

4

Rethinking Traditional Security in Africa: The Reconstruction of the Cosmological Foundations of Security

**Dapo Adelugba, Philip Ogo Ujomu
and Felix Amanor-Boadu**

Beyond Traditionalism and Mysticism: Recreating an Idea of Security from an African Past

The problems of national security in this modern era can be seen mainly in the inability of the various governments and the state agencies consistently and institutionally to guarantee the adequate protection, peace and well-being of their citizens. The weaknesses of existing strategies for overcoming this problem may have limited the potential of the post-colonial state for institutional efficiency. This situation necessitates an interrogation of the traditional and historical trajectories of the security problematic as viable epistemological conditions for national integration and human reconciliation. A survey of the history of the discourse will show the perennial tracks of security activities and designs. We can agree with Latham who says that 'security is an object of every group organization if security is understood only in its elemental sense of the survival of the group itself in order to carry forward its mission' (Latham 1956: 236). But what then happens when security is construed in a wider sense that embraces cosmology, progress and so on? The need to broaden the interpretative capacity of thematic concerns and methodological convergence in security theorising is also appreciated by Nielsen who has rightly put it that we must be interested not in mere survival but also the quality or character of that survival (Nielsen 1973: 24). This study, which is a part of the wider research on the humanities as a contributor to national security, is necessary in view of the hitherto restrictive analysis of the nature of national security and the unexplored character of the critical, con-

ceptual and empirical interface between the ethical and aesthetic dimensions as key contributors to national survival and integration. The idea of security in Africa can be reviewed in terms of the ontology, cosmogony and especially, the cosmology of the people.

In Africa, the interest in security and development arises out of the reality of crisis due to the pervasive presence and influence of a historic culture affected by a foreign and dominating tradition or culture. To start with, tradition is the matter that is handed down and transmitted from one generation to the next generation. According to Goulet (1987: 167), 'the term tradition suggests teaching and habits dating back to a distant past. But in order to survive traditions must prove themselves useful to each new generation'. Through a tradition, I can retain an identity in the life and actions of my space and community and thus adopt a life plan at the personal and social levels. Practices have histories. Any structure or institution that bears tradition is constituted by a continuous argument as to what that thing is as opposed to what it ought to be.

The abandonment of a tradition can arise from two factors: internal criticism or external inducement. What aspect of African tradition constructed as knowledge is suitable for survival and security? In Africa, the interest in security and its development arises out of the reality of crisis in the social and cultural environment. Nwala (1985: 27-30) holds that 'in traditional society the universe is basically structured into two main inter-related parts, there are two realms of existence the spiritual world or supernatural order, the human world or visible order'. This implies that the African conception of security is operational at two levels, the temporal and the transcendental realms.

On the nexus between the transcendent and the temporal in the African idea of the cosmos, Ejizu (1987: 6) holds that 'traditional cosmology postulates a fundamental moral vision as it charts the place of man in the universe. Man depends on the spiritual beings for his life, his welfare. Man's moral behaviour and cordial relationship with the spirits and fellow humans are crucial in the maintenance of order in the universe'. To maintain the cosmic order and harmony of forces in the universe and thence the security of the categories of existence, the African man must keep and abide by the culture of his people. Thus, there is an interface between culture and security. According to Ezekwugo (1991: 4-5) 'culture is defined as a type of civilisation which a people have practised over time. *Omenana* refers to the culture of a people. Thus *omenana* is an instrument for attaining a balance of the spiritual and material forces'.

The Principles of Offensive and Defensive Security

African security has been a matter of both offensive and defensive security. War was the chief means of guaranteeing security and indeed procuring vast human and material goods on a rapid and cheap basis. The internecine and devastating

nature of these inter-communal wars in Africa also paved the way for entire societies to devise defensive strategies where offensive action had failed. Consequently, many peoples or communities resorted to using either alliances or the natural forces of nature for self-preservation. Thus many tribes employed indigenous security strategies such as living in valleys, on mountains, on islands and other inaccessible geo-territories or regions. Also tribes sought to place formidable fortifications or obstacles such as gorges, waterfalls, canyons, mountains, rocks, rivers, etc., between themselves and their aggressors.

Physicalism in African Traditional Security of the Northern and Southern Kingdoms

Reports on the past of Africa and the idea of security show that security was seen mainly as the effectiveness, perseverance and projection of the power and wealth of the emperor or monarch, his chiefs and his society. Large cities were annexed or constructed. Leaders developed large institutional armies by themselves or went into military alliances for mutual defence. The reality of the northern kingdoms that cherished the visions and values of the warrior kingship and monarchical sovereignty ensured that security would be construed in essentially physical terms, in order to tally with their geo-location on large expanses of land – desert and savanna. According to Osae and Nwabara (1968: 14), ‘in the general state of defencelessness created largely by the open nature of the land, kingdoms rose and fell, often quite quickly’. Thus in the northern kingdoms, wealth, food, protection and comfort depended on the principles of mutual pacification and the annihilation of the warring tribes. With special reference to ancient Egypt, Davidson (1991: 157) writes that ‘in Pharaonic history, mighty rulers over the Egyptian empire made themselves into gods’. This style was designed to consolidate spiritual and temporal authority. According to Greaves, Zaller, Cannistraro and Murphey (1997: 24), ‘a strong pharaoh was both the symbol of and the principal reason for national unity; some of Egypt’s earliest pharaohs had pyramids constructed to serve as their tombs and as sites of worship and devotion’. The character and operations of the fundamental principle of security as embodied in the northern kingdoms has been effectively captured by Fagan (1998: 406) who states that ‘at the centre of the state lay the concept of a great king, a terrestrial ruler, who symbolized the triumph of order over universal chaos’. This image is representative of an almost omniscient being retaining the powers to make literally all things possible, the power of life and death, the Leviathan.

On the other hand, in the case of the southern kingdoms their aura of self-sufficiency occasioned by their relative geo-cultural isolation and existence in the economically productive hinterlands of the coast ensured reasonable and relative internal security, internal stability and comfort. These kingdoms existed in ‘a belt of tropical rain forest. The principal example was Benin. By about 1700 the *oba*

(king) was no longer a warrior-king but a spiritual leader who typically remained secluded in his palace and left government to the chiefs. When the Portuguese first saw Benin in 1485, the capital Benin city was a walled town 25 miles in circumference' (Greaves, Zaller, Cannistraro and Murphey 1997a: 554). The clear commitment of the southern kingdoms to the principle of ceremonial kingship, their relative wealth at least in natural and mineral resources, came together to define an alternative vision for the southern societies. Also, their isolation ensured some level of difficulty in terms of access to these city-states of sub-Saharan Africa. The overall effect was to diminish the threats to these societies. But it is not clear whether they were therefore less vulnerable. The fact is that the immanent reality of dense jungles, diseases, and dangerous creatures all served to provide security for the peoples of the southern kingdoms of Africa and to make them vulnerable to these dangers.

Security in the traditional African sense was therefore defined according to the principles of internal social actions using the rules of religion, divination, cults and age grades and so on. The special connection between African religion and African security can be seen more clearly in the view of some scholars. For example, according to Davidson (1977: 297-298), religion 'was far more than a mere comfort in these traditional structures, based as they were on ancestral charters fashioned by the imperatives of daily life, and fastened by a corresponding moral order. When the priest interpreted the message he gave to the king, however picturesque and peculiar his methods may be, the effective task of this priest was to safeguard community welfare and survival. Seen in this way, "religion" stands for an apprehension of reality across the whole field of life. Out of it there emerged what may reasonably be called a science of social control'.

In some other cases, there were cultural organs of security such as the cult of warriors, the youth and age grade formations, joint community action, the cult of masquerades, etc. Let us note that in the past the cult of masquerades was an instrument of both temporal and supernatural justice. It was capable of enforcing sanctions. We recall the operations of the masquerades that destroyed Okonkwo's kindred and banished him to exile in that eternally memorable work of literature, *Things Fall Apart* by Chinua Achebe. The power of the masquerade depended on the cult of secrecy, unyielding militancy and the generation of fear. According to Aremu (1995: 7-9), the '*egungun* cult was very important in the life of the Yoruba people. The coming of the *egungun* masquerade is capable of removing any evil that lingers around the various communities. The spiritual powers inherent in *egungun* and other deities are approached according to the needs of an individual. *Eegungun* is usually used for social control'. In that period, the ability of a society to enjoy security depended on the degree to which it was able to execute the incapacitation and annexation of potential threats or enemies.

The Dualism of Magical Realism and Mysticism in African Traditional Security

At another important level, security in the traditional African context was highly dependent on magical and supernatural support. The heavy dependence on mysticism and metaphysicalism was seen in the strong belief in magical powers and forces. These supernaturalistic beliefs are still held by many Africans in the modern day.

Many reports have been given about outlandish forms of life and action in the quest for security in traditional Africa. There have been claims of individuals and even entire families or tribes possessing powers that made them immune to a wide range of entities or forces in nature. Some people are said to have powers or capabilities that protect them from the activities of dangerous creatures - snakes, lions, spiders, wasps, bees, scorpions, mosquitoes, etc. Others are said to have powers that allow them to use these dangerous animals as vectors to protect themselves or harm their aggressors. There are reports in some places that certain herbs, ingredients and incantations are capable of incapacitating this class of entities. There are reports in other places that some individuals are immune to knife cuts, gunshots, and other forms of physical attack from men or animals. Some reports talk about the capacity of humans to evade capture or harm by disappearing from sight and confounding their assailants. There have been reports of native hunters possessing an extraordinary capacity to use incantations to attain greater human strength or speed, project harmful substances, stem blood flow, unlock fetters or traps, expel foreign bodies such as bullets and mend broken limbs. In relation to the task of security, Olaoba (1997: 26) adds that supernatural means that are beyond human comprehension can be employed in disputes and defence. These are 'the magical display of power, inflicting harm through charms, death resulting from witchcraft and sorcery, sending thunder to kill people, and putting bad medicine in public places which might result in the wide spread of plagues and epidemic in society'. Mbiti (1969: 197-198) reinforces this idea by insisting that 'there is mystical power which causes people to walk on fire, lie on thorns or nails, send curses or harm, to spit on snakes and cause them to die'. Also covenants were another means of guaranteeing security in the African traditional society. According to Abogunrin (1996: 3), a 'covenant is a solemn agreement made binding by rituals and oaths. Covenant is known as *imule*. Covenants are major means of maintaining cohesion, peace and political stability, not only within the societies, but also with their neighbours'.

There were of course other processes and powers that could be used to assure personal and social security in traditional Africa. According to Olomola (1991: 50-51), '*alile* is a common terminology for the traditional security system consisting of semiotic tags and charms used for the protection of places or things by owners or other vested interests. These charms are believed to possess

certain magical powers capable of causing misfortune and disaster to intruders'. However, not all the powers or charms were used for harming or deterring physical or supernatural evil. Some of the magical powers could be put to positive use. As Olomola (1991: 50-51) writes, we have '*awure*, an amulet or a potion credited with power to bring good fortune. *Awure* is self applied for personal good luck in business and other transactions'. Thus security in the African traditional sense could be seen from a positive view and a negative view. The powers harnessed and unleashed by agencies of proactive security were instruments for further enhancing one's chances for personal and social preservation and well-being. In essence, it was a means of fortifying the potential prospects and actual gains attained in human life. The powers embedded in the instrument of negative security were significantly prohibitive and obstructive. They were meant to reclaim security and justice where these had been vitiated or to prevent their loss in the first instance.

Prophetic Powers in African Traditional Security

In the African life worlds, people employed certain futuristic or spiritual extrapolation as means of attaining security. Hence, there was a strong tendency towards consulting oracles, soothsayers, diviners, etc. One major security strategy of the African worlds was the idea of preemptive security through the use of extraordinary powers of divination to see and alter the future, to repel attacks, human or spiritual, from affecting the two levels of the operations of the African consciousness - physical and supernatural. According to Mbiti (1969: 198), 'there is power that enables experts to see into secrets, hidden information or the future, or to detect thieves and other culprits'. On the role of prophecy as a security device, Olaoba (1997: 27) informs us that 'consultation with *ifa* oracle is considered one of the significant means of reaching the unknown realm. *Ifa* is the god of wisdom who has the ability of discernment and fortune-telling'. Also, in the African life worlds, people employed the services of gods and deities to ensure their personal and social security. The appeal to supernatural forces was one of the key ways of achieving security. According to Olaoba (1997: 30), the action of *Yemowo*, a deity against evildoers or wicked people, is akin to that of the goddess of *Aiyelala*. The victims of the goddess were wicked people who usually concealed their acts of wickedness from human beings.

Critique of the Strategies of Traditional Security

According to theoreticians on the African traditional worlds and experiences, there are certain distinctive features of African life. We need to know what these are, before going on to clarify their effects on the security problematic. Oladipo (1996: 47) in his analysis of a foremost African philosopher - Kwasi Wiredu - points out that 'a limitation of traditional culture which Wiredu is unsparing in

pointing out is its authoritarian orientation manifested in the unquestioning obedience by people to the authorities of elders. Because traditional society was essentially communitarian not much room could be made for deviant ideas or social practices. Little premium was placed on intellectual qualities such as curiosity or independence of thought'. This is how the issues of authoritarianism and anachronism arise. Moreover, the idea of supernaturalism is tied to what Sogolo (1993: 57) refers to as 'the recognition on the part of man of some higher unseen power as having control over his destiny'. Such a disposition to life reinforces the critical belief that the security of the person and society emanates from both the transcendental and the temporal realms of life.

It is therefore clear that the concept and context of cultural particularities and the possibility of insecurity arising out of them, are important issues for national and human security construed as individual or collective survival or well-being and progress (Ujomu 2001: 176). More specifically, African traditionalism in relation to security is defeated by supernaturalism or the belief in non-physical causes of physical things, which paves the way for primary and secondary causality to subsist. The problem is that supernaturalism ensured a kind of transcendentalism that in turn occasioned an esotericism. Taken together, these features ensured the dangerous closure of the epistemic and moral spaces to free enquiry and the dissemination of knowledge. Knowledge seemed to be a hidden affair, to be dispensed as a favour or to be used as an instrument of oppression of opponents and rivals. Let us recall the magical and political processes used for identifying witches and wizards as put to us in the popular adventure novel *King Solomon's Mines*. Some of the activities enumerated in that story were also significantly true of other African societies.

Supernaturalism, esotericism and the closure and lack of control that went with them were significantly tied to the issue of a monopoly of knowledge. The outcome of the monopoly of certain knowledge on security inadvertently paved the way for authoritarianism or the high-handedness associated with unregulated power and exclusivist control of knowledge. As Dewey (1977: 153) has rightly noted, 'absence of arts of regulation diverted the search for security into irrelevant modes of practices'. Specifically, authoritarianism in the context of cultural security had other far-reaching repercussions. Mainly, it paved the way for the loss of human and moral support in relation to the quest for security. It also paved the way for the closure of outlets of information and the eventual consequence of betrayal and alienation of the retainer of knowledge. With authoritarianism in place, it was difficult to seek alternatives or to purify existing options in knowledge, life and security. The authoritarian entrenchment of dogmatism, patrimonialism and hegemony paved the way for the demise of creativity, ability, vision and wider participation of persons in the security strategy of African traditionalism.

Thus the efficacy of traditionalist security seemed to rely on the covert character of the specific capability. Another reason for this secrecy could have been the need to avoid the neutralisation of a potent power or its duplication. Magical instruments of security were seen as things to be protected, given the truism that whatever has a defined principle of operation can be effectively nullified. Thus security strategies in traditional Africa were designed to work in combination to ensure better potency and effectiveness. Or the security strategy would be designed alongside its neutraliser or antidote. The use of antidotes was common in African traditional security: to maintain continual control over the power or instrument; to be able to abolish the power when necessary; or secretly to counteract any hostile powers that may have been unleashed with or without one's knowledge. This esotericism in the metaphysical control of security could lead to a lack of public comprehension and control as well as the reality of the loss of knowledge in the event of the demise of the sole bearer of knowledge. This situation is not unconnected with the fact of oral traditions which made sure that crucial *episteme* or knowledge was passed on from generation to generation by word of mouth. The essentially unwritten character of these traditionalist accounts of life and security culminated in a gradual loss of core capabilities.

The vertical movement of power and knowledge brings about a restriction in the social framework of ideas and methods. Authoritarianism did not permit a horizontal or spectral dispersal of ideas and power. This combination of authoritarianism and supernaturalism led to anachronism and the lack of openness to new and better ways of doing things. Anachronism made sure that the wrong things were done almost persistently. The same old customary methods were considered as divine, and a cult of followers arose who were expected to render unquestioning obedience. For now, let us note that the context of the failure of the traditional and modern approaches to security have compelled this analysis. It has brought to the fore the chance of a unique intellectual contribution to security theorising as a way out of the crisis of human development and security in African worlds.

The Methodological Transience and Thematic Proclivities in the Stages of Security in Human Evolution

Naturalism in Security Theorising

From early times, humans have been interested in security matters simply because 'human beings, obviously, cannot exist without having certain of their needs met' (Bell 1994: 19). The failure of institutionalised security strategies has paved the way for an alternative theorising on the security problematic. This work is a quest for a traditional and ethical view of security understood as the need for a new basis of human social life and a new set of strategies that can ensure emancipa-

tion and transformation. Thus, it is true that there can be no security in traditions that have failed us intellectually, culturally or historically. There can be no security if there is a closure of spaces - conceptual or theoretical.

From the earliest ages, the challenge of security was highlighted via the 'survival interaction between human beings and their surroundings, when they began to develop techniques to cope with the harsh realities of nature' (Perlman 1995: 25). Early humans were interested in security to the extent that they needed to migrate and navigate in search of food, shelter and protection. At this stage man sought protection from the vagaries of nature. Mackenzie (1963: 35) observes that 'the dangers that have to be guarded against are sometimes heat, sometimes cold, sometimes drought, sometimes flood, sometimes wild beasts or other men'. The interest in security and development arises out of the reality of crisis in these areas. Thus many communities resorted to using the natural forces of nature for self-preservation. Later on with the increase in human population, man sought protection from his fellow men as individuals. At a later time, people would seek protection within the context of human organisation. Thus at the heart of the human struggle for security is the attempt to confront nature or the natural environment, human nature and human action and human social organisations.

The vision of naturalism in security arose out of human self-consciousness, and the needs and the obstacles to the realisation of a secure existence. The evasion of the natural forces, the association with other humans were all an attempt to live out the primordial instincts of security. The point must be made that security, as an adaptation to the natural environment, was not altogether sustainable. Security faced the problems of the gross uncertainty, lack of control and predictability that attended the availability, suitability and conduciveness of natural security features. There was also the problem of human adaptation, efficacy and systematisation of the use of the natural phenomena. These factors taken together meant that humans were not in control of certain natural defensive strategies. The protection of one's interests and the guarantee of well-being essentially implied that threats to the survival and sustenance of a person or group would be mitigated only if one took deliberate steps to safeguard cherished materials. The name for this is self-preservation.

There comes a point at which the historical analysis of security can snowball into the quest for aesthetic foundations derived from intervening imperatives. It is clear that the aesthetic dimensions of human security in the early stages of human life were inevitably tied to the challenge of thinking in a systematic and holistic manner. This style implied a sense of taste or preference that could make the choice of natural features valuable either for survival or comfort. This seems the inevitable beginning of the interconnection between the aesthetic and security in human life.

Humanism in Security Theorising

Even though it is true that 'some human needs such as those for love, and communication can only be satisfied fully by interaction with other humans' (Bell 1994: 19), the mere fact of the increase in human population, and the competition arising from it, caused men to become a source of insecurity to one another. Thus man sought protection from his fellow men, who in turn had become threats owing to the difficulties of living together in an environment where resources were scarce, civic values were not developed, and laws were not clearly defined and enforced. Under these condition of life, men seen as either individuals or groups were in need of protection from other men. The immediate confrontation between men in their quest for the understanding of the self and other, as well as their implications for the material and psychological dimensions of life, directed the attention of men towards the establishment of some sort of rule-following system. At a later time, human beings sight protection within the type of human organisation called society. At the heart of societal security was its character as a rule-following system or law-based order that depended on the clarification and allocation of rights, duties and other attributes of human social life. Society itself would also trigger its own forms of insecurity.

The condition of insecurity arising from the vagaries of human activity was aggravated by the increasing scarcity of natural resources and the means of harnessing them. According to Mackenzie (1963: 36-37), 'we may regard competition and strife as connected with impulses that help to give rise to mutual aid and rivalry' at this stage of human development. Beyond the question of materialism, there was also the issue of psychological states and security. Men needed security from other men as a result of psychological states such as hate, greed, envy, pride, wickedness and other problems related to the context of morality.

Humans had become creators of tools, systems and ideas related to aesthetically guided security. Much of the challenge of aesthetic security would be defined at the level of the creativity and imagination of men as well as the carry-over into the realm of technology. This humanistic form of aesthetics and security operated at two different levels corresponding to the divergent needs of men in either the state of nature or the state of society. In the state of nature, such aesthetic security concerns were mainly physical and personal, but in the state of society the aesthetic security concerns were predominantly institutional and policy-based. The contexts of human security, therefore, varied according to the differing conditions of human existence.

Humanism in security became dominant given the increase in human population. Such expansions in the physical numbers and potential for innovative acts (good or bad) compelled a redefinition of human interrelations. The confrontation between men in their quest for the understanding of the self and others, as

well as the implications for the material and psychological dimensions of life directed the attention of men towards the establishment of some sort of rule-following system in society.

Militarism or Realism in Security Theorising

Natural security paved the way for militarism or militaristic security. The increase in human populations and the generally lower levels of awareness of the rules of wider cosmopolitan habitations heightened the spate of wars and conflict. This age ushered in the trajectory of militarism; which depended on the 'active use of military force for political purposes and in defence of national interests' (Blau and Goure 1984: 13). All through human history, it has been shown that mere militaristic powers will never be enough as a long-term guarantee of security. Vulnerabilities, threats or actual attacks to undermine security will never be stopped by the traditionalistic (realist) or wider liberal accounts of security. The reality of the shortfall of the realist or militaristic approach has been glaring for many states all over the world.

No amount of military power, intelligence-gathering ability or even economic strength will be sufficient by themselves to maintain security where basic ideas such as appropriate imagination, the will to action and ethical character are lacking. Militaristic security therefore smacked of a rigid deterministic motion towards an arms race, which could only be overcome by a greater amassing of weapons. The logic of militarism can be seen as a faulty one, with its dependence on force and the illusion of power that has consistently heralded the defeat of great civilisations. Realism as a theory of security suffered a two-pronged defeat: first, the problem of the ascendancy of a greater military power over another led to spiralling conflict, arms races, genocidal violence and eventually the mutual decline or expiration of the combatants. This is what we mean by a security dilemma, a process by which 'states are permanently arming themselves in order to protect their borders. Through this, the unintended consequence of pursuing such a policy is to create a feeling of insecurity among one's neighbours. Thus, one state's effort to ensure its own security becomes a source of insecurity for other states' (Messari 2002: 416-417).

The tracks of aesthetic militarism were seen clearly in the rigidity and haughtiness that heralded that peculiar vision and form or stage of security theorising. The features of militarist aestheticism were defined by the concern for order, efficiency, utility and power. These were the aesthetic preferences that defined this version of aesthetic security. It may well be that aesthetic militarism was the perfection of the institutional or societal form of aesthetic humanism. The resounding defeat of militarism paved the way for the emergence of liberalism as a core position in security theorising.

Liberalism in Security Theorising

The appeal and strength of the liberal approach has been based on two pillars: firstly, widening the scope of issues that can be discussed under the umbrella of security. These issues have been expanded to include gender, environment, social, medical and allied ideas. Secondly and more importantly, liberalism repudiated the military technocratic elitism, methodological isolationism and epistemological ethnocentrism of previous security doctrine. We can clarify the liberal view by noting the statement of Prewitt (1985: 12) that 'the term security requires substantial conceptual expansion. It does mean extending and broadening the term beyond its present base'. Aesthetic liberalism was founded on a belief in the lack of a monopoly of knowledge or control by any one man or group due to both natural (human, physical) and unnatural (providential, supernatural) forces. This belief naturally led to the implication that there were competing spaces of multifarious identities and attention in security matters. The aesthetic concern for preferences would therefore be best played out in liberal aesthetic security.

But there were problems with the liberal approach. Essentially, this liberal approach was not sufficiently articulate in its visions. There were existential, ethical and phenomenological shortfalls leading to the inability theoretically to overcome the finitude problem that affects human investigations. The questions of culture, history and social conventions were vital, rightly so, for the clarification of liberal thinking regarding security. There were also shortfalls in the conceptual realms of liberal security theorising. Some of the domains classified under the security problematic were often in themselves contested areas or ambiguous ideas, which, in turn, depended on another set of concepts for their clarification. Hence, liberalism paved the way for a wider and more autonomous conceptual approach to security theorising. The critical problem of articulating and confronting the diversities in the historical, cultural and social specificities of the security problematic ensured that the problem of security at one time and place would not be the same at others.

Conceptualism in Security Theorising

These problems taken together ensured a general inadequacy of conceptualisation and theoretical and practical applications. In effect, both realism and liberalism failed to place a premium on the specific analysis of the core ideas of imagination, vision, values and action that were central to security. The clear deficits in the earlier approaches paved the way for the emergence of a conceptual and philosophical account of security. Incidentally, this conceptual approach to security is undoubtedly the province of the philosopher, who has the double advantage of a long and clear line of historical thought as well as the unique tool of conceptual and phenomenological analysis.

The History of Security and the Security of History

The idea of security is better understood by an analysis of the history of core theoretical and philosophical thinking on this idea. Valuable insights on security can be discerned from the core contributions of a few classical theorists, notably certain leading philosophers.

Plato: An Ancient Theoretician on Security

The ancient classical view of security is aptly portrayed in the ideas of Plato. This thinker approached the idea of security by insisting on the vital roles of justice, harmonisation, division of labour and education as critical drivers. According to Plato, 'justice is doing one's own business. Justice is having and doing what is one's own or what belongs to one' (Plato 1963: 18). The state is organised on the basis of justice 'when the trader, the auxiliary and the guardians each do their own business' (Plato 1963: 19). A state is seen as just when 'the three classes (namely, the guardians, auxiliaries and artisans) in the state perform their specific functions' (Plato 1963: 20).

For Plato, central to security were the ideas of efficiency and effectiveness. There is security when the principle of justice is understood, upheld and made operational. For Plato, the idea of justice is an imperative of security since it is vital that each man should do his own job or fulfil his own function properly. By this means, Plato felt that the security of individuals and society could be guaranteed via the effective and efficient practice of specified social roles, obligations and expectations. Thus, he divided the society into the guardians or rulers, the auxiliaries or soldiers, and the artisans or workers. Furthermore, he insisted on the power and development of security through education. The education of the rulers, soldiers and technicians was crucial if security was to be sustained. With education, the people could live the virtuous life capable of ensuring peace and protection of lives and property. By this emphasis on education, Plato drew attention to the problems of human, social and national security that could arise from a shortfall in education, leadership and the violation of rules.

What can we learn from the ideas of Plato? Plato, in giving emphasis to the idea of justice as a kind of efficiency or division of labour clearly suggests that each individual or group ought to do that thing which has been assigned to him or her properly or which is best suited for her to do. He therefore suggested that one can be effective either by dint of natural talent or hard work or by the proper assignment of roles and responsibilities. This point is more relevant in the light of Plato's insistence that people and structures fulfil their set objectives.

The ability to fulfil role expectations depends on the character of individuals. It suggests the idea of representation and responsibility. The social order takes on the form of a collection of people with responsibilities for work within various organisational hierarchies. In this way there is an emphasis on greater participation

of more competent personalities. Thus we see the value of Platonic analysis. The need for the kind of integrated action suggested by Plato arises, firstly because it has been shown that no man has a monopoly of knowledge. This point demonstrates that the smooth functioning of any system depends on the division of labour, the sharing of knowledge or ideas, as well as the integration of social roles. Although Plato implies a rigidity in the structure of the society in which each individual or group is fixed in a social class, we must now move beyond his position to recommend the possibility of social status enhancement or mobility so that each man or group can attain the fullest development.

Plato's idea of security did not create the opportunity for vertical growth and social mobility among the segments of the society. Plato had insisted on a totalitarian and rigidly configured society that would operate almost in a mechanical manner, with immutable configurations of social classes. This idea was contrary to the human ability to exercise choice as characteristic features of human nature and human endeavour. The class conscious and deterministic nature of Platonic society could not be sustained on any enduring basis because it created internal and external conflict, both psychological and social. This society would not be fully secure, because of its inclination to undermine the natural human tendency to increase in stature. The society would not be secure because it brought about the alienation of women, children and other marginal groups. The failure of Platonic theorising on security compelled the emergence of other theoreticians on security.

Aristotle: An Ancient Theoretician on Security

The failure of Platonic theorising on security led to the emergence of Aristotle who insisted that security emanates from defining a conception of the good. For Aristotle, the community is the highest form of the good, because it is the height of human political affiliation. As he argued, every state is a community of some kind and every community is established with a view to some good, because man always concludes that 'if all communities aim at some good, then the state or political community as the highest form of community aims at the good in a greater degree than any other' (Aristotle 1963: 59).

Aristotle traces the formation of the state from the family to the village and finally the state. For the state to come about, there should exist a union of male and female as beings that could not exist without each other. From the union of male and female, the family emerges. Where there are many families, we have a village as a colony of families. And when we have many villages that are united into a single complete community large enough to be self-sufficient, then the state comes into being. Aristotle further claimed that the state emerges out of efforts to satisfy the basic needs of life and it grows with a view to assuring the good life. Given the fact that the earlier forms of society are natural, Aristotle says that 'the

state is also natural because it is the end or goal of these earlier forms. The state is therefore a creation of nature' (Aristotle 1963: 62). For Aristotle, 'man is by nature a political animal and he is able to separate good from evil, just acts from unjust acts' (Aristotle 1963: 62). This ability is seen in human beings that live in the family and state. And so we note that it is within the ambits of life in the family and state that questions about justice and morality arise.

The society is the highest good comprising the aggregation of the gifts and abilities of a totality of people who seek the goal of self-sufficiency. Security is to be seen in the ability of individuals or groups to be self-sufficient. For Aristotle, security would come only from an idea of justice that depended on the establishment of a legal order. This security required the clarification of the idea of citizenship and the role of the citizen in the promotion of security and social life. Aristotle was clear about the constituents of security and he insisted on the need for basic social goods such as opportunities, work, law and order, an army, religion, leadership, self-sufficiency through the retention of material goods, careful application of reason, all of which would pave the way for happiness as the highest good. In effect, the ideas of Aristotle were a systematic and more carefully thought-out advance on the views of Plato.

St Augustine: A Christian Theoretician on Security

The totalitarianism associated with the views of the classical writers on security did not accord well with early Christian philosophers. Their outlook was an other-worldly philosophy of life and took the view that human problems could never be resolved without a grasp of the order of things in the supernatural world. According to Saint Augustine, the security dilemma can be understood by linking the visions and values of the supernatural world with those of the physical world. To this effect, Augustine postulated the distinction between the city of God and the city of man. These two cities are ruled by differing principles and visions. Augustine insisted that humans could only enjoy security if the city of man was willing to affirm and abide by the rule of love existing in the city of God. The rule of security as given by divine ordinance is peace. Only the quest for peace can bring about security. According to Augustine (1990: 9), 'the basic difference between the two cities is what they are committed to. The two cities have two distinct commitments'. Augustine argues that in the city of man or 'the city of evil, men live according to the flesh, while in the city of God men live according to the spirit. To live according to the flesh means to live according to human nature, to sin. The works of the flesh or the human nature in man are immorality, idolatry, enmities, contentions, jealousies, anger, quarrels, factions' (Augustine 1990: 294-296). In the city of God, Augustine (1990: 328, 451) says that 'there is eternal, supreme and untroubled peace. The city of God represents the vision of peace'.

Thus, the quest for peace naturally compels a repudiation of the negative and lower values that had ruled the city of men. For Augustine, security can only be attained through morality, justice, kindness, truth and humility. He noted that the city of men suffers insecurity due to the prevalence of hate, pride, falsity and wickedness. The city of men is the city of evil and darkness, ruled by envy, perversion, deceit and vanity. Its inhabitants remain insecure because they live according to the flesh. The way of the flesh, according to Augustine, is the celebration of condemnation, hate, corruption, immorality, idolatry, enmities, contention, and factionalism. The flesh repudiates, and is alienated from security because it suffers from imperfection and refuses to abide by truth and the divine light.

Hobbes: A Modern Theoretician on Security

Supernaturalism and the interfacing of metaphysicalism and temporalism in the quest for security were alien to thinkers at the dawn of the modern era. Modernity led to the emergence of theoreticians such as Thomas Hobbes, for whom the security factor was of paramount concern. So much so that 'in Hobbes's view, the main object of any form of political association was to obtain security' (Ayer 1969: 250). Hobbes postulated the idea of the Leviathan or the Artificial Man. The Leviathan retains immense and illimitable powers over men and materials and is thus capable of guaranteeing security. Hobbes made it clear that the security offered by the Leviathan became imperative due to the danger and insecurity of life and possessions in the state of nature.

Hobbes argued that the state of nature is a state of war. It is the state of violence and anarchy of every one against the other. This condition of life is typified by the inability to guarantee survival and peace for any reasonable length of time. Tired of the anarchy of the state of nature, people would agree to the formation of a society, or commonwealth, as Hobbes termed it. Each person would surrender their autonomy and agree to obey the great Leviathan, the sovereign state, created to protect and defend the natural man. Obedience to a mutually acceptable sovereign, argued Hobbes, was the only way to overcome the nasty, brutish and short life encountered in the state of nature. Hence people accept the sovereignty of the Leviathan, the 'artificial soul which gives life and animation to the whole body' (Hobbes 1963: 139). The Leviathan is the sovereign who has the power to punish or reward.

Hobbes traces the emergence of the Leviathan to the nature of man and the conditions of the state of nature. Despite the fact that there are differences in the way men are endowed, no one could be certain that a faculty such as physical strength was sufficient to ensure the individual's security. Others, more cunning, posed an ever-present danger. In the state of nature, each man pursues his own self-interest without the restraint of a constituted authority, giving rise to constant disputes and conflict. Hobbes contended that the state of nature is a condition of

mutual destruction in which no man can be sure of emerging victorious or subsisting for a reasonable length of time (Hobbes 1963: 142). Furthermore, in the state of nature, as really a state of war, where every man is every man's enemy and the security and protection of life and property is not assured, there is no industry or fruitful labour. Worst of all, there is a continual fear and danger of violent death. In short, the life of man 'is solitary, poor, nasty, brutish and short' (Hobbes 1963: 143). Against the background of the absence of a common power, there can be no law, notions of justice and of right and wrong. Hobbes argues the passions and the reason of man lead to a search for peace by willing submission to a common sovereign.

According to Hobbes, the right of nature is the liberty that all men have to use their powers to preserve their lives, while the law of nature is a general rule derived from reason, which forbids a man to destroy his life or the means of preserving his life. For Hobbes, the first and basic law of nature is to seek peace, while the second laws of nature enjoins a man readily to give up his right to self-defence if others show a willingness to do likewise. He notes that a man gives up his right to self-preservation either by renouncing or transferring it. A right is renounced when one does not care to whom the benefit goes, while a right is transferred when one intends that the benefits go to some specified persons. Hobbes maintains that the renunciation of rights is brought about through agreement - a social contract - binding on all participants. For Hobbes, contract is the name given to the mutual transfer of rights among men. It is the basis of the commonwealth, which exists in order to ensure that order is preserved. The protection of life and property is guaranteed in the commonwealth only when men erect a common power on which they confer all their powers and strengths. Hobbes argues that 'his common power can be one man or an assembly of men' (Hobbes 1963: 148).

The commonwealth, according to Hobbes, is the only source of security both from human nature, natural forces and other material creations of men. The commonwealth is the aggregation of an institutional arrangement of a multitude that has covenanted through the social contract to form and live in a society in order to assure themselves of mutual defence, peace, progress and protection from internal and external dangers. The power of the sovereign, conceived as either the ruler or the society, is central to attaining security.

The appealing, systematic and well-articulated security theory of Hobbes suffered from certain internal contradictions that paved the way for the emergence of other views. The theory of Hobbes effectively marshalled the principles for the guarantee of security from external danger, artificial or natural. But Hobbes's theory of security did not fully account for the dangers arising from the unlimited powers that were bestowed on the sovereign as ruler. Hobbes underestimated

the risk of dictatorship, misappropriation, authoritarianism and the eventual denial of security of lives and property under a tyrannical sovereign. It was this unresolved paradox of security that Locke tried to address by posing his doctrine containing the separation of powers, property rights and popular sovereignty.

Locke: A Modern Theoretician on Security

Writing soon after Hobbes, John Locke propounded a different view of the state of nature and the social contract. According to Locke, the state of nature is not a state of licence; man may do as he wishes with his person and possessions, but he has no liberty to destroy himself or his possessions (Locke 1963: 196-170). As such the state is guided by the law of nature, which is reason. Locke holds that reason teaches everyone that since they are equal and independent, no one ought to harm any other person in his life, health, liberty or possessions. The law of nature guarantees peace and preservation of all.

According to Locke, the earth is the property of all men as a whole. But the property of each man is his own person, the labour of his body and the work of his hands. He asserts that 'something becomes a man's property when he has removed it from the common state it existed in as nature, and then, applies his labour, mental and physical, to it' (Locke 1963: 176-178). For Locke, man ought to acquire property within the limits set by reason, to determine what is enough for his use. Locke suggests that consent is important for the establishment of the social order. He holds that a man gives his consent when 'he agrees with other men to join and unite into a community for their comfortable, safe and peaceful existence' (Locke 1963: 178). This community for Locke assures the security of property and protection from external aggression. When a number of men consent to form a community, 'they become incorporated and thereby constitute a body politic in which the majority have a right to act in the interest of the whole' (Locke 1963: 179).

Locke illustrates two kinds of consent, tacit and express. The express consent of any man entering into a society makes him a full member of that society and a subject of that government. In contrast, a man gives tacit consent when he has any possessions in, or enjoys any part of the dominion of a government. Even as a foreigner or traveller, a man is obliged to obey the laws of a government so long as he enjoys its protection. Locke argues that 'when anybody unites his person and possessions to any commonwealth he becomes a subject of the government and a member of the commonwealth' (Locke 1963: 183).

The existence of private property makes the idea of security a necessity. Human beings search for security by constituting society. The basic intention behind creating society is to preserve property. More so, security is possible because a multitude of people give their consent to join and live in community. But security

is possible only if society is guided by the doctrine of the separation of powers so as to keep the power of the sovereign power within bounds.

The criticism of Locke has centred on his emphasis on the protection and legitimacy of existing patterns of private property ownership. His views may be construed as a rationalisation of social inequalities. What is the role of property in the security equation when we are faced with a great scarcity of resources and increased human competition? How do we perceive private property if it occasions heightened injustice, exploitation and oppression?

Conclusion

This analysis of traditional and modern perspectives on security suggests that the quest for security has always been a source of concern for human beings. Although these concerns vary from one society to another, they are underlined by a central existential commitment to pursue the widest possible opportunities for human growth, well-being and survival within a social framework. It is clear that the quest for survival, freedom from danger, and peace, comfort and progress will continue to determine the interest of human beings in enduring security.

References

- Abogunrin, S.O., 1996, 'Covenants in the Ethical System of the Yoruba', *Africana Marburgensia*, vol. XXIX, pp. 3-15.
- Achebe, Chinua, 1958, *Things Fall Apart*, African Writers Series, London: Heinemann.
- Aremu, P.S.O., 1995, 'Egungun Masquerades as Socio-Religious Manifestations', *Africana Marburgensia*, vol. XXVII, no. 1 and 2, pp. 3-13.
- Aristotle, 1963, *Politics in Social and Political Philosophy*, J. Somerville et al., eds., New York: Anchor Books.
- Augustine, St., 1990, *The City of God*, Translated M. Dodds, *Great Books of The Western World*, M. J. Alder, ed., Chicago: Encyclopaedia Britannica Inc.
- Ayer, Alfred Jules, 1969, *Metaphysics and Commonsense*, London: Macmillan.
- Blau, T. and Goure, D., 1984, 'Military Uses and Implications of Space', *Society*, January/February, pp. 13-17.
- Bell, W., 1994, 'The World as a Moral Community', *Society*, July/August, pp. 17-22.
- Davidson, B., 1977, 'A Science of Social Control', in Peter Gutkind and Peter Waterman, eds., *African Social Studies: A Radical Reader*, London: Heinemann, pp. 296-305.
- Davidson, B., 1991, 'Kingdoms of Africa from the 12th to the 18th Century', in Ralph Uwechue, *Africa Today*, London: Africa Books, pp. 157-168.
- Dewey, J., 1977, *John Dewey: The Essential Writings*, David Sidorsky, ed., New York: Harper and Row.
- Ejizu, C., 1987, 'Healing as Wholeness: The African Experience', *Africana Marburgensia*, vol. XX, no 1, pp. 3-19.
- Ezekwugo, C.M., 1991, 'Omenana and Odinana in the Igbo World: A Philosophical Appraisal', *Africana Marburgensia*, vol. XXIV, no. 2, pp. 3-18.
- Fagan, B. M., 1998, *People of the Earth: An Introduction to World Prehistory*, 9th Edition, New

- York: Longman Addison Wesley.
- Goulet, D., 1987, 'Culture and Traditional Values in Development', in Susan Stratigos and Philip Hughes, eds., *The Ethics of Development*, Port Moresby: University of Papua New Guinea Press.
- Greaves, R. L., Zaller, R., Cannistraro, P. V., Murphey, R., 1997a, *Civilization of the World: The Human Adventure, 3rd Edition, Volume One: To the Late 1600s*, New York: Longman.
- Greaves, R. L., Zaller, R., Cannistraro, P. V., Murphey R., 1997b, *Civilization of the World: The Human Adventure, Volume Two. From the Middle 1600s*, 3rd Edition, New York: Addison Wesley.
- Hobbes, T., 1963, *Leviathan in Social and Political Philosophy*, J. Somerville et al., eds., New York: Anchor Books.
- Latham, E., 1956, 'The Group Basis of Politics: Notes for a Theory', in Heinz Eulau, Samuel J. Eldersveld and Morris Janowitz, eds., *Political Behaviour: A Reader in Theory and Research*, Illinois: The Free Press, pp. 232-245.
- Locke, J., 1963, *Treatise Concerning Civil Government: Second Essay in Social and Political Philosophy*, J. Somerville et al., eds., New York: Anchor Books.
- Mackenzie, J. S., 1963, *Outlines of Social Philosophy*, London: George Allen & Unwin.
- Mbiti, J. S., 1969, *African Religions and Philosophy*, London: Heinemann.
- Messari, N., 2002, 'The State and Dilemmas of Security: The Middle East and the Balkans', *Security Dialogue*, vol. 33, no. 4, pp. 415-427.
- Nielsen, K., 1973, 'Alienation and Self-realization', *Philosophy*, vol. 48, pp. 21-33.
- Nwala, U. T., 1985, *Igbo Philosophy*, Lagos: Literamed Publications, pp. 27-30.
- Oladipo, O., 1996, *Philosophy and the African Experience*, Ibadan: Hope.
- Olaoba, O.B., 1997, 'Between Juju and Justice: An Examination of Extra- Legal Devices in Traditional Yoruba Society', *Africana Marburgensia*, vol. XXX, pp. 24-38.
- Olomola, I., 1991, 'Alile - Traditional Security System among the Yoruba', *Africana Marburgensia*, vol. XXIV, no. 2, pp. 50-61.
- Osa, T. A. and Nwabara, S. N., 1968, *A Short History of West Africa*, London: Hodder and Stoughton.
- Plato, 1963, *The Republic*, in *Social and Political Philosophy*, J. Somerville et al., New York: Anchor Books.
- Perlman, J. S., 1995, *Science without Limits*, New York: Prometheus Books.
- Prewitt, K., 1985, 'Security, Peace and Social Science', *Society*, November/December.
- Sogolo, G., 1993, *Foundations of African Philosophy*, Ibadan: Ibadan University Press.
- Ujomu, P.O., 2001, 'Cultural Relations, Human Communication and the Conditions for Intercultural Relations: A Critique of Anta Diop and Kwasi Wiredu', in H. Igboanus, ed., *Language Attitude and Language Conflict in West Africa*, Ibadan: Enicrownfit, pp. 165-188.