

# **INSECURITY AND INSTABILITY AS CHALLENGES TO THE NIGERIAN STATE: PHILOSOPHICAL REFLECTIONS ON THE MEANING OF SOCIAL ORDER**

## **Introduction**

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This paper attempts to provide an answer to the question: what is social order? To make sense of this question, we need to clarify the reason why social order is an issue requiring attention or for that matter why philosophers see it as a problem. The problem of social order has been an age-long one tackled by different social and political philosophers. The substance of this problem is the search for community, which raises fundamental questions about justice between men and how they can achieve co-operation for the common good in the society. Also, it raises the question of how rights, duties and responsibilities can be properly and effectively maintained among the members of society. Thus, the problem of social order concerns the need to balance the conflicts of interest among individuals and between individuals and the state or society. It is the struggle to create or discover strategies and approaches for building a more humane, tolerant and peaceful human society. Human beings have always had problems with one of the basic philosophical questions of: how do I relate with other human beings? As

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such, the human factor is central to social order. These questions and concerns are particularly significant given the Nigerian problem of disorder.

### **The Nigerian Condition of Insecurity and Disorder as a Problematic**

176 Nigeria faces a serious problem of social disorder. The fundamental problems confronting Nigeria's nation-state project have not altered significantly in the past decades. The disorder can be summarised in the inability to tackle the basic problems of unity, security and social justice at the personal and institutional levels within the dynamics of the state. The security problem in Nigeria is easily seen in the inability of the to ensure the protection of its core values: territories, infrastructure, officials, citizens, laws and institutions. This has ensured that the various governments and the state agencies have been unable to consistently and institutionally guarantee the adequate protection, peace and well being of the generality of the citizens. The problem of security in the Nigerian nation-state is seen in the fact that the idea of security was reduced to the personal security of the ruler and that of his immediate supporters (Ujomu, 2008:34-35). The security calculus of the Nigerian state failed because it was over militarised and there were conflicts of interest, undue competitions and overlap of functions as well as a crisis of professionalism among the security forces. The Nigerian security paradigm did not securitise and include vital aspects of social existence in a multi-ethnic society such as social justice correlates especially institutionalised dialogue, equity in resource distribution, anti-corruption and the provision of basic social amenities. The deficits in these critical areas have triggered feelings of neglect and abandonment by the bulk of the citizens hence creating alienated consciousness.

Disorder is noticed in the real consequences of alienated consciousness. The threats to national security arising thereof, indicate that Nigeria, as it exists, may not have fully articulated the conditions for establishing a truly humane and progressive society. The reality of a system lacking in enduring principles of trust, social justice and moral action, which can promote genuine social reconciliation,

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suggests that Nigeria remains a terrain of conflicting identities after decades of independence. The state remains a battle-ground where individuals fight for whatever resource or power they can capture. This situation is worrisome because the long period of co-existence among various groupings has not yielded genuine mutual respect, understanding and common purpose. This is a significant pointer to the potential continuation of insecurity in the country (Ujomu, 2008:35-36).

The Nigerian state is post-colonial in its form. Post-coloniality is tied to marginality. In turn, marginality can be said to be central to experiences of disorder in a post-colonial life-world or discourse. Over the years, different governments, individuals and institutions in Nigeria have systematically entrenched a culture of marginalisation within the social order. What are the immanent consequences of this marginality? One repercussion is that ethnic and other minorities are under-represented and oppressed among those with power in the social, political and economic as well as education system. At the heart of marginalisation, are the real consequences of differences in language, values and beliefs, and the tensions arising from these when we merge with the different interests and aspirations of the groups. Groups attempt to ensure their dominance over others by controlling the key institutions while the minority groups struggle for recognition and a fair deal in the distribution of resources. Political life is organised around the desire by the various ethnic groups to further and protect their own interests. These interests are culturally defined and have to do with what groups possess as distinct communities and what they can get from others in a competitive situation. Instability, over centralisation of power, intense ethnic and elite competition for resources and power and the diverse forms of repression and deprivation affect security at all levels of life. We should note that certain levels of marginality are now beyond the merely ethnic factor. These include the travails of the destitute, unemployed, down-trodden rank and file of the different social institutions, the rural peoples, the handicapped, the aged, the abused youth and children, etc (Ujomu 2008:35-37).

Consequently, the dangerous trend towards disorder has emerged whereby violent and ill-trained militia, militants have cashed in on these institutional lapses to assume state duties and often cause trouble. Furthermore, the general

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lack of commitment to the common good has ensured that most military personnel seek only to satisfy their avarice and narcissism. Such people lack the intellectual and moral basis for the proper utilisation of knowledge and power for the good of all (Ujomu, 2000:39). Thus, they ultimately create conditions of insecurity, deprivation and instability in the polity. Conscious manipulations (of a negative kind) can lead to the loss of unity and cohesion. To fully understand the consequences of alienation for national consciousness, we need to conceptualise the deplorable state of our national experience as typified by institutional and moral problems. According to Temlong (2003:13), “the parlous state of the economy has also reduced the majority of the citizenry to abject poverty and increased unemployment”. We add that the objectionable state of our infrastructure, the moral decay in our society, the pervasive corruption, social discontent, lawlessness, selfishness and cynicism that have taken over all areas of national life are irrefutable manifestations of the security crisis in the land.

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The security problem and the attendant disorder, is bigger than any group or institution and is a matter of a challenged national consciousness. These are evidences that national consciousness is on the decline in the society. National consciousness has implications for national security, which itself is an important concern in the life of a person, group or society. The central feature in the quest for national security is the concern for national survival, which cannot come about unless there is, in the society, some degree of joint action and purpose, for the common good (Ujomu, 2008:36-37). Evidence of the defeat of social order and national consciousness is seen in the increasing attacks on national leaders and citizens by violent mobs, armed robbers, assassins and kidnappers, ethnic militia groups, as well as the invading rebel forces from neighboring countries to the north of Nigeria. It is ironic the Nigerian state and its military system has not been able to perfect the art and craft of upholding institutional and regime security. We may recall the various national security problems and lapses that have led to the death of top government officials at the hands of assassins and other criminals. We also recall the problems that have led to the predation of infrastructures (civil and military) in which the negligence, laxity and incompetence within certain institutions have been revealed. All of these have had negative effects on

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the development of national consciousness both for men and women (Ujomu, 2008:36-37).

In addition, Braithwaithe concurs with the above when he says that “an unprecedented and widespread corruption in governance and injustice have combined to engender insecurities, insurgencies, heightened criminalities, widespread unemployment, all in the face of mindless profligacy of the corrupt” (Braithwiate 2012:10). This situation revolves around “the quality and manner of life as the poor majority are banished to the ghettos where there is no electricity, water supply or sanitation facilities, as armed robbery, hooliganism, prostitution have become a way of life” (Okonta and Douglass in Osha 2006:15). We notice a link between disorder and social justice deficits. There is currently a crisis in the context of the deterioration of the various instruments of justice, such as the police, national assembly agencies of government, law courts, prisons, etc, due to inefficiency, under-funding, incompetence, ethnicity, politicization and social dissatisfaction. Nielsen (1996:82) puts it succinctly that the problem or “the question of justice is the question of what is that genuine social order that can guarantee human flourishing (and) social harmony”.

An empirical account of the disorderly state of our economy and the implications for social justice in Nigeria is seen in a recent Nigerian House of Representatives Fuel Subsidy Probe Report 2009-2011(2012:62 & 63), which reports that “the mood of the nation is justifiably ill tempered.” There is a conflict between the people’s larger interest and the self interested clique of government officials seemingly out of tune with the existential realities of the ordinary man in the street. The Nigerian people from all social indicators are already impoverished by the maladministration of the political elite.” This social justice problem is tied to the concerns over endemic corruption. According to the House of Representatives Fuel Subsidy Probe Report 2009-2011 (2012: 129-130) the Nigerian National Petroleum Corporation “NNPC continued to pressurize officials of other agencies, to process and pay subsidy on the product, arrogated to themselves the power to override the Presidential Directive.” In fact, the “inefficiency of the NNPC and Ministry of Petroleum reflected in the failure to supply the product to Nigerians at affordable pricing while the NNPC feasted on the Federation Account to bloat

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the subsidy payable, some of the Marketers took the option of claiming subsidy on products not supplied.” (House of Representatives Fuel Subsidy Probe Report 2009-2011 (2012:131, 74 & 116).

The problem of disorder as seen in the deficits in the value and quality of human life also has consequences for security, social justice and human rights. This problem is endemic on the Nigerian landscape and is underscored by even more recent civil society documents like the Center for constitutionalism and Demilitarization 2011 annual report CENCOD 2011 Annual Report (2011:ix-xi) which says that “Nigerians still face varying forms of human rights violations. The state is still largely authoritarian as security forces trample on the rights of the citizens with a surprising impunity unexpected in a democracy. This often takes the form of harassment, extortion, unlawful detention and extra judicial killings. There are reports of misappropriation and misapplication of state resources by incumbent state actors” as well as local authorities and foreign business interests. The common people have been driven beyond the poverty threshold “the unemployment rate in the country is alarming” (CENCOD 2011:xi). Beyond the general trends, there were specific patterns in the trend of social disorder, national insecurity and problems of human dignity in Nigeria. Predominant among the challenges were cases of kidnapping, harassment by security forces, extra judicial killings, violations of women’s rights, intra communal clashes, gun battles between criminal gangs and local vigilante groups, student union protests, child abuses, assault on the media, political intolerance, illegal sects (CENCOD 2011:xii-xviii).

The disorder is seen at another level, whereby the social justice question triggers a problem of unity easily seen in the inability of the diverse ethnic and religious groups to co-exist politically, culturally and socially as a community by living together in peace through mutual respect, trust and cooperation for the personal and common good of all concerned. The situation is that given the divisive nature of the Nigerian state and the ineffectiveness of its key executive and legislative organs, there has been a rise of ethnic and parochial interests whose basic argument is that the current configuration of the Nigerian state is not equitable and humane to all concerned. In relation to the Niger-Delta and

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indeed most parts of Nigeria “there is a deep seated feeling of neglect, which lies at the root of widespread discontentment, grievances, conflict, criminality and violence. Economic inadequacies predispose youth to violence and manipulation” (Report of the Technical Committee on the Niger Delta 2008 (2010:82, 93& 107). Put simply, “the root causes of insecurity in the areas had to do with the neglect, frustration, and the sense of abandonment of the people” (2002 Report of the Special Security Committee on Oil Producing Areas 2007: 120&132). What can the philosophical discussion on social order contribute to solving this problem of disorder in Nigeria? Let us review the goals of social order.

### **Understanding the Major Goals of Social Order as a Prelude to Clarifying the Meaning of our Concept**

Do human beings have certain goals in mind when they try to establish and sustain social order? One of the most important goals of social order is to achieve the security, protection, safety, defence and preservation of the lives and property of people in a society. The protection of lives and property is the central goal of social order because society cannot survive for long in any meaningful sense if the safety of lives and property is not maintained. This goal is assured by identifying and distributing properly certain roles, rights, duties and benefits that accrue from effective social co-existence among people. This proper allocation of goods, duties and burdens among the members of a society ensures that everyone has some stake or interest in the society which induces him to strive for individual and collective security and protection. To ensure security of lives and properties, the social order allows each person to have certain valuable possessions and commitments which can only be retained within a social environment that is secure and safe.

A second goal of social order is to ensure that things are done in the common or public interest. This means that the social order ensures that people do those things which assure the sustenance and security of everyone in the community. Common interests are thus separated from the private interests of individuals or even the group interests of associations which serve personal or sectional ends.

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The idea of common interests or public interest suggests the conscious promotion of the shared interests of a community as an effective means of guaranteeing certain rights and advantages to individuals and groups. Such advantages include security of lives and property, peace, freedom, and mutual co-operation. And these would constitute the central and basic focus towards which the energies of all the members of society are directed. Social order is also agreed towards achieving peace among all and sundry in the society. Peace in the community is emphasised because, it is only in an atmosphere of peace that any community can survive and make progress. A peaceful environment allows all the social rules, policies and institutions to operate efficiently and purposefully towards the central goal of the society in whatever way it has been designed.

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Another goal of social order is to promote love, good conduct and morals within the society. Social order is impossible without these qualities. The co-existence of any group or community of people requires some level of friendly feelings shared among them. Such friendly feelings facilitate mutual cooperation, communal rapport and integrated activities. These friendly feelings also help to manage and control inevitable differences of opinion and interest that can arise out of communal co-habitation. It is also impossible for people to live conveniently together within a community if morality is absent. Morality is what defines the way people conduct of people, morality also guarantees the harmonization of diverse interests through the promotion of the disposition by individuals to take the interests of others into account. Therefore, a significant level of good conduct is vital to the survival of individuals and even a community.

Lastly, social order aims at ensuring the progress, prosperity and wellbeing of all in the society. Socio-economic progress and prosperity are vital elements in the maintenance of a social order because for social order to be functional and meaningful people need to be induced to make a commitment, and contribute to the well being and progress of the community by their different activities. The people's interest and dedication to preserving the social order is assured if they have made some valuable and perennial inputs to the prosperity and wealth of the society. Let us make sense of these goals of social order and thus shed light on the meaning of the problem of social order by doing a detailed conceptual study of the idea.

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## **The Quest for the Meaning of Social Order *via* a Conceptual Analysis of Key Terms**

This section of the paper examines the concept of social order with a view to determining its meaning. Social order refers to the social systems and schemes of social relations that define the political, economic and social roles, rights and duties of people in a society. It is the sum of all the human arrangements, values, rules, norms, regulations, ideologies and institutions that enhance the proper functioning of the various parts of the society or community (Bierstedt 1963:1, Messner 1949: 149, Fagothey:1959: 523). To start with, a distinction can be made between society and community. On the one hand, community is hinged on a feeling of belonging or sense of togetherness that exists prior to the solidarity instituted by contractual agreement. The idea of community is descriptive of a wide spectrum of societies, of familial, religious or cultural types. The shared sense of identity and solidarity in the community arises from the acceptance of common values and norms relevant in the pursuit of common goals (Kaiser 1979: 31-32, Messner 1958:80 & 83, Schmitz 1983: 246, Grisez and Shaw 1989: 38, McDowell 1962: 5-994, Ekennia 1998: 351. A community is bound together by a common creed or belief, a common ancestry or blood ties.

On the other hand, a society refers to the network of structures and relations developed by human activity. Society, viewed as the totality of social relational structures and the individuals operating in this domain, is the union of individuals who are guided by a particular form of organisation. The aim of society is to secure social ends (private or common goods) by organisational and legal institutions (Messner, 1958: 386-394). We have seen how society differs from community. The real issue is: how do both connect to social order? In what way, if any does the social order facilitate the proper functioning of various parts of the society? Social order is a set of arrangements put in place by man in order to attain certain important ends like justice, peace, self and group actualisation as well as the general well-being of all in a social system. Social order arises out of the need to balance the conflicts and interplay of interests existing among individuals and between individuals and the society. It means that a community or society will

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possess a framework that defines rules, roles and functions of its members. Social order is akin to a skeleton that supports a body, a scheme of social relations or a social system that underlies our real life actions as members of a society.

The idea of a social system is fundamental to the conceptual analysis of social order because the social system refers to both the structure and organisation of human beings within a society. For Park (1982: 16), the structure of the social system refers to the orderly, fixed arrangements of the different individuals and groups that constitute society, while the organisation of the social system refers to the dynamic efficiency of a structure or the relation of integrated and purposive actions in view of their common goals and interest. As such, the structure and organisation of a social system make up its form or character by which it can be identified and evaluated as a stable, viable or enduring social order. Therefore social order, understood as the form of a social system, refers to the various social roles allocated to each number and group of the society. Social roles depict the political, economic, religious and administrative functions of people in a society (Park, 1982: 16). According to Grisez and Shaw (1989:38), each person possesses a variety of social rules that arise from his membership in various communities. Each of these social roles carries with it a variety of duties. Social roles are like job descriptions specified for an individual and the fulfilment of these roles require that the individual occupying them act in certain ways. These required ways of acting can be seen as duties. Therefore, Emmet (1989:324) argues that social roles as they concern persons living in society “mean that a certain number of reasonably stable functions and expectations can be depended upon”. We may therefore hold that social roles are basically defined and identified through the powers, rights and duties associated with them.

The clarification of the concept of role is important in social order because a role refers to a set of expectations associated with the position of a person in a society. Since all social organisations are characterised by a differentiation of functions, then stable role definitions allow social organisations to function effectively and properly (Scheibe 1982: 271). According to Zanden (1977:173) roles help people to formulate their behaviour so that their actions can fit into those of others. A role does not exist by itself; rather, it is a bundle of activities

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meshed into the activities of other people. Roles embody both expectations as well as obligations. In addition, Emmet says that roles are linked to the human moral consciousness, social demands and regular patterns of social interactions (Emmet 1989: 323). Therefore, in relation to the social order, Zanden holds that roles are sets of norms that define our obligations which are the actions that others can legitimately insist that we perform. Given the nature of a social system, roles usually operate in conjunction with norms. According to Zanden, roles are sets of norms that define our behaviour, while norms are standards of behaviour which members of a social group share. People are expected to conform to these norms which are enforced by sanctions. He suggests further that roles and norms provide us with a sense of social order by ensuring conformity. The notion of conformity presupposes predictable modes of conduct and the adherence to social expectations. Conformity makes social order possible and social order makes society possible (Zanden 1977: 153-173).

Thus, we may agree with Zanden (1977: 153-173) that social order, presumes organisation, regularity, stability and predictability. It is these qualities of social life that give us an appearance of social order. Social order, as we have seen, is based on the identification of social roles as they define our expectations and obligations. Our obligations according to Zanden are those actions that others can legitimately insist that we perform while our expectations are those actions that we can legitimately insist that others perform. Obligation as conceived by Kant “is the necessity of a free action when it is seen in relation to a categorical imperative of reason. And duty is the designation of any action to which anyone is bound by an obligation (Kant 1990: 391). Social order, which is the product of the structure and organization of a social system, is fundamentally based on the proper definition of social roles through a reciprocal and systematic way of relating obligations with expectations. Social roles are more significantly viewed as ways of distributing rights and duties among the members of the society. In a profound manner, rights and duties are the basis of defining human relations. In fact, the whole idea of justice which is one of the goals of social order is more significantly comprehend through the analysis of rights and duties. These notions help in attaining the proper organization and the smooth-functioning of the society (Kant 1990: 391).

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The most minimal formulation of a right goes thus: A right “is the moral and inviolable power vested in a person to do, hold or exact something as his own” (Bittle 1950: 273-280, Fagothey 1965: 238-259. It also refers to an immunity or privilege protected or enforceable by law (Gerwith 1981:2) “rights are justified claims or entitlements to the carrying out of correlative duties positive or negative” Bittle (1950: 276). Brugger (1972) on his part says that “rights are those normative legal relationships which protect a man from others in all that concerns his personal dignity and individuality and which bind him as an essentially social being to larger social groups both natural and freely organized.” Following this conception of right, Brugger holds that the notion of right relates the individual and the social aspects of human life to each other by determining the structure of social life itself and also forming the supporting frame around which the structure of society is to be constructed. Rights therefore concern the relations between persons in a community (Brugger 1972).

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To reinforce the connection between rights and community, J. S. Mill holds that “a right is anything which a person has a valid claim on society to protect him in the possession of it either by the force of law, education or opinion” (Mill 1990: 470). On his part, Marx sees the notion of right as a judicial concept whose proper function is discerned in the moral or legal institutions of society. And such institutions and relations viewed in the light of the materialist conception of history form part of the social superstructure (Marx in A. Wood 1979: 268). Kordig (1981:171) discusses, and lays much emphasis on the social nature of rights. For him, rights relate members of society to each other. More importantly, rights concern justice as it defines the actions of one person in relation to those of others (Kordig 1981:171). Justice on its part concerns public morality and in fact, justice is a part of morality.

In discussing the foundation of rights or the reason for which rights exist, Kordig (1981:171) argues that rights exist, and are based on the principle that a person should be given the opportunities for full human development. Rights seek to preserve human dignity which is itself the foundation of human rights. Human dignity involves acting knowingly and willingly, that is, acting freely and responsibly. Rights are usually classified into various categories. The major

classifications made by scholars separate natural rights, such as the right to life, from political and civil rights. Political rights include the right to vote while civil rights include the right to own private property. There are also social and economic rights (Meyers 1981: 139, Kordig 1981:171, Gerwith 1981:1-2, Schauer 1981: 229). Rights are also separated into active and passive rights. Active rights are rights of action or the right to do something while passive rights are rights of a recipient, claims rights or the right to have. Another group of rights are those that give liberties and powers. On the whole we can view rights as both descriptive and prescriptive, within the context of social order.

To facilitate our understanding of the notion of right, it is necessary to conceptually examine the idea of duty. A duty refers to “the moral obligation to do something or to omit something in favour of another according to the demands of strict justice” (Bittle 1950: 277). Within the context of society, Grisez and Shaw 1989: 38) hold that a duty is something that one has a responsibility for doing or not doing by virtue of one’s role in a particular community. For them, duties are genuine moral responsibilities because the members of a community are engaged in a joint action seeking the realization of a fundamental human purpose (Grisez and Shaw 1989: 38). According to Gerwith (1981:2) a duty is a requirement that some action be performed or not be performed. For Kant, a duty is the designation of any action to which anyone is bound by an obligation. It is the subject matter of all obligation. The categorical imperative which expresses an obligation in respect to certain actions is a morally practical law (Kant 1990: 391). Mill asserts that duty is a thing which may be exacted from a person as one exacts a debt. Real duties are duties of perfect obligation which ensures that a correlative right resides in some person (Mill 1990: 468). The essential character of a right or a duty as amoral demand suggests that the claims of right or duty are not invalidated even if there are situations in which they are breached or neglected. The above clarifications provide a basis for redefining social order as the way a social system identifies and allocates social roles through the definition of rights and duties which are reflections of the core values of a society.

A social order can be understood in terms of the values it upholds and practices. It is interesting to note that the disorder problem in Nigeria and the

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conflicts arising thereof, symbolize basically a field of competing values, beliefs and attitudes. The issue of “the nature of value is one of the central and most persistent problems of human existence” (Titus 1970:331). Central to overcoming this disorder or crisis of our values and value system is the definition and appropriation of the mechanisms of values and valuation. While value concerns the worth of something and the way we come to attain that worth, valuation is based on the decided weighted cost-benefit of the placement of a price or primacy on something as important, desirable or interesting. In either of these ways the concrete concern is to discover how people can live in peaceful cooperation, obedience to laws, amenability to organization and loyalty to the state. This is a phenomenological issue that interfaces what we are, what we have become and what we ought to become. In pursuing this track of moving from is to ought, we must pursue the normative and prescriptive re-entry into a tripartite challenge of social order, understood as stability or predictability, reliability or cooperation and change or creativity.

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We can understand the nature of values better when we realise that every society sets for itself “an ideal form of life or an image which it seeks to attain and to which it constantly refers in the process of going through life” (Sogolo 1993:119). More importantly, values are the basis of all cultural life; the foundation of all cognition and the category structure of the human consciousness” (Brunner and Raemers 1937: 87-88). To capture the essence of the notion of value, Perry affirms that a thing or anything has value when it is the object of an interest, which is a train of events determined by an expectation of its outcome (Perry 1968:336). Singer, on his part, adds an extra dimension to the conceptual analysis of values when he suggests that a “person’s values are what the person regards as or thinks important” (Singer 1989:145). The same is applicable to the society insofar as a society’s values are what it considers important. According to Ackermann (1981:451) values must, then, be considered in intimate connection with what could be called the “collective interests of the very social groups that hold them.”(Ackermann 1981:451) Otite differentiated between the balancing, assimilative and overarching approaches to dealing with ethnicity. The dual tragedies of the first two show that there is a real context of dominance and imposition

in the quagmire of ethnicity. But the third approach is what is of interest here. The third approach “is called overarching by which members of all the ethnic groups are made to be committed to a common set of values which may be ideological or religious in nature, but which overrides all other differing interests based on ethnicity. There is no overarching set of values or an overwhelming and dominant ethnic group that does not need others in alliance to control the federal government” (Otitte 1990:143). The kinds of overarching values that we push for are those that cross-cut the different ethnic groups and the mental and physical barriers that they have set up.

From the fore-going, Bertsch (1991:109) holds that people are likely to give pride of place to values that promote the wider devolution or distribution of power as opposed to concentration. Also people will demand greater respect and the opportunity to express their political beliefs and initiative. Kudadjie (1992) holds that the present situation is that there is very little, if anything, by way of a national policy for the cultivation of such values. The paucity of morally good human resources has thwarted efforts to bring about development thus the creation of a moral community will require moral education of the members of the society. The aim of social order is to create a social system whose values are expressed mainly through its ideologies. According to Macridis (1989:2-3) an ideology refers to a set of closely related beliefs or ideas or even attitudes characteristic of a group or community. Within a community, an acceptable ideology rationalises the status quo while other competing ideologies and movements challenge it. He holds that ideologies especially of the political kind, address themselves to value such as the quality of life, the distribution of goods and services etc (Macridis 1989:2-3). To further clarify the notion of ideology, Wiredu asserts that ideologies in a more positive sense refer to “a set of ideas about what form the good society must take” (Wiredu in Oladipo 1996:58). As such, an ideology is necessary for every society and its aim is to provide a theoretical framework for socio-political action. For him, the social and political organization of a society requires the guidance of a set of ideas (ideology) about the goals of society and the means of their attainment (Wiredu in Oladipo 1996:58).

Social order originates from certain fundamental questions or concerns about justice between men and it is realized in the idea of partnership among men who exercise rights, duties and responsibilities. Thus, social order whose primary goal is the

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attainment of justice, arises out of the need to balance the conflicts of interest existing among individuals as well as between them and the society (Neuner and Dupuis 1990: 676). An analysis of the essential features of social order reveals clearly that the question about justice is fundamental to the proper and full conceptualization of social order. In its most minimal understanding, justice demands that each part of a social scheme be given its due, rights, duties, roles and benefits in relation to others. Justice is that condition in which each component is given its proper function to exercise within the framework of social relations. The essence of the notion of justice is captured by some major social philosophers. According to Plato, justice is when each man fulfils his proper duties and functions (Plato 1990: 349-355). Justice is division of labour. There is an expectation that people will play their parts. Given that it encourages good practices that lead to virtue, Aristotle (1990: 376-382) says then that the just act which is the good act is also a virtuous act. For Aristotle, the just is the lawful and fair. Justice is the greatest of virtues which encompasses those acts prescribed by the law with a view to education for the common good. Therefore, justice exists only between men whose mutual relations are governed by law.

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For St. Augustine, justice is that virtue which gives everyone his due (Augustine 1990: 231 & 593). As such, a republic (society) cannot be administered without justice because where there is no justice, there can be no right. To further develop and appreciate the idea of justice, Thomas Aquinas holds that the function of justice is to establish rectitude in various kinds of exchanges and again in distributions (Aquinas 1990: 51-52). Justice is discussed in respect of something due to someone or another. It pertains to justice that a man gives another his due. Also Montaigne affirms that justice consists in obeying the law of well-doing or doing that which is virtuous or good (Montaigne 1990: 342). According to Hegel (1990: 39-40) justice is "rectitude or the general character (behaviour) that may be demanded of a person by law or custom." For him, in a community, it is easy to say what a man must do, what are the duties he has to fulfil order to be virtuous. For Hegel, a man simply has to follow the well known and explicit rules of his own situation (society). Therefore justice is when individuals perform their duties in conformity to the ethical life or social order (Hegel 1990: 39-40).



The idea of justice, for J. S. Mill (1990) arises from the fact of living in society. Justice renders it indispensable that each should be bound to observe a certain line of conduct towards the rest. This conduct consists in, first, not injuring the interests of one another and secondly, that each person bears his share (to be fixed on some equitable principle) of some labours and sacrifices incurred for defending the society or its members from injury. For Mill, justice demands that people observe certain general rules that define what to do and expect. Justice is thus the conformity to law. It implies something which it is not only right to do and wrong not to do but which some individuals can claim from us as his moral right. Mill concludes by saying that justice is grounded on utility (Mill 1990: 302-303 and 467-476). John Rawls (1971) gives a contemporary account of what justice entails. For him, “justice is a set of principles required for choosing among the various social arrangements which determine the division of advantages and for underwriting an agreement on the proper distributive shares. These principles are the principles of social justice, they provide a way of assigning rights and duties in the basic institutions of society and they define the appropriate distribution of the benefits and burdens of social cooperation.” (Rawls, 1971: 4).

### **Key Elements of Social Order in the Social Doctrines of the Catholic Church**

According to the social teachings of the Church, the social order operates on four central principles. These are the common good, personality, solidarity and subsidiarity. The first principle of the whole ethical and social order is that of the common good (John Paul II, 1981: 68, Werhahn, 1990: 28). Brugger holds that this principle affirms the state’s duty to ensure common justice and fairness in the relationship between individuals. It assumes that every common body be it a society or community has its own proper task or aim which is the reason for its existence and the basis of its character. For him, the aim of a society must consist in some good, which is to be accomplished by the activity of that society. This good must be accomplished in such a way that it is useful both for the society itself and its individual members themselves (Brugger, 1974). According to Brugger, there

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are different ways of conceptualizing the common good. The two major ways of doing this are as follows: The common good may be understood primarily as the perfection of the members through the existence of the society. Perfection here means enrichment with all the human values that make for a full life. It is in this sense that the common good is conceived for the society and its members. For Brugger, the second approach to the notion of common good is seen as a state or condition of the society itself. This is to say that the common good is, in a sense, an organizing value, which requires two things. First is that the society should have a way of endowing its members with the means necessary for the attainment of its goal. Secondly, the society should also have a way of influencing its members so that they can attain effective cooperation (Brugger, 1974:62).

The second principle of social order is that of personality, which affirms the dignity of man, expressed through his personal freedom and responsibility of man help to guarantee his dignity as a person who can exist and participate in a social order. In general, “freedom refers to that state of not being forced or determined by something external in so far as it is joined to a definite faculty of self determination” (Brugger, 1974). Freedom for Brugger can be viewed from the physical, moral and psychological perspectives. Seen in the context of the principle of personality, Brugger holds that freedom presupposes freewill or the power a being possesses to determine itself with regard to known limited values, and to choose or not to choose any limited good. Freewill is important to the personality and dignity of man because, without freewill a man cannot be held responsible for his willed actions as such he is not worthy of praise or blame. For him, if freewill is abandoned, then the moral dignity of the person is renounced. But the principle of personality affirms the dignity of man by upholding the freedom and responsibility of the individual as necessary conditions for existence in a social order. According to Brugger, responsibility is also linked to the principle of personality because responsibility is a necessary consequence of human free will, which allows the moral person to be a decisive cause of his good and evil deeds. Responsibility also ensures that a person answers for his deeds and accepts any consequences of his actions. Brugger holds that the dignity of the human person, as a vital condition for his existence within a social order, is seen in his

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capacity to bear personal responsibility. It is within this context of the freedom and responsibility of the person that the idea of social order as the allocation of social roles, rights and duties in a social system can best be understood (Brugger, 1974:147).

The third principle of social order is the principle of solidarity, which holds that the society and its members are mutually interlinked and responsible for one another (Mc Oustra, 1990, Werhahn, 28, Joseph Cardinal Hoffner, 1990:24, John Paul II 1991: 33, Pope Paul VI, 1967:20). It enhances human dignity, responsibility and contribution to the common good. The mutual bond and obligation existing among the members of a society is the aim of this principle of solidarity. By its nature, the principle of solidarity rejects individualism because it denies the social nature of man. Also, the principle rejects collectivisation because it denies man of his personal dignity and freedom. Within a social order, the principle of solidarity affirms reciprocal relationships, defence of the weak members of society, limitation of the autonomy of powerful groups and persons as well as mutual help and interaction among all in the society.

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The fourth principle of social order is that of subsidiarity, which holds that in the relationship between the individual and society, the subordinate group should have priority over the superior group (Pius XI, 1931:38). That is, neither the state nor any society should substitute itself for the initiative and responsibility of individuals and of intermediate groups in their functions and freedoms. This principle aims at creating favourable conditions for the free existence of economic activity, which will lead to an abundance of opportunities for employment and generation of wealth. Therefore the principle of subsidiarity captures the true aim of social order, which is to help people in a society and not to absorb or destroy them. The principles of social order discussed above provide ample indications of the nature and goals of social order in social and political philosophy.

## **Conclusion**

We reviewed the pattern of disorder in Nigeria. We made a conceptual analysis of social order as a solution taking care to show how its defining elements were

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linked together in a web of interlocking ideas. Such elements included social system, structure, organization, roles, rights, duties, norms, values, ideologies and justice. We also discussed the four principles of social order namely; the common good, personality, solidarity and subsidiarity. We tried to show how they were linked individually and collectively to the idea of social order. Finally, we examined the major goals of social order such as the security and protection of lives and properties, peace, progress, love and morals. We saw how these goals and the values that enhance them combine to provide a full notion of community which is what social order ultimately aims at.

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