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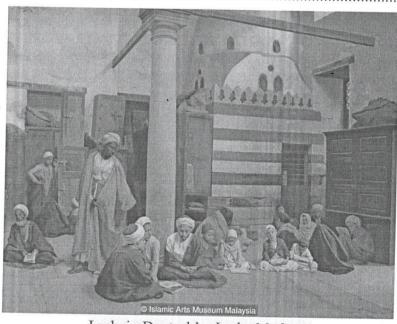
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Introduction

It is incontrovertible that the problem of insecurity is part of the ravening realities in the current civil society. It is a general problem facing the whole world. However, it is more pronounced in some parts of the world than in others. In African countries, especially in Nigeria, insecurity has been (and is still) a seemingly insurmountable problem. It has rendered (and still rendering) all attempts made by the government and individuals to stabilize the country thereby strengthening the principle of social co-operation, harmony and peaceful coexistence among citizens, abortive.

The abortiveness of the various measures put in place to ensure peaceful coexistence and harmony among the people in the nation is undeniably precipitated on the one hand, and complicated on the other, by such ugly occurrences as kidnapping, rape cases, ritual killings, robbery, terrorism, insurgency and other vicious activities going on in the nation. These, in all honesty, are part of the unavoidable realities that human beings have to grapple with in existence but then – and in all seriousness – they are too unpalatable in contradistinction to the kind of good and pleasurable life, which human beings seek in existence.

In a country where violent occurrences continue to ensure and to frustrate all the measures that are put in place to suppress them, citizens usually feel unprotected, uncomfortable and unsafe. As a result, the tendency of individuals in the state to result to taking personal security precautions or measures to protect their lives and properties becomes inevitable. Also, ethnic suspicion, interethnic conflicts, and religious-related crisis are bound to erupt. This, however, is injurious to the unity of the nation as it persistently threatens the togetherness of the people at the slightest provocation – especially in a country like Nigeria where peoples of different cultural, linguistic religious and administrative orientations were forcibly lumped together – and have been reluctantly managing the excesses of one another over several decades.

The above is, in fact, largely responsible for a series of ethnic uprising which Nigeria has experienced from the dawn of independence to the present times. These ugly sociopolitical realities have positioned a large barricade on

peaceful social intercourse and coexistence of different ethnic, cultural and linguistic extractions in the nation and it has provoked a higher level of violence, ethnic rivalry, terrorism and civil unrest in the nation. That being the case, how to make sure that human beings live as safely as possible in their various societies becomes imperative. Hence, the problem of insecurity becomes an urgent issue that requires the nation's immediate attention.

Evaluating the trajectories of nationalism and the histories of Africa's emancipation from the strangling holds of the colonialists, Ali Mazrui contends that there are six different paradoxes, all negative and disadvantageous, that emerged in various African nations as by-products of the colonization of Africa and direct products of violent efforts to achieve independence. These paradoxes, according to him, have been hunting different African countries from the wake of the post-independence era to the current periods. For Mazrui, they are unavoidable realities that ensued because of 'violent nationalism' in Africa. This position is largely true on the one hand; however, on the other hand, it is largely contestable. It is undeniable that the six paradoxes identified by Mazrui are some of the major factors militating against the harmony and peaceful coexistence of people in different African nations, Nigeria especially.

However, while it may be true that armed struggle or violent nationalism (against colonial rule) is responsible for the outbreak of those paradoxes in African countries like Algeria, Zimbabwe, Kenya and the rest of them, it is not the case that 'violent nationalism' provoked those paradoxes in a country like Nigeria. This is because Nigeria did not attain her independence through armed struggle or 'violent nationalism' against colonial rule. If 'violent nationalism' must be contextualized, it is in form of ethnicity and tribal politics within the context of Nigeria – and we think Mazrui does well enough in that regard by identifying several different categories of nationalism[1]. It, therefore, makes sense, against this background, to speak of ethnonationalism in Nigeria.

Nevertheless, Nigeria, like most African counties, is a deep abyss of those six distasteful paradoxes. This, however, is not our focus here. Our major concern here is to discuss Mazrui's six paradoxes and see how they persistently render futile the attempts made by the government to keep the problem of insecurity under control in Nigeria. This paper will argue that understanding and tackling these paradoxes is a prerequisite for the resolution of, or at least, minimization of the problem of insecurity in the nation. In other words, attempts to address the problem of insecurity in Nigeria without first addressing the six paradoxes of violence will most likely be abortive or feeble like previous efforts.

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1. Mazrui, Ali. "Nationalism, Ethnicity and Violence", Ed. Kwasi Wiredu. *A Companion to African Philosophy*. USA: Blackwell Publishing Ltd. 2004. 472-482.

Insecurity and Mazrui's Paradoxes: Tracing the Trajectory of Violence in Nigeria

Nigeria is one of the African nations that have experienced insecurity in its blatant and most serious instantiations. Being a country where many incompatible ethnic nationalities are welded together at independence, it has recorded a series of security challenges. Scholarly literature emerging from conflict studies, political science, public administration and other relevant fields of study which have direct or indirect affiliation with national issues are densely filled with information and records of violence such as unwarranted killing, robbery, kidnapping, rape cases, insurgency and so on. Also, the problem of insecurity, in recent times, has made the hottest headlines in the dailies, on the radio and the television, as it is the most constantly emphasized and reported issue in the nation.

Decrying the reality of conflict, insecurity and instability in Africa, and how African countries launch themselves into those seemingly pertinacious problems, Ali Mazrui identifies six different paradoxes of violence. Those paradoxes, for him, are the major causes of contemporary conflict and violence in African countries – and they are, according to him, in form of dialectical propositions – sometimes ironical, paradoxical and contradictory[2]. The paradoxes Mazrui identifies are the paradox of racial deficit; the paradox of fatal borders; the paradox of religion and ethnicity; the paradox between identity and resources; the paradox between modern weapons and premodern armies; and the last is between civil wars and interstate conflicts[3].

The Six Paradoxes of Violence

Following a wave of independence in Africa after the 20th century, violence took another dimension in Africa. Blacks turned on blacks in different spates of violence and many African countries, within a short time, recorded deaths of as much or even more blacks than the number that died in the build-up to independence[4]. This is the paradox of racial deficit, according to Mazrui; because of the indigenous methods of conflict-resolution dismantled by colonialism, the resolution became more difficult in Africa after independence. Although, it will be a form of over-romanticisation to claim Africa was very peaceful before colonialism. This is because the pre-colonial histories of African societies are full of frictions, wars and sociopolitical crises. However, there were methods of conflict-resolution such as mediation, reconciliation, negotiation and arbitration in that era. These methods were

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2. Mazrui, Ali, Op.cit., 480.
3. Mazrui, Ali, Op.cit., 480-481.
4. Mazrui, Ali, Op.cit., 479-480.

not general, but specific to communities depending on their culture[5]. Nevertheless, they helped to stabilise the pre-colonial African societies and made peaceful coexistence possible among people.

The second paradox is the paradox of fatal borders. This paradox has its roots in imposed borders during colonialism. It happens when different communities, who traditionally are not cordial, are forced to share borders or live together[6]. An example is the 1914 amalgamation of the Southern and Northern protectorates in Nigeria. 106 years after the forced amalgamation, both protectorates are still struggling to live together. The Nigerian civil war is a fall out of the paradox of fatal borders[7]. Hence, fatal borders are not actually about conflict over border control, but violence over forced borders.

The third paradox, the paradox of religion and ethnicity, is one of the fatal paradoxes of violence in Nigeria[8]. The *Boko Haram* crisis in Nigeria, the Southern Kaduna crisis, Ife and Modakeke crisis, the Plateau crisis, sharia crisis, are just a few examples of ethno-religious crisis that have ravished Nigeria for several years. This paradox is closely related to the paradox of fatal borders and there is a thin line between both. When borders are forced together, the ethnic and religious differences of the people who are merged without their consent is bound to spark conflicts. To make matters worse, the traditional systems of conflict resolution are dismantled already; hence, it will be difficult to resolve these conflicts.

The fourth paradox is the paradox of identity and resources[9]. Also connected to this paradox is the paradox of religion and ethnicity. When religious and ethnic conflicts arise between different tribes, the underlying problem is an attempt to emphasise one's identity. For example, the Ife and Modakeke crisis was not only over who owns what but also largely, over 'who is who'. Each ethnic group attempted to emphasise the importance or superiority of their ethnic group.

The fifth paradox is the paradox of modern weapons and pre-modern armies[10]. The weapons entrusted into the hands of security forces are not indigenous. A police force or security unit that lacks discipline and adequate training, armed with modern weapons, will most likely abuse its power. In many cases, the armed security forces in Nigeria eventually turn on those they ought to protect and heavily brutalise them. For example, on October 1 2008 in Nigeria, Modebayo Awosika was shot dead by an officer of the Ni-

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5. Ajayi, Adeyinka Theresa & Buhari. Lateef Oluwafemi. "Methods of Conflict Resolution in African Traditional Society." *African Research Review* 8 (2).33 (2014): 138-157.

6. Mazrui, Ali. "Nationalism, Ethnicity and Violence", 480.

7. The Nigerian civil war, also known as Biafra war, took place between January 1967 and January 1970.

8. Mazrui, Ali, Op.cit., 480.

9. Mazrui, Ali, Op.cit., 480.

10. Mazrui, Ali, Op.cit., 480.

gerian Police Force. To cover up this crime, the cops staged an accident scene and fled the scene. Autopsy and other evidence gathered at the scene of the crime later revealed the truth and the family sued the force to court and won[11]. The killer cop was, however, never identified or apprehended. This is not an isolated case in Nigeria, but one of the thousands of reported cases of extrajudicial killings and police brutality in Nigeria.

The sixth paradox is the paradox of civil wars and interstate conflicts. According to Mazrui, Africa has recorded more internal wars than external wars[12]. The reality in Nigeria is that there are minimal external but more internal threats to peace in the nation. All these internal conflicts are products of the other five paradoxes of violence. It is important to note that in interrogating these paradoxes in the light of violence in Nigeria, we will realise they are closely related and often cannot be separated from one other.

The reality of these paradoxes in the Nigerian context is starkly undeniable. They have been the ravenous razors that have been systematically severing the nation's garment of unity, thereby suggesting the dismemberment of the nation as the only obvious way out at any slight provocation. However, those paradoxes are somehow inextricably intertwined in the Nigerian context in such a way that one can hardly explain one without referring to the others. The reason for this is not difficult to know — one paradox serves as a foil or what can be called a galvanizing factor to another. Nevertheless, the paper will endeavor, in this section. To examine seriatim how each of those paradoxes prompts the phenomenon of insecurity in Nigeria. However, the genesis of the whole problem has some historical backdrops that need to be traced to make meaning out of this endeavor.

If we are to trace the trajectory of insecurity in Nigeria, we will exercise no patience in digging the pocket of history, especially the earliest period of post-independence, when the tasks of governance, national building, administrative strategizing, economic and commercial activities and resource control fell directly on the shoulders of Nigerian nationalists and political figures, through the dreadful era of a series of military interventions, to the subsequent return to a democratic government. These three periods are the foundations of the problems.

The post-independence era ushered in such ugly occurrences as ethnic rivalry and suspicion, tribal politics, election violence, military incursion and many other embarrassing incidents unbefitting a newly independent nation. The post-independence politicians, forming their different political parties with convincing mindsets of regional affiliations, carelessly polarized the

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11. The Whistler. 2020. October 17. "How SARS Killed First Bank Chairman's Brother 'For no Reason'." Retrieved from: https://thewhistler.ng/how-sars-killed-first-bank-chairmans-brother-for-no-reason/ Accessed October 22, 2020, 9:17 pm.

12. Mazrui, Ali, Op.cit., 481.

nation along ethnic, tribal and religious lines. Tracing the prologue of political instability and violence in Nigeria and how Nigerian politicians immensely contributed to the complication of the problem, Martin Meredith reports that:

> Despite the promising start made at independence in 1960, Nigeria was soon engulfed by an intense struggle between the country's three main political parties for supremacy over the federal government. Control of the federal government determined the allocation of development resources. Because each region produced its political party dominated by the major ethnic group based there, the struggle turned into ethnic combat. Politicians on all sides whipped upon ethnic fear, suspicion and jealousy for their advantage and to entrench themselves in power. Tribalism became the ideology of politics[13].

Unfortunately, those carelessly created problems at the earliest period of independence were further fueled by the incursion of the military where some prominent regional political figures were eliminated during a coup led by some junior Igbo army officers while some were spared without any justification in 1966[14]. Lamentably, counter-coup and reprisal killings were the unavoidable consequences of the military's preferential killing during the coup. The sentiment displayed by the military during the coup and several reprisal killings that ensued after the coup among different ethnic groups later pressurized a civil war in the nation during the same military rule[15]. The resolution of the civil war and the retrieval of the seceding ethnic group into Nigeria gave rise to ethnic suspicion and fear of ethnic domination in the nation, especially among the three major ethnic groups – the Igbo, the Yoruba and the Hausa.

The undesirable seeds of ethnic suspicion, unnecessary rivalry and tribal politics that were planted immediately during the post-independence times, through the formation of ethnic-oriented political parties, and during the times of military interventions, which recorded a series of coups and countercoups, have germinated and broadened into wilder and almost uncontrollable national problems, manifesting in form of ethnic clashes, conflict, insurgency, terrorism and crime.

The processes of returning from military to civil rule unveiled a new shade of violence, especially when Moshood Abiola, a Yoruba man, was prevented from taking over the government by Sani Abacha, the then military head of state – a Northerner – after winning the election on June 12, 1993. The violence broke out substantially when he was detained and was reported to have died of a heart attack in detention. The Yoruba, until now, hold the special sentiment that the Northerners technically murdered him to

13. Martin, Meredith. *The State of Africa: A History of Fifty Years of Independence.* Great Britain: The Free Press, 2006, 194.

14. Achebe, Chinua, *There was a Country.* USA: Penguin Books. 2012, 64-65.

15. Achebe, Chinua, Op.cit., 95.

marginalize them politically. The discontentment of the Yoruba people was not in any way mitigated when Olusegun Obasanjo became the elected president of Nigeria in 1999[16]. Since then, the presentation of candidates for election posts, especially the presidential seat, is defined along with tribal politics and ethnic loyalty in Nigeria.

Surprisingly, the most recent cases of violence in Nigeria have taken a different dimension and they seem to be directed entirely to the execution of different marked-out projects – ranging from the control of the central government by one region of the country, control of the resources of the nation, the sphere of religion, and the potential project to dominate other ethnic groups in their lands. Hence, the already well-thriving ethnic division is further invigorated by religious suspicion and unprecedented killings that accompanied it. Accordingly, ethnically and religiously invoked clashes become heightened while ethnic and religious conflicts remain part of the socio-political realities that Nigeria has to grapple with. However, those ugly phenomena have degenerated to the level of terrorism, insurgency, kidnapping and killing in the nation to the extent that they are becoming more unbearable.

Lamenting the ugly incident of killing recorded in Africa, Mazrui maintains that more people died as a result of conflict between Black and Black than because of conflict between Black and White in the second half of the twentieth century[17]. This is what he calls the paradox of racial deficit. The manifestation of this paradox is starkly undeniable in Nigeria. It upsurges and resurges in form of land disputes and resource control where communities rise against one another and bag huge records of killing. An epitome of such an incident is the Ife-Modakeke war that has a deep historical root. This war ensued mainly because of boundary dispute and contest for supremacy between Ife and Modakeke people[18]. The irony is that they both are of the Yoruba ethnic group. This immediately reveals the tiny line among all the mentioned paradoxes especially the paradoxes of fatal borders, identity and resources. The activities of the Boko Haram sect, the Niger-Delta militants and the Fulani Herdsmen in Nigeria, which is further emphasized in another part of this paper, are a direct corroboration of this point.

The above-cited example of the Ife-Modakeke war under the paradox of racial deficit is directly connected to the paradox of fatal borders. Mazrui contends that while most conflicts that ensue in African countries are partly caused by borders that were created by colonial powers, those conflicts

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16. Martin, Meredith. *The State of Africa: A History of Fifty Years of Independence.* 582-583.

17. Mazrui, Ali, Op.cit., 480.

18. See Shina Olayiwola and Ndukaku Okorie, "Integrated Education: An Instrument for Resolving Ife-Modakeke Conflict in Osun State, Nigeria." *Journal of Alternative Perspectives in the Social Sciences.* 2.2. (2010): 953-965.

themselves are not about borders[19]. This, again, is incontrovertibly the case in Nigerian. In 1914, the British government amalgamated the Southern and the Northern protectorates. This union has been so consolidated to the extent that de-amalgamation appears to be a nightmare[20]. Emphasizing this point, Abimbola Lagunju exclaims that 'the founding fathers of liberated Africa, unfortunately, maintained a post-liberation policy of maintaining the inviolability of those absurd and unnatural borders'[21]. However, this has given birth to several crises in the nation, ranging from the clamour for resource control, demand for autonomy, self-determination secession and tribal-ethnic loyalty. It has come to an ironically circular point that attempts at de-amalgamation will result in the paradoxes of racial deficit or provoke a larger scale of religious and ethnic crises in each protectorate.

The paradox of religion and ethnicity is the most pronounced of the paradoxes in Nigeria and it is, most times, the root cause of other paradoxes. The administrations of Presidents Olusegun Obasanjo, Goodluck Jonathan and Mohamadu Buhari recorded several of such distasteful incidents. Narrating the phenomena of the ethnic faceoff and religious conflicts during the administration of President Obasanjo, Meredith observes that:

> Compounding all the difficulties that Nigeria faced was a resurgence of ethnic and religious rivalry, held in check by years of repressive military rule...a host of ethnic groups sprang up, some demanding self-determination, some wanting control over local economic resources, some setting out cultural and social objectives. Militant groups formed their militias and used vigilante forces to combat rising levels of crime that the police failed to curb. Outbreaks of ethnic violence became increasingly common. More than 200 clashes were recorded between January 1999 and January 2000[22].

The above is well pronounced during the administrations of President Goodluck Jonathan and Mohammadu Buhari. An Islamic group of terrorists known as *Boko Haram* emerged in the North and they have been the major threat to the Nigerian security system as they kill people through bomb blasts, direct gunshot, slaughtering, etcetera. Initially, the violence was mono-dimensional in that it was directed to and unleashed on the Christian community by the said Islamic sect of terrorists. Churches and other Christian gatherings were the targets of suicide bombers. However, it gradually transmogrified into full-scale violence against everyone in the country – Christians and Muslims alike; hence, it became indiscriminate as any professed faith or religious body that fell short of the standard of the said group

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19. Mazrui, Ali, Op.cit., 480.

20. C.N., Ajaebili, "A Century after Amalgamation: Reflections on History and Nation Building in Nigeria 1914-2014", *Journal of the Historical Society of Nigeria*, 24. 2015: 100.

21. Lagunju, Abimbola. *The African in the Mirror*. Ibadan: Tomio Publishing House, 2005, 89

22. Martin, Meredith, Op.cit., 582.

was labelled as a group of infidels who deserve nothing but gruesome death. Consequently, freedom of religion seemed to be persistently threatened in the northern part of Nigeria for both Muslims and Christians. This threat is further reinforced by the enforcement of the sharia law in some northern states, even though Nigeria is supposedly a secular state. This, according to K. O. Olayode, has increased the tension between the Christians and the Muslims, leading to bloody religious riots[23].

Many Nigerians died through bomb blasts and many were practically disabled, especially in the northern part of Nigeria during the attacks of the Boko Haram sect. Also, many were internally displaced as their immediate habitations suddenly became inhabitable due to the high rate of violence and killing that were going on there. Presenting the data of the havoc wrecked in Nigeria by the Boko Haram group, William Ehwarieme and Nathaniel Umukoro contend that as of 2015, the Boko Haram group has killed about 13,000; affected about six million; and displaced about 300, 000 people in Nigeria – making them one of the deadliest terrorist groups in the world[24]. If the data of Boko Haram's havoc on human life had risen to that astronomical number in 2015, one can only imagine the number of people who have been killed between 2015 and 2020. This is because the group has not desisted from its killing activities since then.

The impunity of the Boko Haram terrorist group reached its most alarming stage when two-hundred and seventy-six (276) secondary school girls were kidnapped in April 2014 in Chibok, a town in Borno, a northern state in Nigeria. This incident happened during the tenure of President Jonathan. All attempts to retrieve the girls proved abortive hence, they remained in the custody of this Islamic fundamentalist sect for more than two years – where many of them were killed, violated and impregnated. This provoked a series of protest here and there by concerned citizens, human right activists, feminists and so on. The government of Nigeria was restless and greatly troubled on how to retrieve the girls. The nation's security outfits were directed towards rescuing the girls and defeating the sect. However, these efforts were resisted and frustrated by the terrorists. It took too long a time before about a hundred (100) of them were released during the tenure of President Mohamadu Buhari. The rest of them remain in the custody of Boko Haram.

The killing of innocent Nigerians during the administration of President Jonathan continued until the end of his tenure and extended into the admini-

23. K. O. Olayode, "Ethno-Nationalism and Democratic Consolidation: The Nigerian Experience, 1999-2003." In Sola Akinrinade, Dipo Fashina & David O. Ogungbile (Eds) *The Humanities, Nationalism and Democracy*. Ile-Ife, Faculty of Arts, Obafemi Awolowo University, 2006, 158.

24. William Ehwarieme and Nathaniel Umukoro. "Civil Society and Terrorism in Nigeria: A Study of the Boko Haram Crisis." *International Journal of World Peace*. 32.3 (2015): 25-26.

stration of President Mohamadu Buhari where the Islamic fundamentalist group were greatly suppressed – but not conquered! Curiously enough, while the administration of Buhari was busy battling with the crisis of Boko Haram insurgency, the challenge of insecurity in Nigeria took another wave of reinforcement when another violent group, labelled as Fulani Herdsmen, suddenly complicated the problem of insecurity by allegedly invading almost all the regions in the country, killing the indigenous people in those territories with their cattle destroying their farms, vegetation and desecrating sacred places in those territories.

The upsurge of violence from the Fulani Herdsmen towards other ethnic groups in various regions of the nation erupted several ethnic reactions. Fear and suspicion greatly arose among other ethnic groups as their lives and properties are open to the risk of insecurity due to the incapacity of the federal government despite the various security outfits set up by her, to curb this growing violence in the nation. Accordingly, the failure of the federal government to provide a formidable security system directly saddles the state governments, on the one hand, with the task of ensuring the safety of their people. However, on the other hand, it places the onus of ensuring personal security on the shoulders of the individuals in the nation. The interface between state and individual security systems will be discussed later.

The fourth paradox is the paradox of identity and resource control. There are over two hundred different ethnic groups in Nigeria. However, three, Hausa, Yoruba and Igbo, are said to be major. Within the federation that recognizes only three major ethnic groups amid over two hundred sub-others, other ethnic groups, thinking they are subservient, are normally not comfortable with such tyrannical arrangement. Consequently, such phenomena as consciousness of identity, tribal sensitivity and clamour for resource control are inevitable. As a result, other ethnic extractions struggle with the domineering system that gives national recognition only to the so-called three major ethnic groups. Hence, clamour for autonomy, restructure and other related emotional concepts are the famous songs of the day in Nigeria. Apart from that, however, there is a more crucial issue that borders on resource control.

Nigeria operates a mono-directional economy that relies mainly on oil as the only source of income. However, the wealth that the three major ethnic groups together with others depend on is derived from the regional area of one of the minority ethnic groups – the Niger Delta together with the Ogonni lands. This oil is extracted and controlled by the Federal Government of Nigeria and it is used for the development of other regions to the detriment of the areas from where it is derived. The distribution of resources, therefore, serves as a root cause for other problems in the nation. Edlyne Anugwom lucidly captures this when she explains that:

The issue of resource distribution in Nigeria is webbed around the forces of ethnicity, ethnonationalism, the politics of derivation and a weak state structure that vitiates both development and fairness in resource distribution. These issues set the stage for the marginalisation of the oil-producing minorities (used here about the ethnic minority groups in the South-South zone of Nigeria from whose environment Nigeria derives its crude oil resources) who in recent years may have risen to the challenges posed by the politicisation of resource control in Nigeria[25].

Asides from the absence of justice and fairness in the distribution of the resources that are derived from the Niger-Delta region, the activities of oil extractors leave certain direct hazardous effects on the land and the people inhabiting the region. The said region was degraded and impoverished[26] to the extent that its inhabitants feel exploited, cheated, taken for granted and uncomfortable. This has provoked a series of agitation from the military era to this present time[27]. Consequently, clamour for resource control is part of the inevitable realities in Nigeria. William Idowu, succinctly explains that 'the hallmark of ethnicity in Nigeria is group opposition and competition for political power and the resources it controls'[28]. This is the case in Nigeria. The indigenes of those areas where oil is being extracted demand self-autonomy, self-determination and control over the resources that were discovered in their areas[29]. This is to prevent the domination of the Federal Government of Nigeria and the parasitic benefits which other ethnic groups derive from that domination. That being the case, the grievances were demonstrated in form of kidnapping, vandalism and terrorism, before it officially attracted an amnesty from the Federal Government of Nigeria in 2007 during the administration of President Yar Adua. Before that time, however, several organisations have been established to address the issue of marginalisation and clamour for resource control. Some of those organizations are Oil Mineral Producing Area Development (OMPADEC) and Niger Delta Development Co-operation (NDDC)[30]. Despite this, the efforts to suppress the agitation seem, at best, repressive as several other issues such as embezzlement, misappropriation and mismanagement by the organisations put in place to take care of the situation have arisen!

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25. Anugwom, Edlyne. "Oil Minorities and the Politics of Resource Control in Nigeria." *Africa Development*. 30;4 (2005): 90.

26. See Martin, Meredith, Op.cit., 576-579.

27. The execution of the Ogoni nine (9) over the Niger-Delta course was during the military rule, precisely during Abacha's regime in 1994.

28. Idowu, William. "Citizenship, Alienation and Conflicts in Nigeria." *Africa Development*. 24.1&2.(1999): 44.

29. See J.O. Famakinwa, "Nationalism, Class and Resource Control in Nigeria." In Sola Akinrinade, Dipo Fashina & David O. Ogungbile (Eds) *The Humanities, Nationalism and Democracy*. Ile-Ife, Faculty of Arts, Obafemi Awolowo University. 2006. 176.

30. J. O. Famakinwa. "Nationalism, Class and Resource Control in Nigeria." 2006. 186.

The fifth paradox identified by Mazrui is that of modern weapon and pre-modern army[31]. This was explained in form of the inability of African leaders to cope with the sophisticated security legacy left behind by the colonialists and their inability to entrench their security system while hanging tenaciously to the inherited legacy of the colonial masters – which they hardly can handle. This is largely the case with Nigeria. In addition to Mazrui's point here, those political and economic theories such as democracy, equality, autonomy, restructuring, etcetera, are part of the modern weapons which are (mis)handled by the pre-modern army. Nigerian democratic system, for instance, is nowhere near the shadow of the kind of democracy practised in the Western world. The reason for this is not far-fetched – we hardly can handle those weapons effectively like their original owners and instead of jettisoning them for our own political cum economic theories, we hold them tightly to the bosom. Decrying the special preference African leaders have for foreign political concepts and policies and the terrible eventualities such attitude has on African countries generally, Lagunju laments that 'regrettably, Africa has not deemed it fit to put its feet down and insist on homegrown alternatives that would serve its people'[32].

The last paradox is civil war and interstate conflicts[33]. The Nigerian civil war was fought between 1967 and 1970 during the military era when one of the major ethnic groups, the Igbos, felt that they were no longer comfortable in the entity called Nigeria because of the great murder and massacre unleashed on them in the north. The murder of the Igbo people in the north by the Hausa were a form of reprisal killings for the coup organised and executed in 1966 by some Igbo army officers[34]. They opted for secession and declared their own Sovereign State called Biafra[35]. This, however, instigated a civil war which left an indelible mark on the nation. The seceding ethnic group were forcibly retrieved from the rest of the nation. Nevertheless, that did not resolve the problem at all as all the ethnic groups in the nation are living in utter discontentment with one another.

On several occasions, ethnic clashes broke out and people were killed. Following this, various groups of activists arose, agitating for different ethnic-oriented courses. In the Niger-Delta area, the Ijaw Youth Council arose. In the East, the Igbo People's Congress[36] and the Movement for the Actualisation of the Sovereign State of Biafra, clamouring for the interests of the Igbos, insist on dissociating themselves from the entity called Nigeria. In the

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31. Mazrui, Ali, Op.cit., 480.

32. Abimbola Lagunju, 2005. *The African in the Mirror*. Ibadan: Tomio Publishing House, 49.

33. Mazrui, Ali, Op.cit., 481.

34. See Achebe, Chinua. *There was a Country*, 80-84.

35. Achebe, Chinua, Op.cit., 92.

36. See Martin, Meredith. Op.cit., 582-587

Southwest, the Oodua People's Congress championed the course of the Yoruba, and in the north, the Arewa Youth Movement fight for the interest of the Northerners. Accordingly, tension is everywhere in the nation. In late 2017, a strange phenomenon called hate speech broke out in the nation amongst different ethnic groups and everywhere was badly tensed – the Igbo were against the Hausas; the Hausa against the Igbo and the Yoruba etc. This went on and on until it resulted in an inter-ethnic issuance of ultimatum[37]. All these paradoxes as explained above are the major factors militating against security in Nigeria and they consistently threaten the cooperative coexistence of the nation.

The Urge for Self-Preservation: Individual versus State Security in Nigeria

Within the federation of Nigeria, we can divide the security system into two stages. The first federal, which is controlled by the federal government; the second is state and it is controlled by the state government. There are thirty-six (36) states in Nigeria with their various governors. While the federal government is responsible for the security of the entire nation, constituting the thirty-six states, the state government is responsible for the security of its immediate state. In that wise, each state caters for the safety of its people.

However, in a multi-ethnic nation like Nigeria, the state security system is somehow complicated. This is because almost every ethnic group occupies each state. Hence, the state security system is somehow tailored alone ethnic line. In the Southwestern region of the nation, for instance, six states belong to the Yoruba ethnic group. The governors of these six states, due to the invasion of their geopolitical zone by the Fulani Herdsmen from the far North and the outrageous consequences such invasion leaves on the people of the zone, organised a regional security summit in Ibadan. The outcome of this summit is the establishment of the Western Nigerian Security Network (WNSN) also called *Operation Amotekun*, which will function only in the six states of the Southwestern geopolitical zone[38].

The action of the Southwestern governors invited reactions and criticisms from different angles. The federal government stoutly kicked against the development but its condemnation of the action became flimsy in the face of its inability to provide a formidable security system that will be effective in all the states in the nation. This security outfit has been established with full constitutional backing in the Southwest to complement the effort of

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37. The phenomenon of hate speech spread like a wild inferno among the different ethnic groups in Nigeria. This started in late 2017 and extended to the early period of 2018.

38. This meeting was held in Ibadan, the capital city of Oyo in June 2019 and the Security system was launched in January 2020.

the federal government and other security parastatals in the Southwest. Hence, it is the only regional security system in Nigeria.

Now, we have distinguished between federal and state security systems. Both can be concisely summed up as government security. However, there is another very important level of security, which can be called individual security. In the stark failure of the federal and state governments to secure the lives and properties of their people, asides from the burden of individuals, ensuring personal security, they have to bear the burden of personally ensuring communal security, which should otherwise be the function of the state. If, for instance, a citizen suspects or confirms an obvious threat of life, the protection of the government is not assured, it is largely the responsibility of the citizen to defend herself or himself. This is exactly where a stanza of one poem in Gbemisola Adeoti's *Naked Soles* becomes compelling. The poem goes thus:

> *How can I,*
> *Offspring of the spring*
> *Fold my arms*
> *Around my shoulders*
> *When others unfold ammunitions*
> *Across the borders?*
> *But I'm the son of the Sun*
> *That swathes friend and foe*
> *Whether in wealth or woe*[39].

The above stanza portrays a state of lawlessness and the demonstration of large-scale violence, where the individual must repent from being inactive and passive to ensure his safety. The persistent failure of the government of

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39. This stanza was taken from the poem titled *Pun fair* in Gbemisola Adeoti, 2005. *Naked Soles*. Ibadan: Kraft Books Limited, 84. This is the full poem:

> *How can I,*
> *Offspring of the spring*
> *Fold my arms*
> *Around my shoulders*
> *When others unfold ammunitions*
> *Across the borders?*
> *But I'm the son of the Sun*
> *That swathes friend and foe*
> *Whether in wealth or woe.*
>
> *There can be no reparation*
> *For failed preparation*
> *Each faltering step draws the unwary*
> *Into tearful pit.*
>
> *Where deference makes the difference*
> *Between serenity and senility,*
> *The wide wild road will*
> *End at the square of doom.*

Nigeria to provide a formidable security system seems to serve as a warrant for the individual security system where everyone would want to do anything to avoid being killed by another person. This is not surprising at all – some philosophers have argued it. For example, Thomas Hobbes and John Locke provided some hypothetical rationalization that self-preservation is the first right human beings possess and that right, for them, is essentially inalienable.

In the Hobbesian state of nature, the rights of the individuals to secure themselves were sacrificed for the consideration of a superior security system from the government.[40] However, the failure of the government to secure the lives of the individuals automatically threatens its (the government's) right to their obedience. This is because security is the main consideration of the contract. In fact, in Lockean contractarianism, insecurity of life and property even in civil society automatically invalidates the tenets of the contract and renders its forces impotent on the citizens. This is because survival is a prerequisite to the realisation of every other thing. One needs to first be alive to become anything. As rightly stated by Lagunju:

> The primary duty of the collective, under any pretext connoting an organized entity, lies in enhancing the chances of its survival by drawing on the collective effort and resources to provide a conducive environment for individual survival. Survival thus becomes a crucial social responsibility of the collective towards individual members. In this situation, the individual, unhampered by inconsequential trivialities of life, feel free to harness his creative resources towards improving the quality of his existence and by extension, the quality of existence of the collective[41].

An unstable nation cannot in any way give room to the development and fulfilment of the individuals living in it. Likewise, if the individuals in a nation are not able to realize their self-fulfilment, it will have certain negative effects on the growth of the nation itself. Nevertheless, in a nation where everyone results to taking personal security precautions due to the ineffectiveness of the government, lawlessness and anarchy loom! This is also a barrier to the pleasurable life and self-realisation which the individual so desires within the collective whole which he/she finds him/herself. Consequently, instead of tempting the individual to settle for personal security measure, the government, in every way possible, ought to buckle up and ensure the security of the people. This, however, will be difficult especially in a multi-ethnic nation like Nigeria if the six paradoxes identified and discussed in the previous sections are not properly taken into consideration and addressed.

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40. Hobbes, Thomas - Edwin Curley (ed.) *Leviathan*. Cambridge: Hackett Publishing Company, 1994, 86

41. Lagunju, Abimbola, *The African in the Mirror*, Ibadan: Tomio Publishing House, 2005, 17.

Tackling the Paradoxes: An Imperative for Keeping the Peace

Given the outline of the metaphysics of security challenge and the paradoxes of violence in Nigeria, the imperative question is "How can Nigeria grow beyond the level of violence?" How do we outstep this national, or to speak more generally, the continental quagmire of insecurity? While recognising that, given human nature and differences, violence is probably a state of affair that can hardly be eradicated; some steps must be taken to reduce the spate of violence that threatens the sanctity of human life and unity of people in Nigeria. The solution lies in interrogating the six paradoxes of violence as outlined.

First, the government of Nigeria must understand the incessant propensity to violence, and that insecurity in Nigeria is firmly rooted in the six paradoxes of post-colonial violence as outlined. To resolve a problem, it is imperative to understand the nature of the problem; hence, paying attention to the metaphysics of insecurity in Nigeria is non-negotiable. Hence, the first attempt towards going beyond a simple and haphazard approach towards tackling insecurity and violence requires an intellectual exercise. Addressing the poor state of education and research in Nigeria will distract the focus of the paper. Education is the bedrock of development and research for any country, but the failure of the Federal Government of Nigeria to invest heavily in it reflects in the ignorance of the ontology of insecurity in Nigeria. When the government is ready to tackle the problem of insecurity in Nigeria, from its ontology, it will have to invest in research.

Research on the ontology of violence in Nigeria will not only unravel the six paradoxes of post-colonial violence, properly identify their effects on Nigeria and most likely propose the best approaches to conflict resolution based on the nature and peculiarities of violence in Nigeria. This does not only call for heavy investment in research, but also for a sincere desire to address the problem of violence and insecurity in Nigeria. While education is not a solution to violence, it plays a crucial role in conflict resolution. Hence, unravelling the nature or ontology of violence in Nigeria is a proper way to start.

Second, there must be a deep sense of justice if Nigeria is ready to tackle the problem of violence. The Nigerian government, both past and present, has a way of throwing panels up in the face of violence and eventually, victims are denied justice, as the recommendations of the panel are never implemented. On October 12, 2001, nineteen mutilated bodies of some Nigerian soldiers, previously reportedly abducted, were found in Zaki Biam, Benue State. On a revenge mission, some soldiers from the Nigerian army allegedly invited residents for a meeting on the 22nd of October, separated the men from the women, and in a paradox of modern weapon and pre-modern army, indiscriminately opened fire on the men. At least one hundred men

were reported to have died in the massacre[42]. In 2001, a judicial commission of inquiry was set up to investigate the massacre and the report was submitted[43]. To date, nobody has been held accountable for the murder of the military men and the massacre that followed.

In another chilling case of a paradox of modern weapon and pre-modern army, armed men allegedly murdered six Nigerians. A panel of inquiry set up found and reported that the killings were orchestrated by Ibrahim Danjuma, a deputy commissioner of police, who ordered some junior officers to open fire on the innocent victims. Only five of the junior officers faced trial, two were convicted, while Ibrahim Danjuma was promoted and is still a police officer to date[44]. In 2008, Prince Bola Ajibola Commission of inquiry was set up to investigate a series of ethnic and religious crisis in Jos, Plateau state, which left over 2000 people dead. The inquiry indicted some political figures and the report was submitted[45]. To date, nobody has been convicted of any crime and the crisis and violence in those areas are still happening. Rather than implement the recommendations of the Prince Bola Ajibola inquiry panel, in 2010, another panel, Solomon Lar panel of inquiry, was set up to investigate violence in the same Plateau state, recommendations were once again made and the report was submitted, but nothing was implemented.

These are just a few examples of how the Nigerian government, both past and present, fail to acknowledge the roles and responsibilities of actors in a wave of conflicts, violence and human rights abuse. Thus, victims are forced to relive the horrors of the injustice meted out to them or to seek revenge on their terms. Without a sincere sense of justice, there can be no genuine conflict resolution. There must be an acknowledgment of wrongdoing, there must be accountability, there must be justice, punishment where

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42. Human Rights Watch. 2001. October 25, "Nigeria: Soldiers Massacre Civilians in Revenge Attack in Benue State." Retrieved from: https://www.hrw.org/he/node/225946 Accessed October 25, 2020, 2:46 pm.

43. BBC News. 2001. November 11, "Inquiry Planned Into Nigerian Killings." Retrieved from: http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/africa/1650848.stm Accessed October 29, 2020, 8:32 pm.

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44. Premium Times. 2020. June 8. "Apo Six: 15 Years after Gruesome Police Killings, Families Still Demand Justice." Retrieved from: https://www.premiumtimesng.com/news/headlines/396631-apo-six-15-years-after-gruesome-police-killing-families-still-demand-justice.html Accessed October 29, 2020, 8:39 pm.

45. Premium Times, "Five years after, Plateau State Government to release Ajibola Report on Jos crisis". Retrieved from: https://www.premiumtimesng.com/tag/justice-bola-ajibola-commission-of-inquiry Accessed October 29. 2020, 8:35 pm.

necessary and compensation where necessary. Without justice in Nigeria, there can be no sincere conflict resolution.

Conclusion

From the foregoing, the paper examined the problem of insecurity in Nigeria and the paradoxes that need to be addressed if the nation ever hopes to deal meaningfully and honestly, with the challenge of insecurity that is drifting it apart. The paper identified the six paradoxes of violence as outlined by Ali Mazrui, then analysed how these six paradoxes serve as the major barriers to the peaceful coexistence of people in Nigeria, and how they persistently threaten the unity of the nation at any slight provocation. The paper also suggested some ways by which these paradoxes can be addressed thereby ensuring peace and social stability.

Asides from arguing that the root causes of insecurity are the six mentioned paradoxes, the paper concluded that there is a need to invest in research and adopt a deep sense of justice in addressing the problems of violence and insecurity in Nigeria. This is because these two factors are prerequisite to the economic, political and psychological development of the individuals in the nation and by extension, the progress and development of the nation.

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ABSTRACT

It is incontrovertible that the problem of insecurity is part of the ravening realities in the current civil society. It is a general problem facing the whole world. However, it is more pronounced in some parts of the world than in others. In African countries, especially in Nigeria, insecurity has been a seemingly insurmountable problem. It has rendered all attempts made by the government and individuals to stabilize the country thereby strengthening the principle of social co-operation, harmony and peaceful coexistence among citizens, abortive. This paper argued that security seems to be an illusion in an African country like Nigeria because all attempts by the government to ensure stability do not put into consideration the 'six paradoxes of violence' largely responsible for insecurity.

The paper examined the problem of insecurity in Nigeria and the paradoxes that need to be addressed if the nation ever hopes to deal meaningfully and honestly, with the challenge of insecurity that is drifting it apart. The paper identified the six

paradoxes of violence as outlined by Ali Mazrui, then analysed how these six para-
doxes serve as the major barriers to the peaceful coexistence of people in Nigeria,
and how they persistently threaten the unity of the nation at any slight provocation.
The paper also suggested some ways by which these paradoxes can be addressed
thereby ensuring a level of peace and social stability.