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## THE IMPORTANCE OF PHILOSOPHY IN RESOLVING NIGERIA'S SECURITY ISSUES

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**Abstract.** *The significance of security cannot be overstated, as it is required for human stability or peaceful coexistence. Security entails the protection of nations, communities, as well as individuals against dangerous attacks. The study looked at disturbing security issues in Nigeria, such as the terror activities of Boko Haram, banditry, and militancy. The study exposes that it is the failure of the government to attend to fundamental issues that has led to the aforementioned issues. The study looked at the current state of security in Nigeria and thus examined the importance of philosophy to achieving a peaceful and secure society. The method of content analysis was adopted and, consequently, reveals that philosophy has an essential role to play in resolving the insecurity issues in Nigeria. Furthermore, the study extracted data from secondary sources such as journals, text, and internet sources. The study also comprehensively looked at the concept of security and further exposes that philosophy enables us to understand the obligations and duties of citizens to the government and other members of society, as well as the obligations and duties of the government to the people. Accordingly, we suggest the application of philosophy as a tool to resolve security issues in Nigeria. Consequently, we conclude that philosophy can play an essential role in resolving security issues in Nigeria.*

**Keywords:** *Security, philosophy, Boko Haram, banditry, militancy and ethics.*

### Introduction

The basic function of security as a political notion is to ensure national and international peace. Security, as a philosophical term, is an old human ideal to which people and society have aspired for millennia. As a result, the concept of security takes on philosophical and ethical significance. Security is a major worry for everyone since when there is insecurity, it quickly becomes a social issue with no bounds (Ugwu and Abah, 2020).

Security terminology is ambiguous. The ambiguity of the term "security" stems from its etymological origins, as well as the profusion of contemporary conceptions of what it means to be secure. Philosophical involvement with security has the ability to clarify the concept's structure, substance, hidden value commitments, and (possible) incoherence with other disciplines. Explanatory definitions of security provide scholars with a benchmark against which to evaluate

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descriptive assertions about the presence or absence of security and construct explanatory links between security and other notions (such as power, domination, and justice). Yet, for the most part, this promise has remained unfulfilled. Despite the fact that security appears to be at the heart of many moral and political issues, current philosophers have rarely given it serious consideration.

The comprehension of philosophy's four main branches is important in the current exercise of defining its relationship with the idea of security in terms that are understandable to scholars outside the discipline of philosophy. Epistemology, ethics (or moral philosophy), logic, and metaphysics are the four disciplines. According to Singer (2002), epistemology is a field of philosophy concerned with determining the nature, basis, and extent of knowledge. It delves into the different types of knowledge, the nature of truth, and the connections between knowledge and belief. According to Lillie (1948), ethics is the normative science of human behavior in societies—a science that evaluates this behavior as right or wrong, good or evil, or in some other sense. According to Badru (2009), logic can be characterized as a normative science of reasoning as a discipline of philosophy. It is normative in the sense that it establishes standards of accuracy for correct thinking. It is scientific because it is carefully studied and highlights flaws that may limit man's ability to reason correctly. According to Singer (2002), metaphysics is the study of reality's and existence's underlying natures, as well as the essences of things.

Furthermore, according to Blackburn (2005), the term "metaphysics" is now used to refer to any inquiry that raises concerns about reality that are beyond or beyond the scope of scientific inquiry. Ontology and cosmology make up metaphysics. The former is a philosophical investigation into the nature of being, or what is or exists, while the latter is an investigation into the whole of the cosmos. The former is extremely important to the current research.

Nigeria is not the only country affected by insecurity. It is a problem for a number of countries around the world. It obstructs society's socioeconomic development. Terrorism, banditry, and militancy are to be investigated critically in this work. It also tries to find a solution to the issues. The study aims at looking at the importance of philosophy in resolving Nigeria's security issues. The study employed the method of content analysis to get a better understanding of the issue of security from a philosophical underpinning. Consequently, the work is extracted from secondary sources. The secondary sources include journals, text, and internet sources.

## **The Concept of Security**

The practice of assuaging any form of threat to individuals and their valuables is referred to as security. This is why, according to Buzan, security is about a nation's ability to sustain independent identity and functional integrity in the face of change that they see as hostile, while their bottom line is survival (Bodunde et al., 2014). According to the preceding, security is defined as the feeling of being safe from harm, fear, worry, oppression, danger, and poverty, as well as the defense, protection, and preservation of key values and threats to those values.

According to William (2008), security is most usually connected with the reduction of threats to treasured values, particularly those dangers that endanger the life of a specific reference object. In line with the foregoing, Imobighe claims that security refers to a nation's ability to safeguard and develop itself, promote its treasured values and legitimate interests, and improve the well-being

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of its people from danger or threats. Internal security can thus be defined as the freedom from or absence of tendencies that threaten a country's internal cohesion and corporate existence, as well as its ability to maintain vital institutions for the promotion of its core values, socio-political and economic goals, and to meet the legitimate aspirations of its citizens (Ogaba, 2010). As a result, security, whether classical, state-centric, traditionalist or non-traditionalist, is all about preventing the loss or damage of assets, including living and non-living resources.

On the subject of security, there are two basic schools of thought: traditional and non-traditional. The traditional school of thought favors maintaining the Cold War security concept. Security in this sense is defined by this school of thought as safety against danger and external attack or infiltration. The traditional security paradigm is a realist security model with the state as the referent object (Abolurin, 2010). It correlates security with peace and conflict prevention by military methods, such as deterrence policies, non-offensive defense, and so on.

This is why Walt (1991), defines security as the study of military forces' threats, uses, and control. It looks at the circumstances that make the use of force more likely, how the use of force impacts individuals, nations, and societies, and the policies that states adopt to avoid or engage in conflict. Because this school of thought is so closely linked to the military, Barry Buzan sees security as undeveloped and in need of rehabilitation. According to Nwolise, the Cold War period gave conventional security theories a high level of dominance, to the point where security is based on the belief that only a military system can effectively deter attack and the threat of force (Nwolise, 2008). This aligns with Ken Boo's assertion that "one of the hallmarks of the new thinking" is that "political accommodation should be a primary and consistent goal of security strategy." Throughout the Cold War, the harmful impact of virtually solely associating security with the military was clear. This approach is known as strategic reductionism, which entails viewing security through a technical and mechanistic military lens, as seen by a fixation on military balance and the application of cutting-edge technology (Nwolise, 2008).

The non-traditional school of thought on security is the second school of thought. The goal of this school is to broaden and extend the definition of security. Other challenges, such as the environment and political, economic, and social threats, it is argued, risk the lives and property of individuals rather than the state's survival. It does imply that a primarily military definition overlooks the fact that the biggest threat to state survival may be environmental, health, political, social, and economic rather than military. As Sola Ogunsanwo properly points out, today's security notions and beliefs are all-encompassing. Security entails more than just military protection or protection from external threats. Many people in poor countries regard security as the most basic level of the struggle for survival. As a result, the non-military dimension of security should be included in an integrated African Security Assessment. From now on, the term "security" should be used in a broader sense to include economic, social, environmental, and food security, as well as equality of life security and technical security (Ochoche, 1997).

However, security in this context refers to human emancipation. It means that people/citizens must be free of the problems, difficulties, and restraints that may hinder them from doing what they want freely, such as epidemics, poverty, oppression, inadequate education, and crises. Politics, environmental difficulties, economic and demographic issues, and other non-military issues are all posing severe dangers to people's security today. Barry Buzan provides a theoretical perspective

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on how to comprehend the concept of security and identifies three levels of analysis: individual, national, and international. He believes that individual security, also known as personal security by other researchers, refers to the values that people desire to protect, such as life, health, status, independence, and prosperity (Buzan, 1991). Individuals strive to protect themselves from a variety of risks, including what is known as "social security." This encompasses bodily harm, economic harm, and violations of human rights. Pain, damage, death, seizure, and destruction of property are examples of these, as are inaccessibility to labor or resources for human subsistence, injustice, unjust imprisonment, denial of normal civil liberties, and threats to human dignity. National and international levels of security, the other two layers of Buzan's analysis, are discussed as national security and international security, respectively.

### **Boko Haram**

Boko Haram, which means "Western education is forbidden in Hausa" etymologically, was founded in 2002. The creation of Boko Haram was the consequence of a dispute between the conventional Islamic teachings of Sheikeh Adam at the Mahammadu Ndimi Mosque in Maiduguri, Borno State in Nigeria's north-east, and the militant exposition of the holy Quran by Mohammed Yusuf, his follower and pupil. For his rebellious tendencies, Yusuf was dismissed from the mosque. For example, he had a vision in his mind of building a new system in which people who are considered to be impoverished would inherit the earth. Yusuf did not lose up on his dream after being expelled from the mosque, and he went on to build his own mosque shortly afterward. When Yusuf finished erecting his mosque in Nigeria's north-eastern region, he began recruiting young boys at the primary and secondary levels. His objective was to first indoctrinate them with his own Islamic worldview, causing them to reject earlier ideas about western education, which he saw as a sin, earning them the moniker "Boko Haram." Several experts have pointed out that the formation of groups like Boko Haram is a result of elite corruption, which has had a negative impact on citizens in that region (North East), and hence poverty is the norm (Big-Alabo and Big-Alabo, 2020).

As a result of the life paradox created by western education and society, looking at the aforementioned factors, one could argue that the formation of the Boko Haram group was a key reason for the majority of people living in poverty and abject poverty, while the few who are essentially the ruling class are waxing rich with the nation's resources. Yusuf's major goal was to Islamize Nigeria, therefore the first attack on the Nigerian government occurred in 2009, and a bounty was placed on Yusuf, which resulted in his death the following year. The leadership was thus passed on to Abubakar Shekau, who quickly declared himself in a widely circulated videotape. The group's goal is to Islamize the country and impose Sharia law across the board, and it has sought to do so by kidnappings, suicide attacks, and bombings of religious and government facilities that harm a significant number of people at the same time. The assassination of the gang's head enraged the group, resulting to violent attacks against the Nigerian Police Force as well as innocent bystanders. Boko Haram has evolved into a highly dangerous and destructive organization. However, over 20,000 people have died and millions have been displaced, mostly in Nigeria's north-eastern region (Idahosa, 2015). Boko Haram fighters bombed, demolished, and

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killed numerous civilians, burned villages, and kidnapped many people, including children, women, and adults, according to Amnesty International. Nigeria had the greatest substantial increase in terrorist killings ever recorded by any country, according to the Global Terrorism Index 2015 report, from 1595 in 2013 to 6118 in 2014. The group was declared the most dangerous terrorist group in the world that year as a result of this data, as well as the attack on the police force headquarters in Abuja and the United Nations offices in Abuja. The kidnapping of almost 300 schoolgirls from Chibok in Bornu State was one of Boko Haram's bloodiest atrocities, and it drew international attention of the world and also international response. The Nigerian military claimed at one point that they had cited the girls' position, but they were hesitant to go for their rescue because doing so might result in the deaths of some or all of the girls. When they controlled so many local administrations in the north-eastern section of the country and declared those territories an Islamic caliphate, their operations took off. Boko Haram's activities also reveal that they have been able to infiltrate the government, military, and the general public, allowing them to carry out successful terror attacks. This terrorist gang has killed so many people and caused so much harm to the civilian population in 2019 and 2020. In fact, between the end of 2019 and the beginning of 2020, there were a series of attacks on the military that resulted in the deaths of over 100 military people. Despite all of the sabotage, the struggle against Boko Haram has so far yielded some victories (Big-Alabo & Big-Alabo, 2020).

## **Banditry**

Banditry has reached alarming proportions in Nigeria, posing a severe security threat not only to the Northwest but to the entire country. The extent to which bandits operate in Nigeria's northwest has resulted in a wave of kidnappings, maimings, deaths, population displacements, cattle losses, and general disruption of socio-economic activities, as well as an atmosphere of uncertainty, which has become concerning to both the government and the citizenry.

It is important to realize that banditry is not new in Nigeria. According to anecdotal and scholarly reports, the phenomena existed before Nigeria became a governmental state. According to Jaafar (2018), there were documented incidents of banditry in colonial Nigeria as early as the 1930s. In order to put this assertion into historical context, Jaafar explains that wayfarers and merchants traveling over our local commercial corridors in those days were frequently threatened and endangered by nondescript bandits. Armed robbers and criminals were known to prey on items transported by donkeys, camels, and ox carts. Those robbers on our trade routes would take the merchandise by force and flee into the bush. So that's only one facet of the problem. In other cases, bandits would raid farming communities and villages with the goal of committing heinous murders and wilful destruction of property. The bandits would destroy nearly everything in their path during such raids, including jewelry, farm products, and so on. This subculture existed long before the arrival of colonialists in northern Nigeria (Jaafar, 2018).

According to The Humanitarian (2018), banditry has a long history in northern Nigeria. The first reported incident occurred in 1901, when a 12,000-strong camel caravan transporting various grains was ambushed, killing 210 merchants somewhere between western Hausaland and the Niger border. Although banditry is as old as Nigeria, it has grown in scope and complexity over time,

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progressing from a simple kind of criminality to a more intricate and complicated pattern of criminality.

In the framework of Nigeria's present security dialectics, the modern metamorphosis of banditry can be witnessed. As a result, criminal gangs, generally composed of young people from farming and herding communities and/or local bandits, exploit the escalating instability, fear, and cyclical attacks to plunder villages, perform highway robberies, and rustle cattle for personal gain. Both farming and pastoral communities are affected by this lawlessness (Bagu and Smith, 2017; Okoli & Ugwu, 2019).

### **Militancy**

Militancy also refers to the actions or attitudes of persons who are actively involved in attempting to bring about political change, frequently in methods that others find objectionable (BBC English Dictionary, 1972). Since the Niger Delta Militants began operations almost a decade ago, they have shown a willingness to use force or violence to achieve their goals. Oil was discovered for the first time in 1958 near Oloibiri, in what is now the state of Bayelsa. In the years afterwards, oil and gas production in the Niger Delta has provided the Nigerian government with a significant portion of its revenue. During this time, successive dictatorships, influenced by corporate politics, enacted laws that effectively placed multinational oil companies like Chevron, Royal Dutch Shells, and ExxonMobil in control of Nigeria's oil resources.

Surprisingly, the Niger Delta region, where oil is used to develop other regions of the country, has remained the least developed. The goose who laid the golden egg was apparently thrown to the wild wolves. The residents of the Niger Delta have endured environmental degradation as a result of the oil industry's unrestrained pollution. As a result of environmental contamination and lax rules, entire generations have been denied the means of subsistence. The people of the Niger Delta, who are largely fisherman, saw their catches diminish on a daily basis owing to the effects of oil on aquatic life. Oil revenues were rarely seen or felt by those who were affected by its impacts (Essoh, 2018).

Ken Saro Wiwa spearheaded a nonviolent struggle against environmental deterioration in Ogoni territory and other parts of the Niger Delta as president of the Movement for the Survival of Ogoni People (MOSOP). In 1995, he and eight others were wrongly convicted of masterminding violence and murdered by General Sani Abacha's military regime, an act that sparked international outrage and earned Nigeria a three-year ban from the Commonwealth of Nations. Following in the footsteps of Saro-Wiwa, Niger Delta militants opted to use violence as a form of opposition to what they saw as unfair and unjust treatment of their people, after witnessing the governments' reaction to nonviolent campaigning (Essoh, 2018).

The Niger Delta People's Volunteer Force and the Movement for the Emancipation of the Niger Delta (MEND) were among the organizations that prosecuted the Niger Delta Militancy (NDPVF). These gangs kidnapped and occasionally killed oil workers, destroyed oil pipelines and installations, and engaged in guerilla warfare against the Nigerian government at the height of the insurgency. Militancy in the Niger Delta Region has thus become a vicious cycle, wreaking havoc on the region's mineral riches and earnings (Essoh, 2018).

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## Philosophy and Security

In general, it's worth noting that the four areas of philosophy all focus on various elements that help people organize their lives and thrive in society. Epistemology is concerned with human knowledge, ethics with human behavior, logic with the skill of proper reasoning, often known as deep or critical thinking, and metaphysics with the systematic attempt to assist human beings in recognizing and distinguishing reality (what is) from mere appearance (what appears to be, but is not).

In this study, the four branches of philosophy contribute in different ways to our specific understandings of different dimensions and levels of analysis of the concept of security, on the one hand, and our general understanding of what security and securitization are about in general, as well as the best practices for pursuing it in society, on the other. The nature of security and securitization in any given context is revealed by metaphysics; epistemology focuses on the knowledge and information systems that underpin security; logic deals with critical analysis and deep thinking relevant to proper security analysis, policy decisions, and implementation; and ethics is concerned with the right behavioural disposition to duty that is expected of people. However, it should be understood that any society's survival and growth depend on its ability to maintain security. Security entails defending individuals, communities, and nations from threats and attacks. Security is so crucial that every government devotes a significant portion of its budget to ensuring it.

## Philosophy's Importance in Resolving Nigeria's Security Issues

Individuals with a good understanding of philosophy can fit well into interpersonal, inter-ethnic, and international relationships (Abakare and Okeke, 2016). According to Salawu (2010), charges and allegations of neglect, oppression, dominance, exploitation, victimization, discrimination, marginalization, nepotism, and bigotry are a key source of ethnic disputes. For example, in the case of militancy in the Niger Delta, which began as a result of the government's failure to respond to the needs of the region's people, peaceful protests failed and resulted in the execution of the vanguards of such movements against neglect, marginalization, and nepotism. The emergence of militancy was because the peaceful protests failed, and hence the need to use force and violence to obtain their demands. Abakare and Okeke (2016) demonstrate that knowledge of philosophy leads to new approaches to problems. Philosophy sharpens the mind and frees it from preconceptions. As a result of this, individuals are able to question cultures and customs that contradict reason. Such practices that are contrary to reason are therefore rejected or modified (Abakare and Okeke, 2016).

Ethics is a field of philosophy that establishes guidelines for human conduct. It assists us in distinguishing between acceptable and unacceptable behavior. It aids in the development of good character and the avoidance of undesirable habits. For instance, as we have stated, many experts have seen the emanation of groups like Boko Haram as a result of elite corruption. This corruption, which is a result of moral bankruptcy, has further led to poverty and hunger. We are of the view

that ethical knowledge will aid politicians in avoiding rancour and hatred in politics. It instills in political leaders a sense of civic duty and accountability. This enables them to look out for the interests of the people and make judgments that will benefit society's growth and development. It will also assist us in having law-abiding individuals who respect legitimate authority (Adekiitan & Christiana, 2021). Philosophy teaches us about citizens' responsibilities to the government and other members of society, such as paying taxes, obeying the law, community involvement, voting, etc., as well as the government's responsibilities and duties to the people, such as provision of security, welfare of citizens, provision of social amenities, etc., which are necessities for civil order and peace. The Nigerian government, which ought to be responsible for making provisions for all of these, has failed to do so. Hence, this has led to the emergence of security issues such as militancy in the Niger Delta, Boko Haram in the northern part of the country, and pieces of banditry everywhere in the country. Philosophical theories also promote fairness, justice, equality, freedom, and the preservation of human rights, and if the government charged with providing all of these fails to do so, citizens have every reason to revolt, resulting in insecurity. Undoubtedly, these values contribute to societal peace and security.

## Conclusion

Security, as it is, is a fundamental necessity to achieving civil peace. The government is expected to provide this fundamental necessity or face operating in an unsafe environment where insecurity will be the order of the day. We comprehensively looked at security issues such as the terror activities of Boko Haram, banditry, and militancy. We are of the view that education as a tool is used to reshape man's total being. This work shows the essence of philosophy and its role in resolving matters pertaining to insecurity in Nigeria. Finally, the study showed the traditional branches of philosophy and the importance of each branch to achieving or resolving security issues. Accordingly, we suggest the application of philosophy as a tool to resolve security issues in Nigeria. Consequently, we conclude that philosophy can play an essential role in resolving security issues in Nigeria.

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