

Theory, Theoretical Framework and Topic Choice

A theory is a set of accepted beliefs or organized principles that explain and guide analysis. A theory is of value because it assist to explain the meaning, nature and challenges associated with a phenomenon, often experienced but unexplained in the world in which we live, so that we may use that knowledge and understanding to act in more informed and effective ways. Theories are formulated to explain, predict, and understand phenomena and, in many cases, to challenge and extend existing knowledge within the limits of critical bounding assumptions.

The theoretical framework is the structure that can hold or support a theory of a research study. The theoretical framework introduces and describes the theory that explains why the research problem under study exists. The theoretical framework is most often not something readily found within the literature. You must review course readings and pertinent research studies for theories and analytic models that are relevant to the research problem you are investigating. The selection of a theory should depend on its appropriateness, ease of application, and explanatory power.

The theoretical approach one take towards examining security and security studies will determine the type of subject matter one considers constitutes security. Theoretical development and empirical application are two sides of the same coin. The theory and theoretical approach should answers the four questions: what is security; whose security; what is a security issue and how security can be achieved.

The theoretical framework strengthens the study in the following ways:

1. An explicit statement of theoretical assumptions permits the reader to evaluate them critically.
2. The theoretical framework connects the researcher to existing knowledge within the framework. Guided by a relevant theory, you are given a basis for your hypotheses and choice of research methods.
3. Articulating the theoretical assumptions of a research study forces you to address questions of why and how. It permits you to intellectually transition from simply describing a phenomenon you have observed to generalizing about various aspects of that phenomenon.
4. Having a theory helps you identify the limits to those generalizations. A theoretical framework specifies which key variables influence a phenomenon of interest and highlights the need to examine how those key variables might differ and under what circumstances.

Realism and Social Constructivism: Fitting Theoretical Model to Nigeria's Environment

Alan Collins "introduction" to his edited book *Contemporary Security Studies* provide instructive lesson in the origin of realism as a security theory and to my persistent reference to history, experience and reality as determinant of security and security studies. According to Collins,

Welcome to Security Studies: the sub-discipline of International Relations. It is the study of security that lies at the heart of International Relations. It was the carnage of the First World War, and the desire to avoid its horrors again, that gave birth to the discipline of International Relations in 1919 at Aberystwyth, United Kingdom. This concern with the origins of war and its conduct enable International Relations to 'distinguish itself from related disciplines such as history, economics, geography, and international law'. It is the survival of agents, which for much of the discipline has meant sovereign states, that has become accepted as the dominant explanatory tool for understanding their behaviour. Security is a matter of high politics; central to government debates and pivotal to the priorities they establish. Quite simply, no other concept in international relations packs the metaphysical punch, nor commands the disciplinary power of "security".¹

Realism took off holding a pessimistic view of the human nature and of the world and, had argued that the international system, the arena where states related with one another, was anarchic. By anarchy, it meant there was no international authority in place that can enforce agreement and prevent the use of force. Anarchy simply referred to the lack of authority in the international system. Realism was of the view that power was the defining feature of the international system. Power meant the resources available for building military forces. States or countries that were more powerful can build larger and more sophisticated military forces. The importance of power and military capabilities followed closely from the anarchic nature of the international system. Without an international authority to protect them, states needed to rely on their own capabilities to achieve their international goals. Power played a central role in enabling states to acquire these capabilities.

Realism sees states as the most important actor in the international system. The other alternative is international institutions. They argue that international institutions play a less important role than states. The dominance of states as actor on the international scene is a common strand that permeates the realist family. Realism is of the view that the

¹ See Alan Collins (ed), *Contemporary Security Studies*, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2007, 2. This characterisation was no less evident in Paul D. Williams introduction in the book *Security Studies: An Introduction*, London and New York, Routledge, 2008, 1

international system is characterised by competition and war. While this view has been changing following the end of the Cold War, it is a contention held by realist and understanding this assist in the comprehension of its role in the debate over international relations theory and over foreign and national security policy.

These amongst others were considered some of the shared assumptions of realism. As a theory, realism is a family and the central divide within realism is between theories that focus on the structure of the international system and those that focus on states' motives. Among the families are classical realism, neorealism, defensive structural realism, offensive structural realism, rise and fall realism and neoclassical realism.

This represented the history, experience and reality that pushed Europe and America into embracing realism as the theory that represented their approach to answering the questions: what is security, whose security, what counts as issue and how can security be achieved.

Security in Nigeria: In Search of a Theory and Theoretical Structure?

In the first place what are the definitions of security as provided by scholars and scholarship in Nigeria? There are no definitions as there are no scholars and scholarship on security yet. Whatever definitions there are derived from the views of American and European scholars and scholarship and as I argued these were views that incorporated their histories, experiences and realities. Thus from the point of view of studies that consistently investigated and interrogated issues of security within theory, theoretical framework and practice and above all from history, experience and reality, Nigeria has none.

What is the view of practice concerning what constitutes security? In terms of practice, security derived from the role of the armed forces in the defence of the state. This role initially condensed into law enforcement as provided by the police developed into the perception of security following the consistency with which the military in Nigeria violated the constitution by taking over political authority.

There is a history to the emergence of security consciousness in Nigeria. This history coincided with the failure of the armed forces as government to meet the security needs of Nigerians in their governance. This history also coincided with when security became a burning issue internationally as reflected by different economic and political crisis globally. This was the critical juncture that inculcated security into the consciousness of Nigerians. The military government's inability to secure the lives of Nigerians through the provision of governance that engendered access to basic need translated into crime, protest, demonstration and rebellion among Nigerians. These conditions including epileptic/collapse of public services were described as insecurity. The resource of the police

force, the first line of defence in internal order, was inadequate for the process underway and in some instance the nature of the crisis was novel for the police force. Military intervention that came in the form of supporting police resources to control the situation became known as security.

Nigeria's security was not engendered by the same reality that informed the security that characterised Europe and America. Nigeria was never and has never been a player on the international system to warrant the deployment of realist theoretical exposition in the attempt to secure the state. Nigeria has never been threatened by any power within the sub region, region and around the world to necessitate the disproportionate focus on security that has thus been generated. Nigeria has not faced a Pakistani type reality first in the dispute with India and second as a frontier state in the war on terrorism; Nigeria has not face the Iranian type reality in the civilisational cum regional hegemonic struggle that pitched that country with Israel, Saudi Arabia and the United States; Nigeria has not faced a North Korean type reality including being alone from the point of view of ideology and following the end of the Korean war in 1953, persistently pressured by the presence of the United States, South Korea and Japan, forcing the North Koreans to conclude that the possession of nuclear weapon guaranteed their security in the region. These states have compelling reason to dictate their application of realist security tenets.

Nigeria's reality was the type that was generated by the dissatisfaction of its people with their material wellbeing. Nigeria has over 250 ethnic nationalities that prior to the British intervention and creation of the Nigerian state had lived independently and interdependently. I had argued that Nigeria was a British security creation. It was from 1849 until 1960 when independence was granted to Nigeria. Since 1960, Nigerians have yet to build a home from the house constructed by the British. The lack of a home was responsible for the state of insecurity that had confronted administrations particularly the military which had dominated governance for the better part of its independence until 1999. Incidentally, the military institution is, from the realist tenet, charged with protecting the state and as the state for the better part of when governance failed, the military used its resources to tackle challenges to its hold on power and in the process created the prevailing security consciousness that had no foundation in philosophy, policy and governance.

Nigeria's ethnic composition depicts a caricature of an international system reality that could explain the application of realist security tenets. Nigeria with over 250 ethnic nationalities is an international system with competing states (nationalities). Each state was brought into the Nigeria international system at different time and in different condition. These states had varying capacities and capabilities with few described as major and most described as minors. Most states were autonomous and whatever semblance of

relation they had with their neighbours prior to incorporation by the British was occasioned by the need to exchange goods and services. There were few elements of conquest especially as it relate to the claims of the major groups over the minor groups. It was, prior to the British intervention, an ideal international system where some tenets of realism did apply to a certain degree. However, realism worked in Nigeria because governance failed to evolve a model that gave Nigerian nationalities the reason to lessen the assertion of their individuality in preference for Nigeria.

There was also an international enabling environment unleashed after the Cold War that gave vent to primordial ethnic and religious sentiments in the bid to building and rebuilding security communities. The control of the state determined who gets what and in what quantity. There have been coalitions of ethnic nationalities that have worked together on occasion and worked against each other on other occasion in the attempt to control the state. Thus the instruments of coercion of the Nigerian state belonged to the ethnic nationality or the coalition of ethnic nationalities that control the state at any given moment. Ethnic nationalities were thus engaged in the fight to capture the state if they were to access the benefit of governance. This perhaps explained the importance of security in the realist context in Nigeria. But was security practice within the realist context even if it was modified?

The increasing expenditure on "security" by the Nigerian state was therefore not justified. In the last three decades of the emergence of security in public affairs, there has been a significant rise in spending on this security. The expenditure included defence, armed forces, the police, security vote and the Office of the National Security Adviser that has become ubiquitous and had grown in influence in the management of this "security". Yet, the rising expenditure that cuts across states and local government areas, in the name of "security" and justified on "security vote" was not to deter external enemy or threat. The spending was to address the growing dissatisfaction of Nigerians with the quality and quantity of their lives manifested in activities the state claimed threatened its existence. The expenditure on health, education, agriculture, transportation, housing and employment generation did not witness significant rise even as investment in these areas hold the key to stemming the growing insecurity.

The practice called security did not derive from any systematic application of theory. The practice of security did not derive from any policy on security. The practice of security was arbitrary. The practice was derived from the constitutional role of the military. Realism did not, in the western sense, explain the security reality in Nigeria. The practice of security did not recognise the four fundamental questions on security – what is security, whose security, what count as issue and how security can be achieved. What amounts to the selective application of its tenet is not addressing the issues confronting Nigeria. In the

event that Nigeria decide to give security a focus with a theory, which of the theory or theories would best explain the Nigerian condition?

Therefore the definition of security, concepts, alliance development, contemporary challenges and deepening and broadening debate² were issues that were not indigenous to security in Nigeria. This is because there was no security theory, philosophy and policy. For most part, Nigeria and most other developing countries subscribed to some of these issues generated by Western security need. They do this in order to access the fund (cash, training and equipment) through bilateral and multilateral channels. In the end, Nigeria and other developing countries assists the Western to fulfilling their security objectives.

Realism: People, Economic Opportunity and Internal Environment

If the application of realism by the developed world to assure their security was anchored on state, military and external environment, Nigeria should anchored its application of realism on people, economic development and internal environment.

The experiences of developing countries such as Nigeria differ from the Western model described in the preceding. Until the emergence of Nigeria in the Westphalian sense, the type of struggle described in the evolution of Western societies that informed their focus on state-military-external environment was different. It is colonialism that created the modern state particularly in sub Saharan Africa. It is colonialism that imbued this type of sensitivity in their statecraft. However, colonialism bequeathed more crisis to the new states than it solved, thus saddling the states with enough to threaten their internal stability for most of their independence existence.

As a result, strengthening the state with military power is not directed at any external enemies as is the case with Western societies. There were few sources of interstate conflict and more often than not they were the legacy of colonialism. Strengthening the state is directed against rival centres of power often along ethnic, regional and religious lines and the generality of people excluded from dwindling economic and social development in these countries. The source of struggle hinge on being cobbled together regardless of history on one hand, the dearth of opportunity and the history of post colonial deprivation occasioned by poor governance on the other hand. People need employment which enables them to access food, shelter and health to be able to engage in other activity. This is consistently lacking in these countries. This is why security in Nigeria and other developing countries should focus on people, economic opportunity and internal issues.

² See the framework of security studies provided by Paul D. Williams

Of recent, the preoccupation of academics is to debate the utility of broadening and deepening the concept of security from military to non-military threats and from states to individuals.³ This preoccupation is with those in the developed world where the question of security is tied to the survival of the state in a chaotic international system. It is also the case that the threat perception of governments and international organisations in the transatlantic region has radically changed following the end of the Cold War and since the event of 11 September 2001.⁴

Since much of the direction of developing countries' ideas come from the developed world, there has not been a significant shift in what constitute security and threats in their politics and polities. What is evident is the lip service paid to the drive towards elevating human security agenda,⁵ within the broadening and deepening context, in policies. Indeed, this acknowledgement is tied to the assistance from donor agencies and governments as part of bilateral and multilateral relations. In reality the overwhelming attention is paid to the protection of the state conceived here as regime security. The post Cold War and 9-11 events especially the launch of the war on terror in the Bush presidency provided a pretext for regimes to crack down on dissents. Nigeria was not an exception.

Almost two decades after the United Nations system put the broadening and deepening debate on the political agenda with its human security paradigm,⁶ Nigeria is yet to put this into practice to check the constant and persistent state-induced crisis of insecurity affecting its people since independence. It is true that Nigeria has elected governments thus fulfilling the minimalist requirement of representation in a democracy. But it is equally true that the expectations of Nigerians that should come with representation which would guarantee their security have remained unfulfilled. Failing to enhance human security, the leadership continue to subscribe to the security tenets of realism founded on politics among nations⁷ as a safeguard against threats from Nigerians.

Security of the realist type seeks to protect the state, conceived of threats as external and relies on the armed forces to contain it. Since justifying this security situation is difficult in Nigeria, the regimes subsumed state and non-state actors as external threat and linked them to the internationally branded ones such as Al-Qaeda and now Islamic State, in the emerging security governance.⁸ It made no distinction between the circumstance that informed transatlantic view of security that put the defence-power security emphasising the centrality of state at the heart of discourse and policy and those that affect Nigeria.

³ Richard H. Ullman, "Redefining Security", *International Security*, Vol. 8, No. 1, 1983, 129-53; Stephen M. Walt, "The Renaissance of Security Studies", *International Studies Quarterly*, Vol. 35, No. 2, 1991, pp. 211-39; Emma Rothschild, "What is Security?", *Daedalus*, Vol. 124, No. 3, 1995, 53-98; David A. Baldwin, "The Concept of Security", *Review of International Studies*, Vol. 23, No. 1, 1997, 5-29; Keith Krause and Michael C. Williams, eds, *Critical Security Studies. Concepts and Cases*, Minneapolis, University of Minnesota Press, 1997

⁴ Elke Krahmman, "Security Governance and Networks: New Theoretical Perspectives in Transatlantic Security". *Cambridge Review of International Affairs*, Vol. 18 (1), 2005, 19-34.

⁵ UNDP Human Development Report 1994, <http://hdr.undp.org/en/reports/global/hdr1994/> accessed 17/04/12

⁶ UNDP Human Development Report 1994

⁷ Han Morgenthau, *Politics among Nations: The Struggle for Power and Peace*. New York, Alfred Knopf, 1969

⁸ Elke Krahmman, "Conceptualising Security Governance", *Cooperation and Conflict*, Vol. 38 (1), 2003, 5-26

The primary distinguishing criterion is the difference in what obtained in the developed world particularly Europe and USA, and in the developing world. In this we argue that while the enabling environment of the developed world, in different epochs, prevailed on them to make the state-anarchy-external environment-nuclear issue central to the pursuit of security, in the developing world, security is internal owing to the prevalence of abject poverty occasioned by perennial governance crisis and attendant corruption, driven by states' focus on regime survival and not because one country has its gun pointed on another.

The developed world, in particular Europe, in spite of the Euro zone financial crisis, has remained a model of economic prosperity to which other regions of the world try to emulate. They have succeeded in attaining material prosperity of the type that is a magnet to the deprived people of the developing world. Indeed, the Cold War was fought to demonstrate the model that held the most promise of satisfying mankind's quest for material prosperity. One of the consequences was instrumental in consolidating the state-centred security pursuit since Europe and America were assured of stable domestic base as they confronted the defunct Soviet Union led Warsaw Pact. This reality does not apply to the developing world. Although countries in the region were allied to either one of the superpowers in the Cold War, the benefit to them in being proxies embedded in the leadership the same security mentality prevalent with their benefactors.

The security architecture of the world was already structured before Nigeria emerged on the international scene. Nigeria was the handiwork of British colonialism. The British broke most resistance put up by the indigenous peoples and cobbled together their territories regardless of the differences to form Nigeria. The new state embraced the ideals bequeathed by the colonial power. With a heterogeneous population whose sense of oneness was embryonic, with politics revolving around ethnicity, region and religion and, with the people in dire need of improvement in living standard that pre-independence rhetoric promised to deliver, it was not surprising that the contest for space pitched the different groups against one another making the control of the state the sole preoccupation of the elite in power.

The state is attractive making insecurity and reliance on its resources inevitable because of the manner of its evolution and transformation in Nigeria. Three phases of the evolution of state can be discerned. The first was when European obstructed the process of state formation underway in most of these societies. The implication of this to development then and now is immense. The second was the creation and imposition of the colonial state on the heterogeneous people. This created new super-ordination and subordination while enhancing old ones among the people. The third was the negotiated transfer of power, amidst the unsettled climate of the two previous phases, to the new post colonial state. The post colonial state became the theatre where the internecine struggle of the past were re-enacted. It undermined whatever unity created to facilitate the attainment of independence.

As proxy in the Cold War and eager to contain the growing internal opposition to their rule, the leadership valued the life enhancing military and political support that their benefactors offered them. The opposition was often labelled communist to chime with the prevailing threat currency. The result was the emergence of one party or military regimes intolerant of opposition and willing to use all means at their disposal. It was this enabling environment that deepened the growing gulf between peoples' expectation for growth and development, leadership inability to fulfil this and their reliance on force to ensure their security. It was a recipe for perpetual instability.

Thus for the people and leadership, security was defined differently. For the leadership, security was the safety of the state personified by the regime, against the rising tide of opposition and threat. Their solution to this was to crack down on the opposition using the resource at the disposal of the state. For the people, security means putting their economic welfare emphasising the centrality of human being and being human at the heart of discourse and policy. What is germane is the realisation that for Nigeria and most developing countries, the pursuit of security has been off the local realities in both theory and practice since independence.⁹ Post Cold War development following enforced democratisation did not show departure from this tradition, at least, in practical terms.

The development and propagation of human security by the UNDP in 1994 and the subsequent adoption of the perspective in explaining the changes evident since the end of the Cold War brought to concrete surface the abysmal condition in which most human being lived in the whole of the last century. The state of deprivation is most acute in sub-Saharan Africa which has translated into unending conflicts often wrongly diagnosed as ethnic, religious and regional contest. To the extent that this explanation subsists, it is to drive an essentially economic conflict. The UNDP analysis, to borrow Chomsky's word, painted the human condition in the region as "sharp, clear, and highly instructive."¹⁰ The UNDP intervention is a repudiation of the ahistorical security theory and practise in the developing countries which does not speak to their history, experience and reality.

The state of human existence in Nigeria calls for the securitisation¹¹ of development. Securitisation describes a process whereby urgent 'security issues' or 'threats' are identified or 'constructed' in order to mobilise opinion and constitute legitimacy and authority for means of dealing with that 'threat'.¹² According to Huysmans, it is the ways in which areas of political life can be shaped by the framing of political debate in terms of existential threat and survival.¹³ The existential threat is the lack of development that yields growth in

⁹ Adoyi Onoja, "Situating Old and New Security in Nigeria: Reflecting the Theory and Practise of Security", *Journal of International Politics and Development Studies*, Volume 9, Nos. 1&2, January-December, 2013, 149-171

¹⁰ Noam Chomsky, *Failed States: The Abuse of Power and the Assault on Democracy*, New York: Holt, 2006

¹¹ Ole Waever, "Securitization and Desecuritization," in Ronnie Lip-schutz, (ed.) *On Security*. (New York, Columbia University Press, 1995, 57; Michael C. Williams, "Modernity, Identity, and Security: A Comment on the Copenhagen Controversy", *Review of International Studies* Vol. 24, No. 3: 1998, 435-4; Jef Huysmans, "Revisiting Copenhagen, or about the Creative Development of a Security Studies Agenda in Europe", *European Journal of International Relations* Vol. 4, No. 4, 1998, 488-506; Rita Abrahamsen, "Blair's Africa: the Politics of Securitization and Fear", *Alternatives: Global, Local, Political*, Vol. 30, No. 1, 2005, 55-80

¹² Jef Huysmans, 'Migrants as a Security Problem: Dangers of "Securitizing" Societal Issues'. In R. Miles and D. Thränhardt, (eds.) *Migration and European Integration: The Dynamics of Inclusion and Exclusion*, London, Pinter Publishers, 1995

¹³ _____ *The Politics of Insecurity: Fear, Migration and Asylum in the EU*, London, Routledge, 2006

Nigeria which produces perpetual instability spawning ethnic conflict, religious intolerance, insurgency, crime, displaced persons and refugees while in sub-Saharan Africa it is migration, transnational crime and refugee. The latter constitutes issues of insecurity to countries and organisations in Europe and USA whose intervention only strengthen the old state responsible for this.

The solution is tackling corruption, poverty, unemployment and inequality through growing the economy¹⁴; strengthening the family as the basis of security; tackling hunger and disease; enrolling children in school and vocational trade; improving economic and social infrastructure; creating housing for all classes; opening the political space.¹⁵ It is about strengthening human being which will in turn strengthen the state by reducing conflict in the polity.

From the foregoing, Nigeria and sub-Saharan Africa experience fragile peace since decolonisation because people lacked security in their daily lives. Conflicts were internally generated before spilling into neighbouring countries. It is not necessarily because countries had issues to settle. The Boko Haram conflict began in Nigeria. It engulfed neighbouring states such as Niger Republic, Cameroun and Chad. Economic deprivation owing to corruption in governance is at the root of the conflict. Religion is merely a driver. Nigeria possessed the human and natural resources to satisfy the need of its people. However, they lacked the leadership and will to move in this direction. This is the perspective that shapes reliance on state centric security in governance since independence in 1960. It is a perspective that relegates history, experience and reality in constructing security. This is the perspective that needs to change not only in theory but in practice.

Social Constructivism

Social constructivism is perhaps the theory of security that offers Nigeria the chance to reflect the idea of history, experience and reality in the construction of its security if and when it chooses to do so. Social constructivism is one among the many post Cold War theories reflecting the deepening and broadening of security and security studies. With its tenets of negotiation, change, agents and structures, social constructivism, like critical theory, contained commitment to emancipation in its conception of security. Social constructivism brings to the fore the importance of ideas, identity and interaction in the international system, revealing how 'the human world is not simply given and/or natural but that, on the contrary, the human world is one of artifice that is "constructed" through the actions of the actors themselves.

¹⁴ Adoyi Onoja, "Social Classes and Nigeria's National Development", paper presented at the Course 25, National Defence College (NDC), Abuja, Nigeria, 23 September, 2016

¹⁵ Adoyi Onoja, "Defining and Situating Insecurity in the Nigerian Context: A Glimpse at Everyday Insecurities", In P.U. Omeje and U. Okonkwo, *New Perspective on West African History: A Festschrift in Honour Prof S.C. Ukpabi*, Enugu: Madonna University Press, 2013, 437-474; _____ "Security in Nigeria Depends on Human Welfare, not State-Centric Bureaucratisation": *Open Security* May 2012 <http://www.opendemocracy.net/opensecurity/adoyi-onoja/security-in-nigeria-depends-on-human-welfare-not-state-centric-bureaucratis>

A central shared assumption of constructivist approaches to security is that security is a social construction. As Karin Fierke argued 'to construct something is an act which brings into being a subject or object that otherwise would not exist'. Security may be understood as the preservation of a group's core values. But such a broad definition of security tells us little about who the group itself is; what its core values are; where threats to those values may come from; and how the preservation or advancement of these values might be achieved. For constructivists, answers to these questions are different in different contexts and develop through social interaction between actors. It is the answers to these questions – articulated and negotiated in a particular social and historical context through social interaction – that bring security into being.

The relevance of identity to security in constructivist approaches provided the basis their shared assumption that non-material or ideational factors in general are central to the construction and practices of security in world politics. Aside from identity or perception of who we are, the most important ideational dimension of world politics addressed by constructivists is the role of norms. As the shared expectations about the appropriate or legitimate behaviour by actors with a particular identity, norms are applied to states. Constructivists have devoted a significant amount of time and research activity to exploring how international norms evolve and come to provide limits to acceptable state behaviour in general regarding issues as disparate as colonialism and the use of nuclear weapons.

Security is socially constructed in the sense that threats are brought into being rather than meeting an abstract set of criteria about what counts as a security issue. The Iraqi war was one example. There is also the contention by other constructivists that security is constructed in the sense that different actors behave according to different discourses or frameworks of meaning of security. In this analysis, it is less a case of security having meaning through the designation of threat than the designation of threat occurring because of the adoption of a particular perspective of security. This suggests that conception of who we are and what we value encourage particular ways of thinking about where threats to those values might come from, what form they might take and how they might be dealt with.

Constructivists conceptualise security from the perspective of thick signifier. This involves moving away from ascribing a specific meaning to security such as emancipation or territorial preservation of the state and instead focusing on what particular political function security plays in social life. Thus a definition of security articulates particular understandings of our relations to nature, other human beings and the self. In other words, "security" refers to a wider framework of meaning within which we organise particular forms of life. What this translates to is that different articulations of security suggest different definitions of political community and that community's core values.

For constructivists, security is a site of negotiation and contestation. Security is context-specific social construction. Rather than developing abstract definitions of security,

constructivists work from the premise that we would do better to focus on how security is given meaning within these contexts and analyse the implications this has for political practice. In exploring how security is given meaning, constructivists argued that security is a site of negotiation between political leaders and domestic audiences in particular and contestation between different actors elaborating different vision of 'our' values and how 'we' should act.

Security as negotiation is a prominent feature of constructivist approach to security unlike realist approaches where security is enacted at the level of policy elites with negotiation between policy elites and the public having little or no role. Constructivists' approaches contest these positions and point to the importance of public support for or acquiescence to elite discourses. Constructivist especially critical constructivists have attempted to make sense of the relationship between political leaders and domestic audiences in a range of ways, emphasising the role of representation. A prominent question in security terms might be whether, in elite representations of the key beliefs and values of a nation-state, individuals recognise themselves as members of such a community. Thus if public support or acquiescence is important to the construction of security and enabling political action, it follows that security itself becomes a site of negotiation. This contest takes place between actors searching to put forward their own visions of society and templates for action.

In the constructivists world view, security as a site of negotiation and contestation makes world politics a social realm and therefore provides room between agents and structures and associated possibilities for structural change. Agents and structures are mutually constituted. Thus to Alexander Wendt 'anarchy is what states make of it' and for Wendt, there is nothing inevitable about anarchy conditioning state interests and actions. Wendt suggest that agents or states can influence the content and effects of a particular structure or anarchy through the way they act. This meaning is not a simple reflection of an external material reality, but is developed through intersubjective interaction in the international system. To the extent that anarchy seems to encourage self-help, an overwhelming concern with survival and a view of conflict as an inevitable feature of world politics, it is one of the several particular cultures of anarchy, rather than a timeless reality. Through their practices, states can either maintain this culture of anarchy or disrupt it, in turn either validating or questioning the normative basis of this international system itself.

The belief in the mutual constitution of agents and structures and indeed in the socially constructed nature of the world politics generally, leads constructivists to conclude that change is always possible. The belief that structures are socially constructed necessarily suggests the possibility of these structures becoming other than they are. One is example is the end of the Cold War which enabled actors such as Mikhail Gorbachev acting as if an alternative normative structure was in place and subsequently changing the nature of the structure itself.

Generally, constructivists share a belief that security is a social construction, meaning different things in different contexts. Security is also seen as a site of negotiation and contestation, in which actors compete to define the identity and value of a particular group in such a way as to provide a foundation for political action. Identity and norms are seen as central to the study of security, together providing the limits for feasible and legitimate political action. Agents and structures are mutually constituted and, because the world is one of our own making, even structural change is always possible even if difficult.

While most of these constructivist views were built around security of country to country relations within the context of the international system, what does this imply for a country like Nigeria with no claim to the foundation of this postulation? As I argued in the case of realist security perspective as lacking in Nigeria's history, experience and reality (HER), social constructivism offers Nigeria and Nigerians a chance to construct their security not in imitation of a non-existing history, experience and reality but with what is available within their environment.

Social constructivism unlike realism creates room for dialogue in the construction of what represent security for a community. Social constructivism is about ideas, identity, interaction, norms, negotiation, contestation, change, agents and structures in the construction of security. Perhaps the call to restructure Nigeria – a move towards creating an inclusive security model – is an exercise in social constructivism and a repudiation of the selective realist model replete in practice.

The Making of a Topic

Grounded in theory and theoretical framework which comes from reading the literature on security, the decision to apply these in a particular topic should be borne out of one's extant reality. It is important to read/study, observe and think about what was read/studied, observed and thought about. The choice of topic should be determined by what was read or studied, what was observed in the environment and what was thought about what was read or studied and observed. There is therefore a symbiotic relationship between reading, observing and thinking in the making of a topic.

The prevalent idea among student is to coin a topic first and begin to look for a problem to fit the topic. The existence of a problem should be the reason to coin a topic. Problem can be found in the environment from observation. Problem can be found in the environment from reading and studying existing works.

In the event that the issue or area of study is novel as in security and security studies, it is advisable to engage with the issue or area from the point of view of environment where it has been practiced and studied. It is the understanding from this places that would provide the base and guide to its development in the new area.

I have observed three distinct ways of arriving at a topic among students. The first is the practice of students coining a topic because they were in need of a topic. In this case it was a process that was impervious of the rudiment of scholarship and of the environment necessitating this scholarship. The second is the practice of coining a topic first and looking for the problem, if at all they do, from the environment. This was reminiscent of the scholarship that prevailed during the ideological struggle called the Cold War. In an attempt to fit theory to practice especially the concept of mode of production, there was an overwhelming distortion of reality in this effort. The third is the practice of coining topic from what was read or studied, what was observed within one's environment and the thought process that went into the reading or studying and the observation.

Of the three processes outlined, the last is the best of the practice. This practice comes with motivation – the right motivation for embarking on the programme. It meant the student has been engaged in reading or studying, observing his/her environment and thinking about what was read or studied and observed. It is a process that commences even before the enrolment into a programme and continues in the phases of the course work so that when it was time to bring forth a topic, the student was mentally ready to engage the supervisor in the making of this decision.

At the graduate level, the making of the choice of a topic is that of the student. At this level, it is expected that the student knows what he/she want. The supervisor is a mere guide. The key to the attainment of this preparatory level as I have argued is the motivation of the student. This motivation is demonstrated by the amount of preparatory study carried out by the student; this study exposes the student to issue of theory and how to construct theoretical framework from the quantum of reading or studying already carried out in relation to the study area. The task of adopting a theoretical framework as the structure of the work to be carried out is that of the student. Theoretical structure emanates from the readings and study of existing theory.

In constructing theoretical structure, the student retain the right to observe the working of existing theories which were mostly constructed within the context of the history, experience and reality of the people from where this study originate and reconstruct his theoretical structure on the basis of his/her understanding of his/her environment. This insight which the student gain can only come from persistent application of self to reading or studying, observing and thinking about all that was read or studied, observed and thought about.