

International Journal of Arts and Humanities (IJAH)
Ethiopia

Vol. 6 (4), S/No 23, SEPTEMBER, 2017: 12-21

ISSN: 2225-8590 (Print) ISSN 2227-5452 (Online)

DOI: <http://dx.doi.org/10.4314/ijah.v6i4.2>

**Nollywood and the Nigerian Security Situation: Prospects and
Challenges of Alternative Security Outfits in Lancelot Odua
Imasuen's *Isakaba***

Nwosu, Canice Chukwuma

Department of Theatre and Film Studies

Nnamdi Azikiwe University Awka

Anambra State, Nigeria

E-mail: nwosucoc@gmail.com

Phone: +234(0)8037415046

.....

Uche, Oliver Onyekwere Chizaram

Department of Religion and Human Resources

Nnamdi Azikiwe University Awka

Phone: +234(0)8038048088

E-mail: ucheooc@yahoo.com

.....

Abstract

Peace and security are not only variables of national growth and development, but also panacea for sustainable development. However, amidst challenges of emergent culture produced by the Nigerian nation-state the two vital variables remain elusive. Hence, the ability to put these variables in place constitutes part of the puzzle and dilemma of almost every republic in Nigeria. Therefore, the problem of this study is persistent state of insecurity that bedevil most republics in Nigeria as manifest in incessant armed robbery attacks, students' unrest, religious riots, and most recently, militancy and terrorism. Hence, the aim of this study is to assess prospects and challenges of alternative security outfits as solution to Nigeria's security challenges using Lancelot Odua Imasuen's *Isakaba*. The study examined Nollywood's projection of the search for lasting solution to the nation's security problems in an outfit influenced by African ritualistic practices, system of justice and its obvious challenges and prospects. Case study and content analysis approaches of the qualitative research method were adopted by the researchers for data collection and analysis. The study revealed that; individuals,

organizations, communities, the media and various tiers of government in Nigeria have continued to experiment on how to ensure security of lives and property of the citizenry in the face of a corrupt and lukewarm police force. Consequently, propositions like: the use of the traditional security system, state police, individual security outfits, the use of armed forces and even individualized security systems which allow individuals the use of personal gun for self-protection have been made. The study concluded that alternative security outfits are closer to the people and is therefore more effective than the government security agents. However, the use of these outfits must be supervised by the state or federal governments.

Introduction

The present Nigerian nation-State is a making of the colonial masters who as merchants were guided by obvious economic value judgment instincts. Hence, reasons for hemming people of diverse cultural differences together in a large umbrella they called Nigerian nation are not farfetched. Consequently, the fate and destiny of over one hundred tribes that were before Lord Lugard's amalgamation in 1914 independent pre-colonial institutions became forcefully re-shaped, re-defined, re-directed and repositioned. Historians and Theorist have come up with different evolutionist theories of states and nations to explain, justify or condemn this historic, economic and political decision that produced the giant of Africa since its creation. However, it is the "... philosophy with the world's outlook of revolutionary democrats" (*Institute of Social Sciences*, 1985) that best explained the Nigerian experiment. Institute of Social Sciences posits that:

As a social phenomenon, revolutionary democratism is the product of the specific conditions in the countries which due to a number of causes, lagged behind the historical progress in the 19th and 20th centuries.

Predominantly, African and Asian countries constitute majority of the presumed backward nations of this era that require civilization and democratizations. These however were the logics of justification the reinforced colonialism, domination and imperialism. Despite their negative impacts, these concepts are not entirely divorced of elements of societal progress through economic and political amalgamation. The failure and success of colonial incursion and democratization of Africa is dependent on the level of conflict between indigenous culture and historical traditions of the colonial people. "Often than not the philosophical concepts of revolutionary democrats were inconsistent, combining most heterogeneous and contradictory elements," (*Institute of Social Sciences*, 1985), with the indigenous culture.

This trend in Nigeria produced new culture from the dilution of numerous residual cultures of the components units of the new Nigerian nation-state. Sequel to this, are emergence of new goals, like centralized police and army, political groups and various interest groups contesting for limited resources. Moreover, inherent sociocentricism among individuals, federating units and the fragile but tilted federation became new cultural variables created from a crossbreed of homogenous and heterogeneous cultural coeternity that breed new national security challenges. According to Abubakar (2012), "the fusion of the various cultural identities into megalopolis complex setting necessitates an emergent social system in which the end justifies the means." This cultural syncretism evolved a cultural ideology similar to the American dream

conditioned by materialism and capitalism. Hence, the new capitalist tendency displaced African cultural values, enthroned emergent cultural values that motivated multiple but complex security challenges that require alternative security approaches. Therefore, what constitutes threat to national security is determined by time and space, ideological pursuit and economic goals. For instance, during a particular period in world history The Cold War, which was the geopolitical, ideological, and economic struggle between two world superpowers, the USA and the USSR, that started in 1947 at the end of the Second World War and lasted until the dissolution of the Soviet Union on December 26, 1991; constituted a serious threat to world security. Continuous rivalry between the two former World War II allies; made conflicts span from subtle espionage in the biggest cities of the world to violent combat in the tropical jungles of Vietnam. It ranged from nuclear submarines gliding noiselessly through the depths of the oceans to the most technologically-advanced satellites in geosynchronous orbits in space. This rivalry extended to arts and sports including: basketball and hockey, in ballet and pop music, from the Berlin Wall to the movies, the political and cultural war waged by Communists and Capitalists was a colossal confrontation on a scale never before seen in human history. The security challenge of this global calamity stems from the continuous alignment and realignment of third world nations with the two super powers. Hence, its impact on national security of allied nations, manifested as military interventions, annexations and indiscriminate establishment of military posts in third world nations. At the end of the cold war, the variables of security challenges changed. According to Katzenstein: (2002),

...With the end of cold war, the mix of factors affecting national security is changing. Issues dealing with norms, identities, and culture are becoming more salient *as factors that constitute new security challenges*.

Nigeria is not left out in this changing trend, for instance the issue of identity is the major factor behind wars of self-determination raging on in the country; The Movement for the Actualization of the Sovereign State of Biafra (MASOB); Odua Peoples' Congress (OPC) Niger Delta Militants and so on. The clash of interest among these identities lead to emergence of organizations with tribal and religious interests like Boko Haram that lead to eventually affected collective societal norms, national unity and consequent break down of law and order. Though, government have tried to put in place measures to tackle obvious security threats generated by these issues; the average Nigerian and Nigerian community are still exposed to the dangers of being kidnapped, robbed or killed by armed robbers, assassins; or have his wife and daughters rapped by rapists. Churches and mosques are blown up daily while unquantifiable lives and property are destroyed with improvised explosive devices. Lack of trust, corruption and insincerity of government and the national security agents are responsible for the failure of the official security operatives to live up to the challenges of the present security situations. The outcome was that the citizenry and communities having lost faith in the government, ventured into alternative security outfits in order to checkmate the precarious security situations. This move however is not devoid of obvious complexities that led to the enigmatic clash between the government and the alternative security outfits and even with the people that initially applauded their effectiveness.

Incidentally, intricacies and aspects of these security complexities have become manifest in the thematic fixations of Nollywood films. Hence, this contemporary

precarious national security situation has not eluded the modus operandi of Nollywood as video drama and theatre, according to Agbasiere (2015):

... theatre arts can be used as an instrument for the enhancement of national security through the gains made from the Nigerian video film industry as has been exemplified in Nollywood productions...

Though, film in Nigeria is generally a fall out of colonialism since the cinematic film came into the country through the activities of the colonial masters. Initially the colonist introduced the cine film into Africa and used it for propaganda and political conscientization. Cultural and economic factors repositioned the cine film and it metamorphosed into the Home video film. Commenting on the evolution of Nigerian motion picture, Ekwuazi (2001); posited that;

the indigenous feature film made its debut in 1970 (*Kongi's Harvest*); and peaked in 1986. Between 1972 and 1990, some 80 indigenous feature films had been licensed by the censor for public screening.

Initial skepticism surrounded the emergence of Nollywood regarding the name Nollywood, quality of films, contents and management principles. Jonathan Hynes reveals that; despite the controversies surrounding the name Nollywood, it has come to stay. According to Hynes (2005):

Nollywood" is here to stay because the term is irresistible to journalists and, more importantly because it neatly expresses powerful aspirations by people in the video film industry and by their fans to have a big, glamorous entertainment industry that can take its place on the world scene and appeal to international audiences (p. 2)

Nollywood video films displaced the cine film and dwarfed the achievement of the live stage. Video film inherited the functions of the cine film as well as the attempt to tackle new responsibilities created by the emergent culture of modern Nigerian nation-state including the consequent security challenges. Hence, high crime wave, ritual killings for acquisition of wealth, kidnapping armed robbery that characterize Nollywood films remain more or less responses to emergence of a new culture and its consequences.

Evidently, Nollywood has not only captured the fallouts of national security challenges, but has also attempted finding lasting solutions to these issues. This attempt is reflected in Lancelot Oduia Imasuen's *Isakaba* 1-4 selected for study in this paper. The failure of the Nigerian police force to rise up to the sophistication in crime, and lack luster attitude of the police is satirized alongside the emergent materialistic, thievery and rat race, and "dog eat dog" culture of contemporary Nigerian society. Hence, in *Isakaba*, Imasuen highlights the pros and cons surrounding the people's decision to fall back to alternative security outfits for the protection of their lives and properties since the police who, the nation originally bestows the responsibility of securing lives and property of the citizenry failed the people.

Conscientizing to Persuade: Persuasive Potentials of Nollywood Films

Film generally is among the most effective instruments of persuasion. Its strong persuasive potentials stem from the fact that it is among the channels of communication that can appeal to audio and visual sensibilities of the individual at the same time. Film

is not the only instrument of persuasion; however, it distinguishes itself among others like: radio, television, newspaper and other social media; especially in Nigeria, where it has acquired very large audience fellowship. The concept of using film for education, conscientization and persuasion is dependent on persuasion theories of mass communication. "Persuasion theory is a mass theory that deals with messages aimed at subtly changing the attitudes of receivers." (*Media Studies: Persuasion Theory Definition and Description*, 2010) Based on this definition of Persuasion Theory and the suitability of this theory for the researchers' analyses; the researchers hinge the case study analyses of this study on the above Persuasion Theory because:

Unlike the Hypodermic Needle theory, persuasion theory considers the stimulus Response model as interposed by a filter: individual specificities, i.e. psychological characteristics of an individual, in this perspective, persuasive messages are thus able to actuate an attitude change that can modify behaviours of consumers, voters and individuals in general.

The Nigerian Security Situation: Prospects and Challenges of Alternative Security Outfits in *Isakaba*

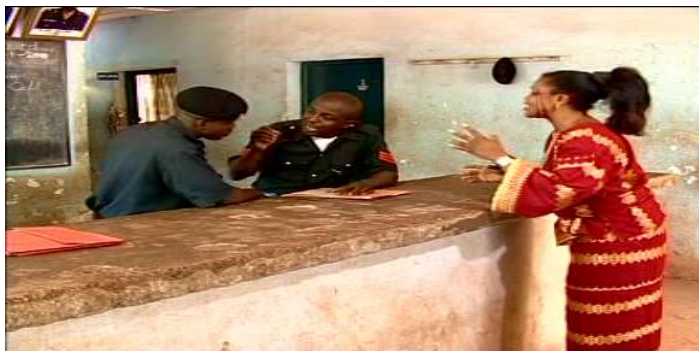
The film opens to show a community and the precarious security situation facing her people. This community is under the siege of criminals sponsored and assisted by influential members of the community. To worsen the security situation, the police are adamant and unconcern as robbers terrorize the entire community. The insensitivity of the Police climax when a woman is wounded and her car snatched from her. She runs to the police station with the hope of getting help. Contrarily she is highly disappointed as all her shouting and pleas fell on deaf ears. The two policemen on duty are very busy discussing pool staking. The policemen turned "poolologists" finally responded and reprimanded the woman for coming to the Police station to disturb them. As the security situation further degenerate, the Igwe and members of his cabinet are seen deliberating over contracting and inviting Isakaba, an alternative security outfit formed and organized by the people for combating crime. The myth of Isakaba is that they went beyond the orthodox crime checking methods to evolve their own traditional but effective ways of checking crime.

The invitation of Isakaba generates controversy among cabinet members as skepticism and acceptance characterize deliberations. However, the will of the Igwe and the majority prevails and Isakaba boys arrive the community, swing into action and criminals become restless. Isakaba fishes out a cripple who hires guns to robbers, a female Corn Seller and Chief Odogwu who are also in the gun running business. Arrests are made and criminals are executed. The final onslaught on the criminals is the arrest of Ikuku, the medicine man of the robbers.

Events take a dramatic turn as patrons of criminals liaise with Nwoke, a rebel and fallen member of the Ebube led Isakaba to form fake Isakaba. Believing that Isakaba has stepped on their toes, these patrons of criminals in Isakaba 2 and 3 equip Nwoke with arms and money and instruct him to blackmail Isakaba. They impersonate Isakaba and carry out heinous crimes: robbery, kidnapping, rape etc. The community, once more came under siege apparently by Isakaba. In Isakaba 4, Nwoke and his group are uncovered by Isakaba, their medicine man Igbudu is arrested.

It is a truism that what led to the invitation of the alternative security outfit is because the town is taken over by armed robbers and everyday people are killed and deprived of their personal belongings: cash, cars, jewelries and even loved ones are kidnapped and carried away. The effort to get the police to do something fails as seen in the attitude of the Nigerian police. The two policemen on duty at the police station did not raise an eye brow when the car snatching screams into the police station. The woman made frantic efforts to attract their attention to no avail; they continued to play their lido game.

Two Policemen on Duty Marking Their Pool Coupon While Complainants Wait



Even the arrival of the D.P.O. does not help matters. As the victim of the car snatching incident make a passionate appeal to the D.P.O to go after the robbers he says:

D. P.O: you see this gun I am holding I have only two rounds of ammunition inside it and, and those armed robbers you want me to go after use machine guns. I don't want to commit suicide (*Isakaba 1*).

This goes a long way to reveal the lackluster attitude of the police and how ill equipped our security operatives are. This also shows that the government has not responded to the changing culture that produced sophistication in criminal activities. This is obvious in the Boko Haran terrorist attack that made ill equipped Nigerian soldiers loss their lives before better equipped and much more informed terrorists. It took the Boko Haran attack to make the Nigerian military realize that they have been living in the past.



The DPO Displays Old and Outdated Pistol

Consequently, the lackluster attitude of the police, corruption and lack of up to date security equipment and guns force the people to look for help elsewhere. Hence, the Igwe summons the elders to deliberate over contracting and invitation of Isakaba security outfit to their town to help them fight crime. Elder Odiwe supporting the Igwe, points out to the elders of the town that Isakaba boys helped the people of Nayaba to rid their town of criminals. Elder Mbanefo supports this proposal, though in *Isakaba 2* it becomes obvious that he does this with ulterior motive. However, elder Odogwu vehemently opposes this proposal not because of any genuine reason but because he has a skeleton in his cupboard. Later in *Isakaba 1*, his first son is arrested as an armed robbery and he confesses his crimes, finally the elders agree that the Isakaba boys be invited. Ebube and his Isakaba boys arrive and clean up the town; but unfortunately.



Isakaba Kills a Cripple Who Gives Arms to Robbers



A Woman Who Gives Arms to Robbers Under the Guise of a Corn and Pear Seller

This alternative security outfit that is based on African ritualistic practices and system of justice became effective for combating crime in the society but unfortunately, Nwoke the second in command to Ebube disagrees with Ebube and walks out of the Isakaba group. Driven by materialism, Nwoke starts the fake Isakaba to blackmail Ebube and the real Isakaba. Events take a dramatic turn and a fake Isakaba emerged through the activities and sponsorship of corrupt leaders and enemies of the people.

The sponsorship of the fake Isakaba by the likes of chief Odogwu and Mbanefo reveals what is happening in the contemporary Nigerian society where criminals like politicians have god fathers. Robbers have patrons, god fathers who provide the arms, cars and money for their operations. Thus, events turned sour as Nwoke and his group impersonates Isakaba to torment the town once again. The people are confused and turn against the original Isakaba.

This is a major challenge of proliferation of security outfits, because criminals can hide under the cover of private security outfits and operate. This particular challenge contributed to the abrogation of the Bakasi security outfit formed at Aba and Onitsha as criminals infiltrated the group and their mood of operation changed. They became debt collectors, political thugs and victimized political opponents and harassed innocent citizens. As seen in the film under study, some of the corrupt members of Isakaba security led by Nwoke pulled out of the original and main Isakaba and formed a fake Isakaba that now became enemies of the people. Like the police, rather than protect the people, they now rob and kidnap innocent citizens especially those sponsoring the original Isakaba founded by the Igwe in council as representatives of the people.



Nwoke About to Pull Out as He Confronts the Original Isakaba Group

Finally, Isakaba hunts Nwoke out as they trace him to a beer parlor. They overpower him and punish him for his evil deeds. Isakaba restores sanity to the society and the people moved about once again without molestation.



Nwoke Traced to the Beer Parlor By Isakaba

The restoration of peace and security to the society encourages Ebube to talk persuasively and justifies the need for alternative security outfits. He says that they have better mood of operation than the police. He insists that the rigorous protocol of the Police is too slow to respond to the new crime wave produced by a new culture, even the Police testify in the film *Isakaba 3* that the Isakaba boys are doing a good job. Ebube goes further to justify his position in *Isakaba 4*, where his group fishes out Nwoke and his fake Isakaba and destroy them. Ebube concludes Isakaba can never shed innocent blood, we stand for justice.



Ebube Talking Persuasively to the People on the Advantages of Alternative Security Outfit

Conclusion

The study revealed that the Nigerian police force has failed in their primary assignment to protect life and property of the citizenry. Hence the people are surviving at the mercy of God as criminals terrorize, harass the people at will and operate for hours without any interference from the so called Nigerian police. Worst still the researchers found out that the top officers of the force “oga on top” is unfortunately on the side of the criminals and their sponsors hence the lukewarm attitude of the rank and file when they are on duty.

The study deduced that the people resorted to alternative security outfits because the police as a national security outfit has failed them.

Though, the alternative security outfits are not without obvious challenges, the researchers concluded that despite the challenges of alternative security outfits, the inadequacies, incompetence and inefficiency of the Nigerian Police Force make alternative security outfits desirable.

The researchers reveal that the level of crime wave and sophistication in crime, induced by the emergent culture requires alternate security outfits. Moreover, the criminals adopt alternative and unorthodox methods there is also need for the people to resort to alternative measures.

It is also observed that the negligence of the Police Force by the Nigerian government led to the failure of the Police Force to wake up to the security challenges of the contemporary society.

Finally, Nollywood is committed in its relevance to nation building. The interest of Film makers in these issues and their utilization for the thematic fixations of Nollywood films is not only interesting but also heartwarming that Nollywood has the potentials to educate, communicate, mobilize, persuade and conscientize the citizenry positively. Therefore, the government and its agencies should contribute their quota towards repositioning Nollywood towards cultural re-orientation for security stability in Nigeria.

References

- Abubakar, A. S. (2012). Emergent culture of youth restiveness in socio-political dialectics in selected work of Soyinka and Osofisan. *The Parnassus*, Vol. 8 Uyo: Department of Theatre Arts, University of Uyo.
- Agbasiere, C. (2015). Harnessing national security through the emerging Nigerian video film theatre. *Global Journal of Arts and Social Science Education*. Vol. 3. (2) 2015:089-093.< <http://www.globalscienceresearchjournals.org/>> Accessed, 28-06- 2015
- Ekwuazi, H. (2001). Perspectives on the Nigerian motion picture industry. Ekwuazi, H., Sokomba, J. & Mgbejume, O. (eds.) *Making the transitional from video to celluloid*. Jos: National Film Institute.
- Haynes, J. (2005). "Nollywood": What's in a Name? african-cinema conference african-cinema-conference@xc.org Date: Friday, July 8, 2005. Accessed, 25-06- 2015.
- Katzenstein, P. J. (2002). *The culture of national security: Norms and identity in World politics*. <<http://www.ciaonet.org/book/katzenstein/katz01.html> (27 of 27) [8/9/2002 1:49:26 PM]> Accessed, 20- 06- 2015.
- Media Studies. *Persuasion theory definition & description*. (2010). <<http://communicationmodel.blogspot.com/2010/01/persuasion-theory-definition.html>> Tuesday, January 5, 2010. Accessed, 25- 06- 2015
- Zakharov, F. I., Sushinsky, V. V., Shestopal, A. V. (Eds.) (1985). *Philosophical foundations of scientific socialism*. Moscow: Institute of Social Sciences.

Filmography

Isakaba. Directed by Lancelot Odua Imasuen. Onitsha Kas-vid International.