



RESEARCH ARTICLE

EVALUATING THE INTERACTIONS BETWEEN THEOLOGY, ECONOMY AND NATIONAL SECURITY IN NIGERIA

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ABSTRACT

This paper titled, ‘Evaluating the interactions between, theology economy and national security’ is not only timely but also succinct given the importance of theology in sharpening and re-sharpening national existence and development. While theology focuses on understanding the nature of God and His relationship with humanity, economy and national security are foundational concepts which are necessary for building and egalitarian society. With the aid of library and qualitative analysis, the paper aimed at contributing its intellectual quota in not just exhuming the critical vantage of Christian theology to economic development and national security but also spelling out the expected roles of theological knowledge towards economic progression and promotion of national security. To this end, it reveals that theological studies both in present and past times have significantly contributed towards the progress and curbing the menace of insecurity. It is envisaged that doing theology in this unique time and age requires not just passive intellectual demagogue but a rational and passionate engagement in the plight of the people viz-a-viz stimulating a theology of stewardship and responsibility which would cause both the leadership and the led to take the issue of national rebirth much more seriously. Specifically, this paper established the link between the three concepts: theology, economy and national security and evinced that theology is a veritable tool for social transformation.

Keywords: Theology, evaluation, economy, interaction, national security

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1.0. INTRODUCTION

There has been attendant economic downturn and worsening insecurity recorded in Nigeria over a long time. Regardless of unending campaign promises and much orchestrated economic reforms of successive Governments, Nigeria has been at economic crossroads. At present, Nigerians face unending economic challenges. The overall economic outlook is not just bleak but disturbing as it is marked with low growth, low revenue collecting accelerating, inflation and external imbalances (IMF; 2024). The official estimate for Nigeria's GDP as at the end of 2023 stood at \$1.115 trillion which ranks the country the global grading of an E in world economic data quality rating which is an extremely poor result (World Economics; 2023). A simple internet entry on how insecure is Nigeria; would leave much more than just the economic scenario. Agbelusi (2024) opines that insecurity is now a norm in Nigeria.

The security outlook appears not only to be worsening but in-proportionately escalating and now seems to have been out of control. Purveyors of security concerns in Nigeria would discover that unlike before, insecurity in Nigeria has now become progressive, overwhelming and evenly spread instead of being sectional as was before. Almost all parts of the country have their own unfortunate share of insecurity ranging from the perennial insurgency in the North East to banditry, farmers-nomads clashes both in the North-West and North-Central. The Southern regions are not left out, the South-East apart from grappling with the issues of kidnapping, now faces a more daring cases of insecurity associated with unknown gunmen attacks and struggles for self-determination which not only have claimed innocent lives but have stalled and entirely halted all economic and social activities mostly on Mondays.

The South-West witnesses ever than before the worrisome kidnappings, herdsmen onslaughts and violent robbery in broad day light. The lists of current social crimes in Nigeria are inexhaustive. The question now arises, with spate of insecurity in Nigeria, has Nigeria become a fragile state since loss of internal security is an index of fragility? (Akinyetun, Ebonine, & Ambrose, 2023). However, the aim of the paper is not to re-echo the litanies of Nigerian national woes but to lend support to engender a desperate rescue effort before it is too late. The aim of such intellectual work ought not to be a foray into naming and shaming the nation, but a passionate and engaging methodology that would significantly contribute to national rebirth and transformation which is the major concern of theology. Unlike other



disciplines, theology is the queen of all sciences. A primal discipline paved way for other rational inquiry into scientific phenomenon. It is therefore apposite to state that theological inquiry into social phenomenon are not just moral attacks at the society and her leadership but a serious sober engagement with the sole purpose of proffering lasting solutions to the societal malaises.

2.0. Conceptualizations

Theology

Many people have misconstrued what theology is all about. To some, theology is same as religious studies. This view seems to have been perfectly endorsed as the curriculum of most universities and colleges have combined the two disciplines making them to mean one and the same thing. Even most of our contemporary theologians possess degrees not in theology but in religious studies. Be it as it may, theology is much committed unlike Religious Studies, which its spheres are limitless in scope. Any conscious theological study is focused on God. McGrath (1994), opines that theology is thus discourses about God. It is a reflection on the God whom the Christians adore (McGrath, 1994, p.117).

From its etymology, theology came from the compound Greek words, *theos* and *logos* meaning God and word. Simply, theology is a systematic and scientific study of God. This puts the classical definition in row of academic dissensions. The question now is how can the finite human mind study or know God who is infinite and unknowable. To douse this vexations controversy, St Anselm's conception appears pleasurable as he defines the theology as 'faith seeking understanding (Anselm). Given this definition, theology is the quest to fully understand God. However, this definition does not come from the standpoint of the believer who is grounded on the tenets of faith. Opara (2023) defines theology as a systemic study of God, his natures, attributes and his relationship with his creation.

The later definition is also fraught with intellectual clogs. Theology is not a sophisticated course of study. It is our day to day lifestyle. At every place and at all times we discuss about God. It is not the preserve of the clerics neither is it a conserve of the intellectuals. Theology is part of the human person, high or low, rich or poor, informed or uninformed; do engage in some form of theologizing. The man at the main market may have prayed or talked about



God even more than the parson in his cathedral. The poor and subsistent woman farmer must have prayed today before continuing with her farm work. The ‘touts’ at the motor-park may have been involved in a harangue about God every morning with his ‘intransigent’ colleagues. Theological discourses are not confined to the finest Churches, temples or Cathedrals neither are they only propounded by the erudite professors, theologians, scholars or high profile churchmen. Theology and theologizing is done by everyone at all times and in all places thus making it probably the most current and popular converse among all subject matters.

The essence of theology is not just to imbue the person with the head knowledge of the workings of the transcendent and infinite being, God but also to transform the human person through the revelational knowledge of the one transcendent and immanent God. Five (5) reasons have been adduced for the study of theology: they include to, deepen one’s knowledge of God, defend your faith, strengthen community bonds and to live out one’s faith (Global University, 2023).

Therefore, theology is a rational and intentional study of the nature, attributes and activities of God and his relationship with all his creation but not excluding the issues of environment, eternal destiny and care for creatureliness. The scope of theology covers the ideas of divine revelation, the doctrines of God, Trinity, Christology, pneumatology, soteriology, harmatology, ecclesiology, eschatology among others. Judging from this broad and expensive scope, anybody can do theology. It is not reserved for the few privileged intellectuals who would further confuse one with high-falutin terminologies and jargons, God in his revelational word, opens his arms wide to all of us to know him (Isaiah 1:18; Matt. 11:28).

Economy

Like theology, economy is a concept that appears to be understood by almost everyone but constantly misconstrued. Economy at simple apprehension can be denoted as the state of a country’s financial buoyancy. To the layman, economy is all about one’s financial earning, his purchasing power, what he can do for himself and how ably can he feed his family. He may not be concerned with macro or micro components of economies provided it does not affect him negatively. Technically, economics is the study of human behaviours in



relationship to end and scarce means which has alternative uses. An economy is the system for deciding how scarce resources are used so that goods and services can be produced and consumed (Reserve Bank of Australia, 2022: 1). Economy among all should be understood as the prudent management of resources within time and space for the benefits of the citizenry. Suffice it to state that the Nigerian economy is one that is erratic and susceptible to constant downward slopes despite all efforts and reforms by successive regimes to revamp it. Pundits point to a mono-revenue system from crude oil, which accounts for two-third of the nation's revenues but contributes only 9 percent of her GDP. At the event of the circumstance, economic policies must be humane and redemptive to curb this worsening inflection and creeping poverty. It is unfortunate that hunger is now most felt in Nigeria. True to the adage that "a hungry man is an angry man", once law abiding citizens in Nigeria now attacks trucks carrying food items in some towns in Nigeria, incidences which happened in Zaria, Deidei and even in Abuja the Federal Capital Territory (Ugwu, 2024), with looting of food stores and warehouses. Hence, noting these signals drifts; economy and economic policies should urgently address the unfortunate cases of growing hardship, excruciating poverty and hunger among the peoples of Nigeria.

National Security

Security is simply being safe or free from danger. This is obviously one of the cherished ideals of every given society. It entails the citizens sleeping in their houses, not with one eye open but sleeping soundly and sleeping well. It is taking a drive round the town in an evening cruise with your spouse without the fear of armed robbers or at worst being kidnapped. Security is being sure that your children playing outside is safe just like the 'good old days' when children happily roam round the villages and even attend the *Egwu Onwa* (Moonlight dances) without the fear of molestation, kidnapping or even lynching them to death. It is when the civil servant is sure that his salary would 'drop' at the end of the month and when the farmer would feel free to visit his farm at any point in time, without the fear of herdsmen attacks. For us, security is seen beyond traditional maintenance of military strength to ward off aggression against the state, or the expansion of apparatus of internal security to ensure domestic order. The security of a nation traverses through the complex web of political, economic, social, and cultural structures, and links with the whole range of inter-state



relations (Abaneme &Nwagbo, 2015). Security is being safe and sound in the community. Unfortunately, the reverse is the case now. Insecurity is not just a disturbing trend but has taken disproportionate dimensions of, which one may be afraid to state that it may have been obviously going out of the control of the security agencies of the state.

National security has various scholarly definitions. It involves keeping the nation free from both external and internal challenges. For Wolfers (1960, 2024), national security means the absence of threats to acquired values and subjectively the absence of fear that such values will be attacked. In addition, it can be seen as ‘the measurable state of the capability of a nation to overcome the multi-dimensional threats to the apparent wellbeing of its people and its survival as a nation, state at any given time’ (Paleri, 2000). From all ramifications, national security include: freedom from external aggression, protection from negative actions and inactions of national and transnational groups, economic development, environmental protection, defense against all forms of physical threats, ensuring food security protection of a nations cyber space and internet materials among others, Holmes(2015) lists national security to holistically embrace : political security, protection of a nation’s sovereignty; economic security (capacity of the nation to provide for her people), energy and natural resources security (protection to access to energy resources); Homeland security (safeguarding the lives and security of the people in their communities), cyber security (protection of computer and data processing infrastructure), human security (protection of the human being against hunger, diseases and repressions) and environmental security (protecting the people against environmental hazards and disasters).

From the foregoing, it is provable that national security is omnibus the perception and comprehensive in scope. It covers all activities by the state to keep the citizenry free from impending dangers.

3.0. Methodology

The methodology utilized in this paper is the qualitative appraisals of research concepts through literature reviews, evaluation of cogent scholarly opinions, review of relevant books, seminars, conference papers, mimeographs, among all, The essence of this research method is to critically establish the nexus between theology, economy and national security in Nigeria.



More so, this paper aims to forge through the anvils of rigorous intellectual foray cogent theology of engagement to curb the growing monsters of insecurity and hunger, which are steadily engulfing almost all parts of Nigeria.

4.0. Discourse Analyses

4.1. Theology and Economy

There has been an age- long relationship between the duo; theology and economy with symbiotic benefits for both of them. No doubt, all economic policies affect everyone within the society and sharpen human conduct and affairs. The pioneering classics, ‘the Protestant ethic and the spirit of capitalism’ is insightful to this’. The background to this treatise by Max Weber pictured the pervasive influence of the Protestant ethic being captured by strict ethical behaviours, trust and diligence. Weber (2022) views that strict adherence to these ethical teachings gave birth to the emergence of capitalism. The pervasive ethics transformed both work ethics and production of goods and services (Weber, 1950). The underlying theological ideology that spurred capitalism was the Calvinistic belief in predestination. This theory states that souls were destined either for heaven or for hell. Therefore, to guarantee their destiny, one has to keep himself or herself busy with good works.(Cole, 2023, p 1). Influenced by Calvinistic theology of pre-destination, the pursuit of wealth was not motivated by greed but a Christian duty. Weber’s thesis on the influence of theology on economy is summarized thus:

Labour is not merely an economic means. It is a spiritual and covetousness. If a danger to the soul, is a less formidable menace than slot. So far from Poverty being meritorious, it is duty to choose the more profitable occupation so far from there being an inevitable conflict between money-making and piety they are natural allies, for the virtues incumbent on the elect, diligence, thrift, sobriety prudence is the most reliable passport to commercial prosperity. Thus the pursuit of riches which once had been feared as the enemy of religion now welcomed as its ally. (Tawney, 1950:2)

Apart from Weber’s socio-economic treatise on the influence of the protestant ethic on capitalism, Crane (2020) acceded to the fact that Christian ideology affected not just economic theory but also economic theories in signal ways. Christian theologies profoundly influenced not only economy but have developed ideas which have positively fostered all facets of economic and commercial life including but not limited to lending, pricing, sales,



leases, partnership international trade, usury etc. Paradoxically, though it is provable that Christian thinking and ideology have significantly influenced economic practices, it is most contentious to assert that the same economic system reflect Christlikeness in any way. Economic policies among nations were often said to be fraught with inequalities and unjust system, where ‘the rich get richer and the poor get poorer’. This could hardly reflect the Christian principles on economy. However, Christian thinking and theologies could hardly unanimously adopt any economic system or policy that reflects the true image of Christ.

Theological principles for economy were laid down in the old and the New Testaments. In the OT, the emphasis is that man is the steward of God’s creation (Gen. 1: 28, 2:15, Psalm 8:6). These human and material resources are created by God, who benevolently appoints man as his caretaker. (Gen 2:15). Human society owes its origin from God who was not only pleased with its creation but expects man to daily work to maintain the health and the function of the same society (Prov. 23:4-5, Eccl 5:10-20, Matt 4:4).

It is therefore expected that the guiding principles for economy should not only be diligent stewardship but creativity, dignity, care for the poor, entrepreneurship, health, creation and justice. The New Testament, which is the fulfillment of the Old Testament, toes the same line in outlining theological blueprint for the economy. It re-echoes that human beings are stewards of God’s grace (1Peter 4:10). In the parable of the talents, man was expected to be productive and accountable to God (Matt 25:14-30). It is God’s will that not just the economy ought to be sustained but must be maintained for the benefit of the next generation (cf Luke 12:16-21). However, heedless hedonism is totally condemned while responsible livelihood characterized by the care for the poor is encouraged (Lk 12:13-21).

4.2. Theology and National Security

It looks that these two terms hardly co-exist, but theological considerations have largely influenced and affected security issues and policies. While security concerns deal with emergent realities and often centres on protecting the situation at hand, theology in itself, which is the science of God not only considers things that are transcendent but also applies such knowledge to solve contemporary challenges. Hence, theology emphasizes on security



from above. Psalm 91:1-12 states that God is our refuge and strength. In the midst of the challenges of wars, natural disasters, he is a sure protection and faithful shield and buckler.

Two concepts convey the sense of security, the *Sabbath* (rest) and *shalom* (peace). The **Sabbath** is the seventh day of God's creation when He rested from his labours. It did not just mean a cessation of work but a sense of security having taken care of God's creation and putting into place a benign system (Gen. 2:2-3). Thus, Sabbath was not just to be made holy but instituted as an everlasting covenant with Israel, the covenant people. The idea of the Sabbath conveys rest as Yahweh the God of Israel keeps watch over his people. *Shalom* in the scriptures have several meanings. It means peace, tranquility, soundness, sovereignty and completeness. These virtues convey the sense of security. Israel of old were both assured of divine security but also provided with an impregnable security of the pillar of cloud by the day and the pillar of fire by night (Ex 13:21). These two heavenly devices were given to them by God to keep surveillance over them as they continued their journey in daytime and divine guidance to lead them to where they would go at night.

Being safe in bible terms involves reposing implicit trust in God, who is omnipotent, omniscient and omnipresent. Human and man-made security though trusted, had their obvious limitations. Absolute security comes from reposing implicit trust in God, who is most reliable and dependable at all times and in all situations.

Theology therefore comes not to negate the need for adequate security apparatus to be put in place, but to take care of the limitations of our security arrangements. Security has obvious comprehensive limitations. God is the safest and surest person to rely on at times of emergency, 'a very present help in times of trouble' (Ps 46:1-2). Theology therefore reinforces the need for national security, be it environmental, social, physical, military, economic etc and complements the efforts of security agencies while spelling out their rules of engagement.

4.3. Theology, Economy and National Security

Having earlier established the place of theology as the queen of all disciplines, it is apposite to state that there is interrelatedness between her and economy and national security. Studies



have earlier shown the inseparable link between economic stability and security. Zukrowska (1999) states that the stability of the economy fosters instability shown if insurgencies clashes and homeland insecurities. It is an undeniable fact that instigating factors such as poverty, hunger limited opportunities to resources greatly contributed to the perverseness of insecurity in Nigeria. In the other way round, improvement in the living standard, high literacy level and even development would greatly reduce the cases of internecine conflict, a correlation found between the prevalent socio-economic underdevelopment of some parts of Nigeria especially the North East and the ideological manipulation of the vulnerable, populace. One could by extension allude that the better the economy; the lesser the susceptibility to insecurity, the grim the economic situation, the more likely the festination of rampant conflicts and insecurity.

Given these facts, theology plays the following roles in ensuring a sustainable economy and a secure nation:

1. Theology provides the ideology and the road map for viable economy and national security. Both later concepts exist within the society. The essence of economic activities and national security policies are to help foster a better society. Therefore, a godly theology of stewardship and responsibility are pertinent. As ideologies guide human conduct and give direction to human actions, theology provides the foundational thought for economic development and national security.
2. Theology should enhance the economy and national security. This enhancement which comes from principles about God, man and other creatures, would aim at preserving and securing godly, communal virtues instead of destroying them.
3. Theology helps promote environmental security and economic exploitation through discouraging rapacious and vagrant disposition towards the physical and political environment. A theology of stewardship and responsibility therefore discourages irreverent and indifferent attitudes towards the environment as seen in the incidences of water and air pollution, unhygienic living condition, deforestation among other.



4. Theology promotes economic equality and security for all. Virtues in theology such as equality, community, justice, care, temperance and stewardship help build the society. These virtues in themselves would ensure that everyone would consider one another and hence would not cause harm to anybody.
5. Theology ought to provide the ethics and rules of engagement for economic and national security issues oftentimes policies and principles; involving economy and security are not humane and considerate. Theology in this case brings the entire system to the threshold of morality, humanity and brotherhood as children of one father, God-Almighty.
- 6 Theology enhances the health and wellbeing of the people through providing the blueprint for an accommodating economy and a secure society. Health is not only limited to social, psychological and physical wellbeing but also involves spiritual wellness. A spiritually sick person would be unable to contribute its quota to economic growth and security. Hence, theology provides not just the foundation of a viable economic but also serves as the basis of a secure state.

5.0. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1. Conclusion

The Paper took as intellectual excursions into clarifications of the concepts of theology, economy and national security. Theology, which is an upward venture, has obvious downward impact. Economy is concerned with managing the scarce resources for the betterment of everyone. National security is geared towards the safety of all and sundry. Therefore, theology resonates with both economy and national security as theological thoughts have largely influenced the latter concepts. Hence, striking interrelatedness exists between theology, economy and national security. Therefore, a theology of stewardship and responsibility would help to foster peaceful co-existence in Nigeria.

One of the sources of insecurity in Nigeria is politicization of religion by political actors. It is therefore imperative for political actors not to use the youths as electoral tools during the elections. Besides, the government should refrain from using fake promises to win elections



only to renege on such promises. Political office seekers should avoid politicizing religion so as not to further throw the nation into the kind of insecurity that Bokoharam has unleashed on Nigerian state (Abaneme, 2025).

5.2. Recommendations

In view of these, the following recommendations would be useful:

1. There ought to be the effort to re-enthroned theology as the queen of all disciplines. Human perceptions and worldview were fundamentally shaped by theology before the advent of the sciences. The latter did not in any way diminish theology. God remains God. St Augustine illustratively states that the city of God remains even when all kingdoms perish and wane.
2. Theological policies should guide economic and security issues and policies. The virtues and principles of humanity care, and love could be promoted as against the institution of 'savage capitalism and "brute security.
3. The church should continue to prioritize theological education even for the laity. Theology or theologizing ought not to be seen as empty sophistry or a leap into 'attempted unbelief'. To be theological is not to sound unchristian, any good theology must come for the premise of belief in God, 'for he that comes to God must first believe He is and he is a rewarder of those who diligently seek him' (Heb 11: 6). The task of theologizing is first of all for believers.
4. Theology should be used as an instrument to promote harmonious existence in Nigeria, which are the concerns of economic management and national security. Nigeria as a nation is at precipice of disasters, threats and upheavals with incessant reportage of cases of insecurity in almost at parts of love, selfless etc. which are building blocks for any progressive society.
5. Above all, a theology of stewardship and responsibility ought to be re-emphasized. Stewardship involves knowing that God's owns and controls everything and hence we are accountable to him for our use or misuse of his grace.



6. The country Harmonious co-existence does not entail having all needs met but living with contentment and respect for each other.
7. The Government at all levels should include theological courses as compulsory courses in our tertiary institutions. Theology not only promotes wholesome knowledge but also morality, excellence, virtue, temperament

Competing Interest

The author declares that no conflicting interest exist in this paper.

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