



Managing Security *in a* **Globalised World**

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The Theatre Option in the Management of Radicalisation and Radicalised Groups in Nigeria

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INTRODUCTION

Theatre is considered to be both the most vital and conservative among the arts (Saro, 2009:41). The collective nature of the performing arts and its elements assures theatre's social viability. On one hand, a theatre production is often a creation and reflection of artists with diverse social backgrounds, yet on the other, it is at the same time an implicit or explicit representation of one social group — the artists.

In essence, every theatrical performance can be analysed as a social event, an event with its own unique and playful nature, able to create special social boundaries and energy among performers, among spectators, and between the performers and the audience. Such theatrical exercises might emanate from the borders of certain aesthetic occurrences, and influence society in general. It is in recognition of the potentials of theatre that Henry Bell-Gam submits that:

Government should encourage the use of theatre as an enlightenment organ for companies and host communities. This will encourage harmonious relationship between the oil companies and their host communities (199).

Historically, the traditional African theatre is not an exception in its conflict resolution and peace formation crusade. It is, indeed, a statement

of fact that Nigeria has witnessed more violence than any other nation in the sub-Sahara. Such violence are those between communities, state sponsored which has led to the death of innocent people, violence instigated by and carried out by the youths of particular communities against agents of the state, violence sponsored and instigated by multinational oil servicing companies, against restive communities, and a host of others. This paper, therefore, using the 'medium of theatre' looks at the key figures (individuals-'radicals') and the radicalised groups within our society.

The paper tries to answer questions such as, How dangerous are these groups to our national stability? Is the existence of the radicalised groups a source of development to our national polity or a threat to it? What then is the best approach to tackling their recklessness? It further solicits the adoption of 'theatre option' in the management of the group conflict. This is to act as catalysts that stimulate change in the mode of individual behaviour and perception of thoughts in order to create a peaceful co-existence among the different ethno-religious groups in the country. It informs Yetunde Akorede's (1993) idea that:

Theatre should be the classroom, X-ray room or a laboratory, full of opportunity for educating, re-orienting and awakening the audience to the realities of their time (54).

Radicalisation and Radicalised groups in Nigeria

The term 'Radicalisation' and 'Radicalised groups' is devised to mean the individuals and groups involved in militant ethnic movements in Nigeria. The 'radicalised' groups consist of irregular or paramilitary personnel made up of civilians (both young and adult), who might have received a form of military training and are armed with small arms and light weapons which they use illegally. The early 1990s in Nigerian history witnessed unprecedented fame for ethnic militias, when Oodua Peoples Congress was formed in Southwestern part of the country. Dramatically, other regions followed in their formations numbering about 5 to-date namely; the Oodua People Congress, OPC; the Bakassi Boys, in the Southeast; Egbesu Boys of Africa, in the South-south; Arewa Peoples' Congress, APC, in the north and the latest dreaded Boko Haram from the north.

It has been observed that these groups emerged at different times and operated in different parts of the country but with common trends that cut

across them. Ironically, the groups or militias were set up to protect interests that are more sectional in approach which were perceived as being threatened by either development at the regional level or at the federal level.

As a matter of fact, this study observed that the personality or ethnic configuration of the person at the centre (helm of affairs), dictates or serves as a pointer or shift to where or which part of the aggrieved area comes up with a group. It perhaps informs Leroy Vail's (1989) idea that ethnicity has been treated as a

'cultural ghost . . .' an atavistic residue deriving from the distant past of rural Africa . . . (that) should have evaporated with the passage of time (but) continues to refuse to obey laws of social and political change .

Ethnic consciousness is, in this view, a form of collective irrationality.

Contrary to this idea, Coleman (1971) argues that some of the most prominent features of the social and economic ferment in Nigeria could be traced, directly or indirectly, to Western intrusion, which created new tensions, reinforced old ones and embittered economic insecurity, as well as provoking other militant attitudes and values. It is obvious that the activities of these groups disorganised the country and affected areas and they claim to fight for the rights of their ethnic groups and in particular to rectify perceived exclusion, injustice, economic hardships through government policies, among others.

This paper based on the above scenario discusses few of the groups and agree with Sagay (2008:43) that:

In any incipient dispute bearing the imprint of perceived societal injustice and historical wrongs, of which the Niger Delta is a classic example, conflict analysis must, *a priori*, precede conflict resolution.

A Brief Survey of Some Radicalised Groups

Oodua Peoples Congress, OPC

The formation of the OPC is traceable to 24 August, 1994 after the annulment of the June 12 1993 presidential elections which were widely believed to have been won by M.K.O. Abiola. The consequences of such act and further marginalisation of the Yoruba prompted Dr. Fredrick Fasehun to form the OPC.

The drama surrounding the formation of OPC includes the frustration

about the inability of Obafemi Awolowo to win the election to become the leader of Nigeria thrice in the First and Second Republics — to Moshood Abiola. Both, as the group argued, were 'robbed off their victory' in 1979, 1983 and in 1994. One year after the annulment, in June 1994, Abiola was encouraged by a coalition National Democratic Coalition (NADECO), declared himself President and challenged General Sani Abacha to vacate power. He was arrested and detained. He eventually died in detention under circumstances in July 1998.

According to Fasehun (2002), three people who were popular market leaders at Mushin Area of Lagos, one Mrs Adebowale (popularly known as Iya Ijebu), Alhaji Ibrahim (popularly called Baba Oja) and Mr. Taiwo, were contacted. Each of them brought one other person along for the inaugural meeting held on 29 August, 1994. But later, two educated young friends of Fasehun joined, creating in-roads for the membership of more educated elite including Barrister Oladele, Baba Omojola and Femi Falana, the popular lawyer and activist.

The *modus operandi* of OPC covers a very wide spectrum involving the call for a boycott of the local government elections scheduled for December 1998; called for a Sovereign National Conference during the transition programme of the government headed by General Abdulsalami Abubakar; involved in the ethnic clash that occurred in Sagamu on 17 July 1999, which led to a clash between Hausa and Yoruba people due to the death of a Hausa woman, causing a reprisal attack in Kano on 22 July 1999; and the Ojo Junction crisis on 5 January, 2000, among others.

The above illustrated that the activities of the OPC raised several issues that bothered on national security and the corporate existence of Nigeria. Despite internal factions within OPC, there were recorded violent clashes and bloody clashes with the other ethnic groups, especially in Lagos and Ogun States, and with the police.

Bakassi Boys

Bakassi Boys Movement did not enjoy any constitutional status. "Bakassi Boys" is the popular name given to a group of vigilante youths in the southeastern states of Nigeria (Elaigwu, 2002). The group was formed to curb the menace of armed robberies, ritual killings and other social vices, which had defied the efforts of the ill-equipped Nigeria police, in Anambra State in the eastern parts of the country.

The group comprised youngmen armed with weapons of violence and traditional charms. Elaigwu reported that they “search for and execute brutally, their victims through extra-judicial killings”, and who often “enjoy legitimate financial, moral and spiritual backing of their governments and people”. The group enjoyed the legitimacy of their activities by the Anambra State government, but was seen by the Federal Government as unconstitutional which was contrary to the respect for human rights, and the required peace and stability of the country. Unlike OPC, Bakassi Boys degenerated into lawlessness and resulted into ethnic violence which constituted a threat to its stability and democracy.

Egbesu Boys of Africa

The Egbesu is a deity and belief system in Ijawland. It is a unifying spirit among the Ijaws standing for truth and justice. Egbesu is consulted to assist and fortify warriors in turbulent times, and determines when the cause of war is justified. Egbesu Boys of Africa was the common fighting arm of all the militant Ijaw groups as coordinated by Ijaw Youth Council, IYC.

The group became prominent following the increased agitation and militancy resulting from social neglect, economic and political marginalisation and underdevelopment of Ijawland by the oil companies and the Nigerian state. The militant nature of the youths in their approach prompted the Federal Government and the oil companies to be more repressive in their response to issues. It brought about heavy military — Nigerian Navy and the Police — into the Niger Delta region in their bid to protect oil facilities and in harassing militant elements and innocent citizens.

Egbesu Boys had ritual marks on their bodies during initiation and tied red or white bands on their heads during operations. They were armed with guns and ammunition. The group was involved in series of conflicts within and outside Ijawland. The Egbesu Boys was basically set up to correct alleged neglect, underdevelopment, marginalisation and injustice, especially with regard to access to the rich oil resources of the Niger Delta, in particular those extracted from Ijawland (Ikelegbe, 2001).

Arewa People's Congress (APC)

The Arewa Peoples Congress (APC) came into existence in December 1999, at the earlier part of the new civilian dispensation of President

Olusegun Obasanjo. The APC was a manifestation of elite discontent, an instrument of elite protest against the policies and actions of a civilian regime which they perceived as having robbed them of the privileges they had enjoyed.

The aim of the APC was to protect the interests of the larger geopolitical North. It was, therefore, formed primarily to counter the activities of the OPC and to ‘protect’ northerners who were seen to be the victims of its violence (Asaph Zádok, 1999).

Boko Haram

Sunna Lidda'awati Wal-Jihad, better known by its Hausa name “Boko Haram”, is a jihadist terrorist organisation based in the northeast of Nigeria. It is a movement which strongly opposes man-made laws. It was reported to have been founded in 2002 by Mohammed Yusuf. The movement which translates Boko Haram as “Western education is sacrilege” or “a sin”, is divided into three factions and in 2011 was responsible for more than 450 killings in Nigeria (Aljazeera, 2011:12-24).

The group was founded in the city of Maiduguri with the aim of establishing a Shari'a government in Bornu State. Boko Haram is considered to be a major terrorist threat affecting Nigeria and other countries.

THEATRE OPTION IN THE MANAGEMENT OF RADICALISATION AND RADICALISED GROUPS

Temple Hauptfleish (1997) sees theatre as a primary site for social activity, aimed at setting up a communicative transaction between willing participants within a particular social context. Theatre, of course, is far more than a mere verbal medium but a total communication. It forms a veritable tool in activities that tend to re-form or re-shape society. It has been ably observed by Asagba (2010) that “liberation struggles all over the world have proved to be a rich source of raw materials for creative writers and film makers . . .” (69). Therefore, the main thrust of theatre is to investigate the ways in which society, both as an institution and as an art form, inter-relates and how it affects the people positively in the realisation of their goals.

Within and outside the academic environment, theatre practitioners and scholars have severally created drama or theatre to act as checks and

balances on the activities of government. This trend of activities involved those of 'radicalisation' and the 'radicalised groups', where individuals and groups (characters) are created for those in government and the people to actually capture the imminent scenario of governance and the required skills in the management of the people and resources.

This paper, from the laid down examples cited and to further assist governance, suggests the application of theatre in the management of the people. Theatre from the perspectives of this paper will be approached through the art of performance (music, dance and drama). Creative works through this medium could further be broken down into other forms for people's consumption or comprehension. Such approaches include the application of community theatre development (tfd), the use of stage performances (live theatre), recorded performances (episodic), within the local and urban communities through staging of playlets, choreographies, librettos, scripted plays, comedy, poetry, talk-shows in form of metaphoric expressions, radio dramas (in different etno-cultural languages), jingles (on radio and television), organised workshops and seminars, among others.

The first sets comprising playlets, choreographies, librettos, scripted plays, comedy relates directly to a commitment to theatrical 'realism', a specific theoretical position deriving from a concept of the play as a mirror of life, and flavoured with significant developments in Western theatre as it bothers on changes in our immediate environment. The works of playwrights like Wole Soyinka, Ola Rotimi, Zulu Sofola, Femi Osofisan, Wale Ogunyemi, and others come on board with attendant societal issues.

In addition, the use of choreographic or dance and musical expressions could be employed for short and direct presentations where the people easily identifies themselves with the presentations and learn a lot from such theatre experience. The use of dialectal forms for comic effect is perhaps the oldest of all, dating back to Aristophanes and Greek comedy. Comic use of dialectal and similar forms, of course, relies heavily on such standard comic techniques as stereotyping, exaggeration and caricature, and leads to the use of extremely artificial language forms which are intended to capitalise on the non-standard aspects of the particular variant.

Poetry is another theatre element which is somewhat esoteric use of dialectal forms, truly successful examples of which are those artists that are verse in traditional language of their people.

CONCLUSION

The activities of the radicalised groups is no doubt a complex and disturbing one. Peacemaking efforts geared towards it entails a lot of strategies and needs to be targeted at the various means of simplifying the group's complexities. Essentially, dialogue forms one of the basic instruments or weapons for peace making, which is presently lacking in Nigeria's case. Why? There is the need to understand the psyche of the groups and de-emphasise some of their beliefs or work on their psychologies through proper identifications of their needs/demands. Do let us create 'dramas of life', making statements of facts, dis-abusing their perceptions about the 'fake' world that they have built around themselves. We equally need to try to bring them out of the mirage, darkness and illuminate their world with the realities of existence.

Importantly, there is the need for us to understand the dimension of their struggle and render the service of mediation, peacemaking, peacekeeping and subsequent management of the groups. Theatre creates enabling rooms for the achievement of peace and harmonious relationships between different group of people within our society.

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20 Reflections on Security Sector and Conflict Management in Nigeria's Fourth Republic

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INTRODUCTION

Nigeria is an archetypal plural society characterised by divergent languages, cultures and ethnic groups. With over 400 ethnic groups, belonging to several religious sects, Nigeria since independence has remained a multi-ethnic nation-state, which has been grappling and trying to cope with the problem of ethnicity on the one hand, and the problem of ethno-religious diversity on the other. This is because, over the years, the phenomena of ethnicity and religious intolerance have led to incessant recurrence of inter-communal and ethno-religious conflicts (Salawu, 2010).

Of the three major ethnic groups (Hausa-Fulani, Igbo and Yoruba), the Hausa-Fulani faction became the dominant faction, which controlled the federal power structure for about 30 years. Consequently, the other two major contenders have had cause to complain of marginalisation too. Indeed, such feelings of marginalisation partly accounted for the civil war that nearly dismembered the country between 1967 and 1970 (Babawale, 2001). Besides, there is a strong correlation between religious differences and ethnic and regional diversity. The north, dominated by the large Hausa and Fulani ethnic groups, is predominantly Muslim with significant numbers of Christians.

The character of the Nigerian state is responsible for the country's deepening ethno-religious contradictions. This plural nature originates a