disparity or marginalisation, or even slavery, as long as it is perceived that it would maximise the benefits of the majority. Thus, Greenwood acknowledges that some very morally repugnant acts might be condoned on the grounds of utilitarianism.

b) Non-consequentialist or deontological approaches

This approach is the antithesis of the utilitarian approach. This theoretical paradigm is associated with Immanuel Kant (1724–1804) and is sometimes referred to as "duty ethics". Kant sought to establish a set of absolute moral rules, developed through the application of *reason*. He also put forward an acid test for evaluating the quality of moral rules and this is termed: the *categorical imperative*. This states that: "I ought never to act except in such a way that I can also will that my maxim should become a universal law" (Hart, 1993). In other words, moral rules should follow the principle of *reciprocity,* i.e. do to others as you would want them to do to you. This premise can be found in the moral principles of the dominant religions like the Ten Commandments. Kant further stated: "Act in such a way that you always treat humanity . . . never simply as a means, but always at the same time as an end" (Hart, 1993). The defining characteristics of this approach are the universal *applicability* of principles to all humanity, and basic respect for human beings. A key notion for Kant was that of *intentionality*. It might well be that the outcome of an act leads to very bad consequences for people – for example, the attack of Boko Haram strongholds which leads to stray bullets killing innocent citizens or the death of a terrorist which leaves the wife a widow and the children as orphans.

c) Human rights approach

This influential approach is built on the fulcrum that every person deserves to enjoy basic *human rights*. In this sense, there is the recognition of a core set of human rights which every individual in a society is entitled to enjoy. However, where a human right exists, there must also be a duty or *responsibility* to recognise, support and acknowledge that right. John Locke (1632-1704) was the groundbreaker of this approach. He held that it is not so much the application of reason to acts that is important to morality, but an *appreciation* of the

fair and equal treatment of all people, enshrined in the recognition of basic human rights (Greenwood, 2002). According to Locke, the key rights included freedom and rights to property. However, attempts have been made to codify and amplify these rights including the declaration of the *Rights of Man* (1789), the *Universal Declaration of Human Rights* (1948) and the *European Convention on Human Rights* (1950). In 1998, the UK has passed the *Human Rights Act* in an attempt to codify rights within British law. There is the need to go beyond paying lip service to sections of the Nigerian constitution which stipulate the rights of Nigerians to codifying these rights into a separate legislation like what has been done in the European Union and the UK so that citizens' rights would not be violated by any political potentate or by self-righteous and opinionated individuals or groups who have a grouse to settle with the state.

d) Virtue ethics approach

The Greek philosopher, Aristotle (384–322 BC), originated the virtue ethics approach. Macintyre (1981) has further popularised this theory through his very fecund contributions to the subject. In defining morality or ethics, Aristotle did not aim to identify the qualities of good acts, or principles, but of good people. As Macintyre suggested, acting as a good person is the state of being well and doing well which makes a complete human life lived at its best, but for Aristotle, the virtuous man has to know that what he does is virtuous; and a good man has to "judge to do the right thing in the right place at the right time in the right way" (Macintyre, 1981). These virtues include both intellectual and character virtues. Macintyre adds that there is the need to *feel* that what one is doing is good and right; to have an *emotional* as well as a *cognitive* appreciation of morality is an essential component of virtue. The critical divergence between this approach and others is that it focuses on the issue of *agency* in ethical conduct. It suggests that neither good intentions nor outcomes, codes and the recognition of basic rights will necessarily ensure "goodness". In the final analysis, the effectiveness of an ethical system depends on the nature of the people who employ it. And are people essentially good or bad? Without sounding optimistic, if the moral foundation on which the Nigerian state is built is to be regenerated, then efforts must be put in place by the state especially, supported by non-state actors like faith organisations, civil society groups and other social agents like the school system, family, media and others, to develop a moral culture that will be inculcated in every Nigerian child and citizen. What this theory suggests is that if the individual can be changed, his actions will change. If his/her behaviour can be modelled to fit accepted cultural norms, values and virtues of good people and good societies, then virtuous individuals can be raised.

VI. Regeneration of Moral Values and Code in the Fight Against Insecurity in Nigeria

As Ujomu (2001) rightly observed, the moral basis of Nigeria's security is a vital imperative for national reconciliation, national survival and national development in this new millennium. He argues further that the need for the regeneration of the moral foundations of national security is all the more significant when the trend of events in the history of military and economic growth in Nigeria especially under erstwhile military regimes of Abacha and Babangida is examined. For him, he considers those regimes and the ones before them, as having contributed immensely to the grotesque pattern of ethical degeneration that led to the systematic and institutionalised erosion of personal and collective peace, safety, stability and harmony within the Nigerian society. Tied to this, the accumulation of morally bankrupt leadership that is brazenly corrupt, incredibly inept, peremptorily high-handed, snobbishly elitist and apathetically disposed to the distressful plight of the majority of Nigerians, shows the pillory that moral values and ethic virtues have been subjected to in the country. Indeed, the history of Nigeria shows that the practice of genuine moral conduct and the guarantee of adequate personal and national security for all segments of the society have been otiose.

A peek into the spectrum of national life reveals the incidence of distended corruption and avarice as expressed by Nigerians in high and low places, conflicts and confusion in various communities and regions, selfishness and pervasive lawlessness in the conduct of daily life as the guiding principles of human social interaction (CDHR, 2000). The Nigerian society has become a theatre for the promotion of everything vice, immoral, venal and bloodthirsty. The absence of moral leadership even with the advent of civilian and democratic administration has contributed incalculably to the polluted environment of moral depravities. Thus, the quality and quantity of social deliverables the people are expected to get from government have plummeted while the transfer of a culture that lacks morality and virtues by military politicians that had occupied the Nigerian political space for almost four decades (Imhonopi & Urim, 2011) has continued to plague the moral sanity and integrity of the polity. The state of insecurity in the country has been sustained by a regressing economy, unviable hospital facilities and health services, lack of good pipe borne water, transportation and fuel problems, unemployment and a growing sense of disenchantment that government and its representatives have not been fair to the people, thus pushing some citizens into criminal activities including violent crimes to make a living and to take out their anger on a passive society. Consequently, the state of increased lawlessness, violence and criminality, that has become characteristic of life in Nigeria, has further increased the dismalness of insecurity challenges facing the country.

Onyegbula (2000) holds that the diminishing standard of living and the deteriorating social infrastructure like roads, refineries, hospitals and the educational system have all contributed to a nation of desperate people. Moreover, the existence of a poorly-trained police force has compelled the abdication of the security of lives and property of Nigerians to ethnic militia groups and other dubious cum ill-equipped private and civil defence and vigilante associations. These security agencies and groups are part and parcel of the moral rot in the country; they show disregard for citizens' rights and promote institutionalised brutalisation, extortion and repression of the people.

Also, religious fundamentalism in the country has arisen as a result of multiple problems including lack of education of the adherents, strongly held misconceptions by religious zealots that the only way to expand their religious territories is by killing those who refuse to be proselytised by their arm-twisting tactics, misinterpretation or literal interpretation of Scriptural demands, economic deprivation which forces them to vent their anger on the state and an insensitive and irresponsible government that has failed consistently to provide the people with the basic necessities of life. Consequently, understanding insecurity in predominantly military or defence terms in Nigeria, as suggested by Lodge (1995), is short-sighted and begs the question. As some writers have observed, to address Nigeria's insecurity, there is need to examine the military, economic and human resource development dimensions (Ochoche, 1998; Galtung, 1982; Heywood, 1997).

In other words, until the military is equipped to play their constitutional roles alone, recruits qualified Nigerians and personnel to carry out its assignments without recourse to ethnic, religious or other subjective considerations and remains an apolitical organ of the state, insecurity challenges will continue to dog the peace, tranquillity and development in Nigeria. Even then, how can there be peace, when the moral guideposts that provide conscientious and healthy social relations have been put aside for filthy lucre? For instance, corruption has remained one of the major drawbacks for national growth and development in Nigeria and the war arrayed against it seems a lost one as more and more public officials and their ilk in the private sector are caught red-handed every now and again in acts of corruption. Honesty, sacrifice, patience, hard work and personal honour, including honourable family name, which were very important cultural values in Africa, have been thrown through the window. The implication is that the monies that should have been spent on the provision of basic infrastructure and social amenities or used for human resource development

purposes or even for equipping the military and other armed forces and paramilitary agencies so they can provide adequate and timely security for the Nigerian people, are "colonised" by a thieving and amoral minority, whose only qualification is access to governance and the national till. The resultant effects of these unethical practices creates resource squeeze forcing citizens to compete for the anthropogenic scarcity in place; jobs become scarce as they are few existing employment opportunities; social amenities are absent throwing society into confusion and anxiety; and politicians continue to recruit unemployed youths and vulnerable citizens, arming them with dangerous weapons to pursue and track down their political foes and to sustain a climate of repression, fear and cowardice so they can continue in their political offices "world without end". Therefore, the high and sustained rate of violent crimes such as kidnapping, armed banditry, ethno-religious agitation, religious fundamentalism, ethnic pogrom, human sacrifice for money rituals and terrorism is the response that such an invidious governance environment gets.

The painful part is that the merchants of violence have continued to wreck havoc on society, without any feeling of moral qualms and have continued to paint the land with the crimson of innocent Nigerian blood.

Regenerating the moral values and codes that should guide the actions and behaviour of citizens is an urgent task that must be done to safeguard the future of the country and raise passionate and ethical citizens committed to the welfare and betterment of Nigerians and Nigeria. According to Agrawal (1998) a true moral value is one that upholds respect for human life and personal freedom. And the sum total of the moral values of a society is its image of humanity. The ultimate value is recognised as the sanctity of human life and derivatively, as the supreme worth of the individual person, or as the value of human life.

Arising from the non-consequentialist or deontological approach, human rights approach and virtue ethics approach, there is need to regenerate the moral values in the country and even codify these so as to guide the conduct and social relations of Nigerians.

These values should be built on the following principles:

1) Every Nigerian deserves to be treated with dignity and rights;

2) No Nigerian should be treated differently because of his ethnic origin, colour, sex, language, religion, political affiliation, property, birth or other status;

3) Every Nigerian deserves to enjoy right to life, liberty and security of person anywhere in the country;

4) Every Nigerian should be saved from undeserved torture and inhuman treatment anywhere in the country;

5) Nigerians should be protected against arbitrary interference with their privacy, family, home, correspondence, honour or reputation;

6) Every Nigerian is to enjoy freedom of thought and conscience, choice of religion and freedom to teach, practise and worship;

7) Nigerians deserve to enjoy freedom of opinion and expression and right to seek, receive and impart information through any media;

8) Government should be responsible for the welfare of the citizens and should be committed to acts that would eliminate extreme poverty, hunger and deprivation;

9) Moral leadership undergirded by competence and accountability to the people should form the major guiding criteria for the selection of leaders into position of higher responsibility;

10) Nigerians should recognise that they have duties to their community and are subject to laws which respect general welfare and the rights and freedoms of others; and others.

VII. RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONCLUSION

The insecurity challenge in Nigeria has become a formidable challenge for the Nigerian government and peoples. The governance challenges facing the polity have trickled into the society, resulting in moral decadence. The growing dissatisfaction, discomfort and distress within the larger society coupled with the unabating official corruption, high unemployment rate, economic crisis, pauperisation of the masses, decaying infrastructure and a futile national integration project have heated up the socio-political environment. Consequently, armed conflicts, terrorism, ethno-religious holocausts, kidnapping, political assassination and other violent crimes have become the leitmotif of Nigerian social relations. The government has made efforts to contain the insecurity inferno raging in many spots in the country, but until the moral foundation on which the Nigerian state is fulcrumed is regenerated, Nigeria may be walking the precipice.

This paper argues for the need to revive and reinforce moral values and virtue ethics in the country and that the country should go a step further by codifying these values/principles so that Nigerians, small and old, can begin to imbibe these virtues to guide their conduct, behaviour and social relations with others. First of all, government carries a moral burden to lead by example. Providing moral leadership that eschews evil, corruption, vices, inequity, injustice and wickedness will compel the people to model the character of their leaders and vice versa. In addition, the democratic system in place must begin to deliver the needed social goods so as to improve the standard of living of Nigerians and deliver many citizens from the state of absolute poverty to which they have been

subjected for a long while. Third, there is need to identify the moral values and ethical virtues that should guide the conduct and behaviour of Nigerians. These values should be built on the respect for human life, the regard for human dignity and the right to life, liberty and security of the people; the freedom of worship, religion, thought and conscience; and the freedom of opinion. Fourth, there should be a codification of the moral values and virtues the government and Nigerian peoples subscribe to for the good of the larger society. Fifth, government should plug all the holes through which scarce resources are been siphoned so as to free resources for national development and equipping of the military to fulfil its functions. Lastly, there is need for a national conversation or dialogue where Nigerians can release their pent-up anger and frustration against the state and fashion out the blueprint for the engagement of all the component units that make up Nigeria.

Paying lip-service to the matters of insecurity in Nigeria by government and its representatives is sitting on a time-bomb that may soon explode. Sustaining personal or regime security will not secure government or its representatives if this challenge is not nipped in the bud. The governance process must be erected on the pillars of moral values and virtues and the Nigerian people must be led by a moral leadership that will strive to secure the commitment and support of all citizens to make the Nigerian project a true success.

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