

EXISTENTIALISM AND HUMAN SECURITY: TOWARDS A SUSTAINABLE PEACE IN NIGERIA

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Abstract

The purpose of this paper is on how to build sustainable peace in Nigeria using the concepts of existentialism and human security. Multiple security challenges have befallen Nigeria in the last two decades and they are not yet completely abated. Numerous security problems confronting the country include; Boko- haram, banditry, herder/ farmer clash, kidnapping, ritual killings, ethnic conflicts, and religious conflict. Nigeria is in dire need of sustainable peace and security and there is no contending the fact that security is a prerequisite for sustainable peace. The Federal government and the sub- nationals have continued to spend millions of dollars every year on security but mostly on physical security. Thousands of lives have been lost which includes civilians and security personnel, yet insecurity persists. The scenario painted above has not only affected the state of peace in the country, but has also reduced the quality of human existence making it a subject for philosophy of human existence also known as existentialism. Hence, the paper establishes a nexus between philosophy of human existence and the problem of insecurity in Nigeria. However, the thesis of the work is that Nigeria will achieve more in surmounting her security challenges and also attain sustainable peace if she can focus and invest more in human security without leaving physical security unattended to. The paper adopts an eclectic approach of analytical and descriptive research design.

Keywords: Existentialism, Human Security and Peace

1.0. Introduction

Peace is a necessary desire of any society. It is in fact a fundamental aspiration not just for countries but also individuals and communities. It has economic, social, political, psychological, and environmental impacts on any nation. No country can experience true growth and development under atmosphere of conflict, violence and tension. Sustainable peace simply means a lasting peace or a state of peace that is maintained overtime. It addresses the root causes of violence or conflict and in the same vein promotes social, economic and environmental development

Resultantly, sustainable peace has a direct relationship with sustainable development which is an effort “to meet the needs of the present without compromising the ability of the future generations to meet their needs”¹. Hence, sustainable peace has implications for the prosperity of today and of the future. Therefore, it becomes imperative for countries not just to be interested in achieving peace but sustainable peace.

Nigeria from Independence in 1960 had been making efforts to keep the peace of the country especially because of the multi-ethnic nature of the country. The country is said to have over five hundred ethnic groups. Keeping the peace of Nigeria is indeed a serious task. The need to keep the peace of the country was one of the reasons the country changed from parliamentary system of government to federal system of government in 1979. Despite this and other efforts, peace has eluded some parts of the country. The last two decades have witnessed more conflicts and violence than ever before.

¹ Claude Brunderlin, “People’s Security as a New Measure of Global Stability” RICR/IRRC. June 2001, p,84

The various security challenges like the Boko-Haram, Banditry, Farmer-herder clashes, Biafra secessionist agitation, Niger-Delta Militancy, kidnapping, ethnic conflicts and many more have made the nation's search to peace elusive. All the six geo-political regions (North West, North East, North Central, South West, South East and South - South) are all affected though some are more affected than the other. The imperative question as a result is; can Nigeria ever attain sustainable peace? A form of peace that will not only last but also will be experienced by all regions and ethnic groups in the country.

Answer to the above questions is at the heart of this paper. Hence, the thesis of this paper is that the application of the principle of existentialism and human security can help Nigeria in her quest to achieve sustainable peace. Though the two concepts are not products of the same discipline, they are both individual and people centered. Hence, they are concerned about the peace of the individuals and of the people. While existentialism is a philosophical concept, human security is a concept used in security, strategic peace and conflict studies. Finding a nexus between existentialism, human security and sustainable peace is at the heart of this paper.

Hence, the paper puts the concept of existentialism, human security and sustainable peace in perspective. It establishes a nexus between them in a manner that will help Nigeria achieve sustainable peace. It is hoped that the outcome of this paper will assist security experts, the various military organizations and the academic environment in their quest to help Nigeria achieve sustainable peace.

Human Security

The need for security in any country cannot be over-emphasized. This is because it has a relationship with economic and political prosperity. Peaceful living and co-existence is also not possible without it. This is the reason nations of the world spend extensively on security. All tiers of government (Federal, States and Local Government) in Nigeria spend millions of naira every month on security votes. Ndubisi opines that "without security, the state is bound to experience great difficulty in harnessing its human and material resources towards the development and promotion of general wellbeing of the people"². Alkire on the other hand asserts that "security is the assurance people have that they will continue to enjoy those things that are most important to their survival and wellbeing."³ Therefore security is imperative for human survival, national development and achievement of qualitative human existence for the people.

Ndubisi and Alkire's definition of security implies that there is a nexus between security and human existence as no meaningful human existence is possible without good security. Resultantly, development, promotion of general wellbeing of the people and the philosophy of human existence are inseparable. The government at every level needs existentialism in its desire to achieve growth, development, and prosperity for its people.

The beginning of discussion about human security is to distinguish it from traditional security. Traditional security which is also known as physical security had been the focus of nations for many years and is still the focus of many nations of the world till today. It emphasises military strength and acquisition of military equipment

² I.S. Ndubisi, *Human Security: "Dealing with the Threats to Human Existence in Nigeria"* *Studies in Politics and Society*, 2007, 5(1), p. 62

³ Sabina Alkire, *A Conceptual Framework for Human Security*, Centre for Research on inequality, Human Security and Ethnicity, Oxford, 2003

necessary to combat external and internal aggression. Soldiers are recruited and trained and military hardware and software are also purchased to achieve security⁴.

It is however important to note that despite spending so much money on traditional security, insecurity in Nigeria is yet to substantially abate. The writer is of the opinion that placing more emphasis on human security will help Nigeria in her search for solutions to her various insecurity challenges. This is not a suggestion to abandon traditional security. What then is human security?

Human security also called modern security is most often associated with the 1964 Human Development Report of Human Security drafted and promoted by Mahbub Ulhaq even though the term itself was in circulation before then. From 1968, emphasis on security began to shift away from a militarized point of view toward a political-economic strategy that prioritizes sustainable development as a means of eradicating poverty, tackle unemployment and Infrastructural deficits⁵. The target purpose is to make crime unattractive to criminals. Sustainable development is therefore seen as a panacea to insecurity. This is based on the assumption that economic and political prosperity has the capacity to discourage people from crime and violence.

This does not mean that developed countries do not have security problems but that they are able to discourage many of their citizens from involving in crime and related activities. It is possible for a country to have the best of military power and effective force and yet be open to certain kind of crime because of the prevalence of poverty, unemployment, human right abuse and economic and social inequalities.

The need for human security is also because the military alone cannot secure a nation. There are security problems outside military power. There are social and environmental problems that constitute insecurity. For instance, flood and climate change is a strong source of insecurity. The 2024 flood that ravaged Maiduguri and some other parts of Borno State rendered many homeless and jobless and by that made them prone not only to crime but also to violent activities. Human security in essence is about putting in place things that will make people happy and also discourage them from crime activities. It is not only people centered but also individual centered. This is because it focuses on improving the existential condition of the people. It addresses the welfare and protection of the individual.

The objective of human security is “to safe guard the vital core of all human lives from critical pervasive threats, in a way that is consistent with long-term human fulfillment”.⁶ Hence, human security has the power to make us achieve happiness, fulfillment, and satisfaction. It therefore promotes concepts in existentialism like individual transcendent and authentic existence. Individuals are able to see themselves beyond who they are presently and also live their lives as free entities that have the assurance that their rights and freedom are protected.

Human security first identifies the threats and then seeks to prevent individuals from threat. Additionally, human security is proactive towards threats⁷. It does not react to threats after they had happened. It opens itself to early warning

⁴ Ugo C. Okolie, *Distinction between Traditional Security and Modern Security: A Conceptual Discourse*. *Journal of Administrative Science*, Vol. 19, issue2, 2022.p. 247- 266

⁵ Sara Edson, “Human Security and International Bibliography : Working Document Prepared for the Centre for History and Economics. 2001

⁶ Lloyed Axworthy, “Human Security and Global Governance: Putting People First”. *Global Governance* , 2001, 7:2, p. 19-23

⁷ Mandel Robert, *The Changing Face of Natural Security: A Conceptual Analysis*. West Port: Connecticut Green Word Press, 1994

signals and responds. Most importantly, human security is concerned with human condition and this is where it shares the strongest similarity to existentialism.

It is not expansive but covers essential part of human life. This includes economic security, food security, health security, community security, political security, environmental security and personal security. On food security, it concerns itself with the availability and affordability of food to people. Its emphasis on economic security is on provision of employment and access to social safety. Health security concerns itself with safe water, living in safe environment, basic support during pregnancy and the delivery of good health care. Also germane to human security is political security which entails protection of human rights, promotion of rule of law, separation of power and promotion of democratic values. Environmental security is essentially about prevention of flood, water pollution, air pollution, deforestation, and the provision of irrigated land and conservation. It also concerns itself with the prevention of natural hazard such as floods, earthquakes, cyclones and draught. Community security is the six type of security covered by human security. It is about preservation of tradition, values and culture. This necessarily includes the abolition of ethnic or tribal discrimination. The last but not the least is personal security which ensures the protection of individuals against physical violence or abuse.

Human security may not cover all necessary aspects of human living but it addresses core of human needs necessary for conducive human life. It protects individual but does not obviate state security. Though poverty and violent threats are its primary concern, a country cannot choose one ahead of the other (That is, between physical and human security). When you protect the individual, the nation is indirectly protected. And by extension, the region and international community are protected.

It is important to emphasize it that, human security shares the conceptual space of human development. Human development entails the flourishing of individuals in their homes and communities. It also involves the expansion of valuable choices for the individual. Application of human security is a highway to the attainment of human development.

It is important at this point to zero in on the security situation in Nigeria and its implications for human security. Plethora of reasons has been adduced for the security problem in Nigeria. Some are of the opinion that the inadequacy of Nigeria constitution is a major reason for the security crisis in the country. That there cannot be sustainable peace until the constitution is amended or a brand new constitution is produced that is a constitution that represents the aspiration of the people. Closely related to this is the clamour for a complete restructuring of the political structure which must include the constitution. To some other, ethnic groups that want to secede like the Biafra should be allowed to go away from Nigeria. Staying together must not be by force.

The need for sustainable peace in Nigeria is as a result of the escalating rate of violence and conflict spread across the land. Boko Haram crisis in the North East, cattle rustling and banditry in the North West, herder/farmer crisis in the North Central, secessionist struggle in the South East, youth militancy in the South South and ritual killings in the South West. It is important to state that things have improved in the last one year but the country still has a long way to go.

In the midst of this security crisis, some are of the opinion that Nigerian Army, Navy, Air-force, Police and other security agents do not have sufficient weapons to fight insecurity. Others are of the opinion that, billions of naira that has been budgeted for security in recent past has not been justified or misappropriated.

The former Chief of Army Staff, Lieutenant General Tukur Buratai while in the National Assembly on February 18, 2021 to be screened for Ambassadorial nomination alluded to the need for a shift of emphasis from traditional security to human security in addressing the numerous security challenges facing the country. He said:

This security challenge...has penetrated the communities, the terrorists have won the communities to their side that is why you see a small hamlet keeping Boko Haram in those location... So, it requires the whole government approach to deal with this... The military action is just one aspect and this is one mistake we have been making. It is only the military that is seen to solve the issue of security challenges... there are so many ungovernable spaces (and) until those spaces, locations are penetrated with roads infrastructure, rail, school, and we carry everybody along, and robust foreign and diplomatic policies pursued and sustained to solve issues of insecurity⁸.

There are ideas of human security in the above statement. First, he said military action is not enough, suggesting other methods should be deployed together with military actions. He also alluded to the need for improved infrastructural and social amenities, improved education and promotion of participatory government as possible solutions to tackling Nigeria insecurity problem.

Philosophy of Human Existence

Existentialism is an important nineteenth century philosophical ideology that can be applied to many fields of study. It is applied to some specific works of certain philosophers of the late nineteenth century and the early twentieth century. These scholars may be different in their approaches and methodology, they are however united in that human action and not mere thinking should be the background of philosophy. Some of these scholars include: Soren Kierkegaard, Simon de Beauvoir, Maurice Merleau Ponty, Albert Camus, Martins Heidegger, Friedrich Nietzsche, and Jean Paul Sartre.

Existentialism is primarily concerned with the nature of human existence. Its focus is on how humans can get the best of existence. Also, it is a field that takes the individual existence as the starting point of philosophy for it is only when individuals have good life that the society can be at peace. It is however pathetic that the narrative of human existence in Africa is the opposite of what existentialism is all about. Africa still struggles with human security issues of high rate of poverty, unemployment, environmental degradation, corrupt leadership, collapsed infrastructural facilities and other issues that negatively impact on qualitative human existence.

Though existentialists are not entirely united in their approach to the problem of human existence, they agree on some basic themes or tenets of the discipline. These themes constitute their understanding of human nature and will be the focus of this section of the paper.

‘Existence precedes essence’ is a central proposition of existentialism and it describes a major fundamental characteristic of man. It means that there is no essence of human being which would somehow precede him and determine his essence⁹. This is contrary to the thoughts of essentialists like Plato and Aristotle who hold the view

⁸ Isaac Olawale Albert, *A Four Dimensional Framework for Building Peace and Security in Nigeria*, a lecture presented at the 45th birthday of Honourable Shina Abiola Peller

⁹ Wilfred Desan, *The Tragic Final: An Essay on the Philosophy of Jean- Paul Sartre*. New York: Harper Touch Books, 2007, P. 14

that everything has an essence which exists before birth. To them, part of what it is to be a good human is to adhere to one's essence. In this regard, one's essence gives one a purpose.¹⁰

Existentialism in opposition to the above asserts that existence that precedes essence is a fundamental feature of humanity. Man first exists, and then defines himself. He cannot be said to be anything before and outside his existence. The process is that man first exists then encounters himself, surges up in the world and defines himself afterwards¹¹. The implication is that man is not a predetermined being. He is not determined by anything outside his existence, not even any form of nature. No nature is affixed to man. His nature is continually developing according to the goals he sets for himself. He is what he makes himself. He cannot be seen from a fatalistic point of view. No one is born with innate personality but everyone becomes who they are by the goals they pursue and value they adopt.

An important implication of this is that, man is a continuous and not a complete project. He can be something today and another tomorrow. Every individual has a future depending on what he/she desires for himself/herself. This theme was first propounded by Jean Paul Sartre and adopted by many other existentialists. This further implies that Nigeria as a country must determine for herself the type of human condition she desires for her citizens and intentionally pursue same. An essential aspect of this is providing the best security for Nigerians. She must commit to human security for better human existence

Another important point in existentialism is that human existence is foremost about the individual and not the community. Man, in the context of existentialism, refers to an individual who is self-transcending, a conscious being who always projects into the future. He is unique; he has his own irreversible history and he is not replaceable in the society. He also has an interiority that is impenetrable but can only be accessed by him¹².

The individual, according to Sartre, is never exhausted by any of his phenomenal aspects. There is no particular perspective that reveals the entire character or nature of man. This is why "*Being-for-itself*" is different from "being-in-itself." *Being-in-itself* does not have the consciousness that transcends itself."¹³ A stone is a stone, it is what it is and in being just what it is no more no less. It is fixed, complete and without consciousness.

On the contrary, "*Being-for-itself*" is the being of the individual which has potentiality and is transcendent. It can become what it is not; it is perpetually beyond itself. It is therefore, incomplete, fluid, indeterminate, and it corresponds to the being of human consciousness. It is this process that essentially determines the nature of the individual not birth, the environment or any pre-existence negotiation or condition. .

The implication is that the individual must continue to be free to project into the future. He/she has the capacity to take a new course at any point in time. It also implies that man's character could be unpredictable depending on his choice of project. Lastly, the individual must be an *actor* not a spectator in the language of Soren Kierkegaard. To him, existence must refer to a quality in the individual, namely, his/her conscious participation in actions. Only a person who is engaged in conscious activities of will and choice can be truly said to exist.

¹⁰ Existentialism: Crash Course Philosophy. <http://m.youtube.com/watch?v=YaDyRdLmkHS>

¹¹ T. Flynn, "Existentialism", A Very Short Introduction. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006, P.77

¹² Ibid

¹³ Maurice Natanson, A Critique of Jean- Paul Sartre Ontology. Haque: Nijhoff, 1973,

Hence, human security provides opportunity for the Nigerians for self-transcendence. It ensures the freedom of the individual to achieve the best of existence. It provides necessary freedom for the individuals to achieve their goals and also project positively into the future. Like existentialism, human security is also individual - centred. It addresses the protection of the individual and not just the state that is the concern of traditional security.

Existentialism maintains that, the existence of the individual necessarily implies the existence of others, for the individual cannot exist without others. This means that man is not only a being in the world but also a being with others. Existentialists therefore, stress the social nature of man as a being with others while maintaining man's individuality, singularity and uniqueness.¹⁴ This implies that the individual should not allow himself/herself to be lost in the crowd.

As a result, existentialism asserts freedom as a necessary feature of the human being. This freedom is unfettered and unrestrained. Freedom is the structure of man's being and a basic condition of human existence. An attempt to prove that man is free is like an attempt to prove that man exists. Freedom is an integral part of existence. The individual does not acquire freedom because it is identical with human existence.¹⁵ Sartre opines that freedom is fundamental to man and not a derivate of anything. Man came to the world to be free. Freedom is therefore, natural to man and it cannot be in excess.¹⁶ If there is anything that man is born with, it is the capability to be free. The freedom of man is unrestricted and there is no universal moral law that determines how he should act. However, Sartre is not just interested in man being free for the sake of freedom. The individual must be free of self-fastened shackles in order to attain his/her unlimited potentials.¹⁷ Freedom is, therefore meaningless if it cannot assist man to become the best that he can be.

Freedom for man is however tied to choice. It is the freedom to choose. This means that freedom and choice are inseparable. Choice is the concrete actualization of freedom. Human existence is said to be authentic when the individual freely chooses who and what he or she becomes. Freedom however compels the individual to assume responsibility for his/her life and actions.¹⁸

Freedom in existentialism is related to issues of political freedom like the protection of human rights, freedom of association, freedom to life, freedom of speech and expression, freedom of the press, right to vote and be voted for, access to information, and the right to petition and seek redress that are essential parts of human security. The above enables citizens to participate in the political process, express their opinions, and hold their government accountable. These are covered under political security.

Another imperative point of discussion in Existentialism is the role of God in human existence. Existentialists are however divided in this regard. While Kierkegaard holds a strong view that man is instinctively religious, Nietzsche, Heidegger and Sartre opines that God does not have any responsibility in human existence. To Kierkegaard, human existence is wasteful without God. To him, Christian faith is not a matter of regurgitating Church dogma. It is a matter of individual subjective passion. Faith is the most important task to be achieved by a

¹⁴ Jean Paul Sartre, *Being and Nothingness: An Essay on Phenomenological Ontology*. London: Methuen and Co. 1972, P.440

¹⁵ Ibid

¹⁶ Ibid

¹⁷ Desan, 43

¹⁸ Jean Paul Sartre, *Existentialism is Humanism*. London: Methuen, 2007. P.440-441

human being because it is only on the basis of faith that an individual has a chance to become a true self.¹⁹ He also conceives that religion is not characterized by objective truths (factual information about the world) but rather subjective truths (passion & commitment). Religion is made meaningful by passionate commitment to what the individual believes and what he or she wants out of life, regardless of whether it can be rationally and mathematically described or not. Reason to him undermines faith and can never justify it. To believe in God is a matter of choice and not intellectual exercise.²⁰ Essential or true self is only made possible by religious commitment.

Sartre's atheism, on the other hand, is the foundation of his theory of man. His existentialism rests on the notion that the non-existence of God does not have any negative effect on human values. Without God, man can attain progress, success, honesty, dignity, and qualitative existence.²¹ Men do not need God to exhibit good nature. His atheism also suggests that the non-existence of God makes everything permissible. Since God does not exist, man becomes the only being that is unrestrictedly free and whose existence comes before his essence. Nietzsche's atheism is demonstrated in his two concepts of *Master* and *Slave Morality*. He pronounced God dead in *Master morality* and declared man to be God. Man took over the place of God and rejected the values of *slave morality*. The death of God is the freedom of man. Man is free to act in the place of God. The individual now becomes a *super man* who is unrestrictedly free²². This position is a rejection of the idea of man as instinctively religious.

Africans are generally passionate about God and this is why African thinkers like Mbiti and Opoku opine that it is unthinkable for an African to be an atheists. Religion is reflected in every part of African life and Nigeria is not an exception. However, the emotional aspect of religion has been stretched beyond limit by many Africans that it has become an impediment to right thinking and positive action. There is the tendency to pray more for the security of Nigeria in Churches and Mosques than challenging government putting in the appropriate security structure and welfare programmes that guarantee the protection of lives. Prayer though is important but should not be an excuse for bad government and irresponsible followership. We should "work and pray" as the bible prescribes. Our prayers must be backed up by positive actions in the spirit of existentialism then we can achieve human security for Nigerians.

Essentially, existentialism is a theory of action. Man is born to be active and not passive. He must be active by taking control of his own destiny. Other important features of man to existentialists are facticity and death. Facticity refers to the limiting factors of human existence. It has to do with the awareness of man's finitude, his inability to know beyond what he can know. This is the limiting factor of human existence. This suggests that with the best physical and human security, there can still be occasional threats. No government of the world is free of security challenges because humans are limited. Errors can be made and systems can fail. Death reveals the authentic possibilities of human existence. The concern of existentialists about

¹⁹ Soren Kierkegaard, *Three Discourses on Imagined Occasion*. Swenson translation. P.222

²⁰ Clare Carlisle, *Kierkegaard Philosophy of Becoming: Movement and Position*. Albany: State University of New York Press, 2005. P. 201

²¹ Sartre, *Existentialism and Humanism*. P. 23-33

²² Anslem K. Jimoh, *An Introduction to Existentialism, Phenomenology and Hermeneutics*. Ibadan: Ebony Books. P. 55

death is not about the way it comes, but about the finitude of existence. The truth that, existence will end.²³

Sustainable Peace

The need for sustainable peace is essential because sustainable development is not possible without sustainable peace. Peace is a prerequisite to development. As a result, for Nigeria to attain the level of development that positively impact human condition, she must pay attention to sustainable peace.

In the same vein, effective security system is a pre - condition for sustainable peace. Nigeria is in dire need of sustainable peace because of the plethora of security challenges confronting the nation. To put it in another way, Nigeria will not be able to attain sustainable peace until she is able to overcome or reduce to the barest minimum the numerous security challenges that are before her.

The multiple insecurity headlines in various media organizations on April 27, 2021 perfectly described the depth of insecurity in the country and the urgent need for sustainable peace. The Nigeria Television Authority (NTA) reported the virtual meeting the then President, Muhammadu Buhari had with the US secretary of State, Anthony Blinken. Buhari at that meeting requested that the headquarters of the US Africa command (AFRICOM) relocates to Africa for stemming the rising trend of terrorism in Nigeria and other parts of the continent. Same day, there was a stormy session at the Federal House of Representatives on how to find a lasting solution to the problem of insecurity in Nigeria. The session asked the Federal government to declare a state of emergency on insecurity. The President was advised to seek foreign support in ending insecurity in Nigeria.

The *journalist Hangout*, a programme of Television Continental (TVC) also devoted their discussion for the day to the problem of insecurity. People were treated to the human angle video on the helpless situation of the people of Geidam in Yobe State fleeing their community on foot, bikes and donkeys because of Boko Haram attacks. In another news item for the day, the former governor of Benue State Samuel Orton was featured making provocative statements about the helpless situation of his people who have been attacked severally by Fulani herders. Lastly for that day on security, the Governor of Borno, Prof. Babagana Zulum visited President Buhari in Presidential Villa in Abuja in respect of the crisis situation in his state.

What then is sustainable peace and how is it different from the ordinary peace situation? Sustainable peace can be described to be a state of peace that is maintained overtime, addressing the root causes of conflict and promoting social economic and environmental development. What then are the key elements of sustainable peace? These elements are in tandem with the promotion of social, economic and environmental development. They are²⁴:

1. Social Justice: Sustainable peace is a pre- requisite for the protection of human rights, avoidance of all forms of discrimination, ensuring gender justice and equality.
2. Economic Development: A long lasting peace ultimatum leads not only to economic development but to other form of growth and development. Hence, it promotes sustainable economic growth, it reduces poverty and increases people's access to resources.
3. Environmental sustainability: It mitigates against climate change, protect bio diversity, and prioritize good management of natural resources.

²³ B. Agidigbi, *Issues and Themes in Existential Philosophy*. Benin City: Sky Light Print, 2006. P. 34

²⁴ Janice Moomaw Jennor, *A Handbook of International Peacebuilding: Into the Eye of the Storm*, 2002

4. **Good Governance:** Sustainable peace ensures accountability in public and private services, transparency within government institutions and also promotes inclusiveness in government.
5. **Conflict Resolution:** It ensures conflicts are resolved peacefully with dialogue, meditation and negotiation.

There are indicators of sustainable peace. They are the measurable values or metrics that provide information about sustainable peace. The indicators are used in accessing, monitoring and evaluating progress made in the efforts to achieve sustainable peace. These indicators include: low level of violence, stable institutions, human development, environmental protection and social cohesion²⁵. It can be observed that these indicators are direct derivative of the key elements of sustainable peace.

Convergence of Human Security and Existentialism for Sustainable Peace in Nigeria

The heart of this paper is how Nigeria can achieve sustainable peace through the Convergence of existentialism and human security. It is clear from our discussion that existentialism and human security converge on several points. The first is that the two concepts emphasized human dignity and worth. This has implications for the protection of human life. Any government that appreciates human life will do everything to protect the lives of her citizens. The dignity and worth of the human person desire protection and is also imperative for sustainable peace. The need therefore for government to consciously create awareness on the dignity of human person. Such awareness should start from the educational institutions where lessons about human dignity will be included in school curriculum starting from the primary schools so that children will grow with the knowledge and value that human dignity must be preserved. Such values will deter people that may want to constitute treats to other. Above all, it will make government prioritize both human and physical security. Existentialism focus on individual freedom and choice also aligns with human security's emphasis on empowering individual to made decisions about their own lives. At the atmosphere of freedom where people make choices about their lives and such is protected by government is a pre-condition for peace. No peace is achievable under cohesion and consistent breach of rights. Hence, freedom has implication for the protection of human rights.

It is important to point it out that both concepts prioritize understanding human experiences, emotions and perceptions. Taking people's unique security experiences into consideration without working on general assumptions is a pre-requisite for peace. The security threat experience of people in Plateau State may be different from that of the people of Zamfara State. Their emotional attachment to dangerous attacks may also be different. The two different attacks in communities in Plateau State in the middle of April, 2025 led to a protest on April 20th, 2025. No protest has ever being held in Zamfara State as a reaction to bandit's attacks. This is a reflection of the emotions that the different communities attached to their attacks. The perception of the Plateau communities that the attack of their communities has religious and ethnic under tone may add to the emotions they attached to it. Generally, existentialism and human security emphasise human well-being. Existentialism focuses on individual's existence and achieving meaning for individual life, while human security emphasises protection from threats and promotion of

²⁵ Fitzgerald Ross, *Human Needs and Politics*. Sydney: Pergamon, 1997

human flourishing. Its emphasis on food security, environmental security, political security and others fall within the protection and flourishing of the individual. Existentialism focuses on qualitative existence for the individual while human security focuses on the protection and the flourishing of the individual. Physical security is about the protection of Nigeria as a country but human security is about the protection of individual Nigerian. The protection of the individual Nigerian is by extension the protection of Nigeria as a country.

Both frameworks highlight the importance of empowering individuals to take control of their own lives. In human security, this might involve building resilience to threat, while in existentialism, it involves individuals creating their own meaning and purpose in life. An environment that empowers individuals to take control of their lives and the one that makes individuals create their own meaning and purpose in life are both setting up facilities for sustainable peace.

The two concepts provide a holistic approach to peace. Human security's comprehensive approach to security combined with existentialism's emphasis on the human condition can foster a holistic understanding of peace that encompasses physical, emotional and psychological well-being. Additionally, existentialism's focus on individual perspective and human security's emphasis on human centered approach can promote inclusive decision-making processes that prioritize the needs and experience of diverse individuals and communities.

By converging existentialist's insights with human security approaches, we can develop more nuances and effective strategies for achieving sustainable peace. From all the above the following is recommended for sustainable peace in Nigeria.

1. Human-Centered Approach:
Nigerian government must protect human well-being, dignity, and security, acknowledging individual experiences and context.
2. Empowerment:
There must be a conscious and intentional attempt to foster individual agency and authority enabling people to take control of their lives and make decisions on their security. Community and State policing though falls under physical security can be an added impetus to the various categories of human security for sustainable peace. Full federalism that allows people to take control of their natural resources can be a solution to insecurity in Nigeria.
3. Contextual Understanding:
Existentialism particularly pays attention to context and situation especially as it concerns the individual. This can help human security initiatives understand the complex factors that affect human well-being and security in specific contexts.
4. Holistic Understanding of People:
Human securities comprehensive approach to security and human well-being, combined with the core tenets of existentialism and its emphasis on the human conditions, can encourage a holistic understanding of people that encompasses physical, emotional, and psychological .
5. Inclusive Decisive Making:
Existentialism's focus on individual perspectives and human securities emphasis on human-centered approaches can promote inclusive decision making process that prioritizes the needs and experiences of diverse individuals in the society. This is imperative for peacemaking and conflict resolution.

Conclusion

The relationship between existentialism and human security has been established to be multifaceted, particularly in the context of existential threats to humanity. While existentialism traditionally focuses on individual meaning, freedom, responsibility, and capacity to transcend self, its principles offers valuable insights into broader human security concerns. Existentialism helps us to understand human security in terms of efforts needed to address existential threats which every African counties and Nigeria in particular must embrace to achieve qualitative human existence for her citizens.

By integrating existentialist insights with human security approaches, we can develop more effective and sustainable peace - building strategies and sustainable peace necessary to combat the plethora of insecurity challenges facing Nigeria and other African countries. In essence, existentialism provides a philosophical foundation for understanding the profound nature of threats to human existence and underscore the responsibility that humans bears especially government of Nigeria in securing its own future. It encourages a shift from reactive measures to a proactive, globally conscious approach that prioritise the well- being and continued potential of all people.

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