# Richard Rorty's Postmodernism and Its Implication to the Rise of Insurgency in Nigeria

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**ABSTRACT**

*The idea that reason rules the world has been challenged by the emergence of postmodernism. As a reactionary theory/movement, the central idea that distinguishes postmodernism from other philosophical traditions is its insistence that reason alone does not define the actions of people in the society. As a result, postmodernism goes beyond foundation to investigating the psychological nature of human being as a being guided by instinct, emotions, and most importantly, the society. Apparently, the irrational aspect of human existence which constitutes the central tenet of postmodernism has constantly played out in our daily experiences. However, most troubling of these experiences is the rise of insurgency in the world. In Nigeria, the situation has escalated to the point where the future of the country is in total disarray. Using the expository and analytic methods of philosophical investigation, this work assessed the thought of Rorty in relation to the rising tension in the country. The research established that to curb insurgency in Nigeria demands an adoption of approaches that are pragmatic and not necessarily structural.*

**Keywords:** *postmodernism, modernism, insurgency, rationalism, irrationalism.*

## INTRODUCTION

The rise of postmodernism as a school of thought in philosophy has been described as a relatively recent event. According to William Law head, postmodernists are a loose-knit group of thinkers united around the belief that they are the pallbearers of the modern tradition that originated in the Enlightenment (274). As a school of thought in philosophy, postmodernism is opposed to modernism. It is largely a reaction against the intellectual assumptions and values of the modern period in the history of Western philosophy. Observably, many of the doctrines characteristically associated with postmodernism can, in part or whole, be described as the straightforward denial of general philosophical viewpoints that were taken for granted during the 18th-century enlightenment, though they were not unique to that period (Stanford encyclopedia of philosophy).

The tradition of modernism they reject includes the following beliefs: (1) there is one true picture of reality, (2) it is possible to obtain universal, objective knowledge, (3) science is a superior form of knowledge, (4) the history of modern thought has been a cumulative progression of increasingly better theories about reality, and (5) the autonomous, knowing subject is the source of all ideas (Lawhead 575).

Insurgency has existed throughout history but ebbed and flowed in strategic significance. In a country characterized by a surge in insurgent activities, yet still maintaining a national consciousness based on ethnicity, what lessons can we learn from Richard Rorty's philosophy? Nigerians are negatively indoctrinated by ethnic nationality consciousness which stands as one major factor necessitating the rise of insurgencies in Nigeria.

In fact, the country now rests on ethnicity which seems to be a characterizing factor of the political, economic and social architecture of the Nigeria state. It has turned out to become a defining structure through which the country runs. However, strict adherence to structure is a major factor that has contributed in no small measure to the decline of law and order in society. This breakdown of law and order, often time, is borne out of negative ideas inherent in ethnic indoctrination ideals. Using the postmodern thought of Rorty, therefore, this paper seeks to defend the thesis that there is a causal relationship between societal ideologies and accentuation in insurgent activities in Nigeria; and these ideologies are figments of the age of irrationality.

Hence, feelings, emotions and instincts may be postulated as root causes of insurgency in Nigeria.

## UNDERSTANDING POSTMODERNISM AND INSURGENCY

As a philosophical tradition, postmodernism, as against modernism, emphasizes the elusiveness of meaning and knowledge. It is characterized by the belief that society is no longer governed by history or progress. Postmodernism sees human experience as unstable, internally contradictory, ambiguous, inconclusive, indeterminate, unfinished, fragmented, "jagged," with no one specific reality possible (Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy ). It is the idea that individuals have both the intelligence and the right to decide for themselves what truth is (Farhan 1).

Postmodernism, born under western secular conditions, has the following characteristics: it emphasizes pluralism and relativism and rejects any certain belief and absolute value; it conflicts with essentialism, and considers human identity to be a social construct; it rejects the idea that values are based on developmental realities and also rejects the essential influence of human actions on human destiny (Forghani, Keshtiaray and Yousefey 201). Generally, postmodernism is a reaction against the intellectualism of modernism. On the other hand, modernism refers to a practice or expression peculiar to modern times. Modern times in this case refer to the period in history of philosophy that is characterized by the emphasis on human reason as justification for knowledge.

### INSURGENCY

Insurgency is a condition of revolt against a government that is less than an organized revolution and that is not recognized as belligerency (Peter 64). It is the rising up against what is believed to be a constituted or legitimate authority (Ukpong-Umo4). The term "insurgency" is used in describing a movement's unlawfulness and capacity to pose a threat to a state or seen as such by another authority, especially when viewed from the backdrop of its not being authorized, and therefore executing a cause that is illegitimate (Shafer 88). When used as in the consideration above, those causing the uprising are seen as rebels, whereas those rising up will see the authority itself as being illegitimate. Insurgency is an act of rebellion against a legitimate authority.

### A BRIEF REVIEW OF POSTMODERNISM AND INSURGENCY

Postmodernism supports the view that social realities are dynamic, forming and reforming in response to environmental stimuli (Brown 28; Littlejohn and Foss 324). Joyce Appleby et al, in their edited work, Knowledge and postmodernism in historical perspective, point us to the origin of the concept, "postmodernism." According to them, the popularization of postmodern thought first came to the open during the 1970s in reference to a new sensibility in the world of arts and culture. Appleby et al tell us that the architects of postmodernism rejected the high modern architectural project which was the construction of "rational and pragmatic buildings which could lead to the progressive amelioration of the human condition" (Appleby 385).

Again, Appleby et al further point us to the fundamental factor that led to the culmination of postmodern thought. According to them, the central agitation of this new tradition (postmodernism) was to break away from the modernist credo that took reason as the first principle of all design efforts.

As against this overdependence on rationalism, postmodern thinkers came to the recognition that modernism was incapacitated in its attempt to better human lot. As a result, postmodern proponents attempted to produce an eclectic mixture of styles which would not only speak of the elitist project of saving humanity, but of a far less serious goal, that of amusing people of different cultures. For the postmodern thinkers, therefore, structures need no longer be symbolic of the progressive ideals of civilization.

This is because for postmodern thinkers, an ever-changing world requires new explanations in order to properly understand events, implications of such events as well as possible actions and reactions. It is in this regards that Victor Taylor and Charles Winquist in their edited work, Encyclopedia of postmodernism, tell us that postmodernism has emerged as a significant cultural, political and intellectual force that defines our era (xiii). Postmodernism is a cultural philosophy because it takes into consideration, the role of culture in society. Culture shapes peoples' attitudes and actions; and biases their thinking and behaviour towards conventional orders of their particular societies (Dominick 45; Kellner and Durham ix; Littlejohn and Foss 300).

In his work, The myth of Zedong and modern insurgency, Francis Grice takes us to one of the oldest history of insurgency that has shaped the society for ever. It is interesting to note in this book, how Grice takes us through the political factors of Zedong's time that informed his insurgent ideals. Grice points out four cardinal points of Mao Zedong's arguments for his motivation.

First, Mao, throughout his writings, argued in favour of class warfare, which would involve the lower classes rising up and overthrowing the upper classes, and staunchly opposed foreign imperialism. He supported these viewpoints with instructions on land redistribution, developing the public economy and suppressing rich landlords and capitalists. Secondly, Mao felt that an insurgency must centre on a lower-class revolution that overthrows and replaces conservative forces such as rich landlords and merchants. However, this argument contravenes the perspectives of many other scholars, particularly in the field of security studies, who have suggested that class warfare can be readily pared off from Mao's teachings on insurgency. In fact, Mao was emphatic that this could not be done, going so far as to claim that China's past insurgencies had failed not from a lack of political dimensions, but rather because they had not adopted the ideology of Marxist class warfare specifically.

A third theme is that Mao indicated that an insurgency should build its own political and statutory agencies, such as banks, tax offices, and political committees, which would supplant prior political institutions within occupied territories. They could also rival the organs of government in enemy-controlled regions. A fourth theme was that Mao embraced both the centralisation and decentralisation of power within an insurgency.

Throughout the conflict, he issued countless imperious commands to subordinate agencies and chastised any subordinates who deviated from his directives. At the same time, however, he periodically emphasised the importance of individual initiative at all levels of the military and political hierarchies. He also criticised his superiors and documented his disobedience towards them during the early stages of his career. This suggests that Mao believed in a complex structuring of power within an insurgency, with some degree of centralisation but also a notable amount of devolution of power down the hierarchy. The finding somewhat confirms and rebuts the conventional viewpoints regarding where power should sit according to Mao.

The appeal to rebellion as a form of expressing dissatisfaction over injustice and oppression may have developed serious debates among scholars, but certainly not Albert Camus. Hence, he believes that where one faces the absurdity of life meted out by the society, revolt becomes immanent. For him, revolt expresses a refusal to remain passive against evil, against injustice with all the means at one's disposal. In his work, The myth of Sisyphus, Camus says that "revolt is what gives life its value; spread out over the whole length of a life, it restores majesty to that life" (Camus 54). However, Camus does not encourage rebellion, instead, he sees it as an inescapable experience where oppression abounds. This is what he describes as the crime of logic (Essien 288). Considering the spirit of the society, he, in his work, The rebel: An essay on man in revolt, captures the condition of the present society and sets out the central task of his research thus:

We are living in the era of premeditation and the perfect crime. Our criminals are no longer helpless children who could plead love as their excuse. On the contrary, they are adults, and they have a perfect alibi: philosophy, which can be used for any purpose - even for transforming murderers into judges… The purpose of this essay is once again to face the reality of the present, which is logical crime, and to examine meticulously the arguments by which it is justified; it is an attempt to understand the times in which we live (Camus 3).

Camus believes that amid evil, injustice and oppression, a human being can only achieve meaning in life through revolt. In fact, Camus defines a rebel as "A man who says no: but whose refusal does not imply a renunciation. He is also a man who says yes as soon as he begins to think for himself" (Camus 19). Camus is of the opinion that when faced with oppression, the people try to create values, not only for themselves, but for all those whom they are in solidarity with, by revolt. Camus replaces "insurgency" with "revolt." However, both terms are contextually synonymous as it shows actions toward liberation from oppression.

## AN EXPOSITION OF RICHARD RORTY'S POSTMODERNISM

Rorty is best described as a postmodernist thinker. Accordingly, he rejected the standard conception that there are "essences" to things, such as human nature (Stumpf and Fieser 468). As William Lawhead notes, Richard Rorty has been the most influential and consistent advocate of postmodernism among American philosophers (577). In the section that follows, we shall consider some of his basic ideas as it concerns the phenomenon of insurgency in Nigeria.

## THE ATTACK ON (TRADITIONAL) EPISTEMOLOGY

Rorty believes that the goal of Western philosophy which seeks to establish an accurate and assured picture of reality has to be abandoned. In his book Philosophy and the Mirror of Nature, Rorty attacks

traditional epistemology and its attempt to set out the conditions that enable us to grasp "how things really are" (Rorty 10). As the title of his book suggests, Rorty contends that traditional philosophy views the mind as a mirror that "reflects" the external world. This is the view within foundationalist philosophy and is particularly present in the work of Descartes. It is here that Rorty locates the historical advent of the concept of experience, and connects foundationalism and the need for a theory of knowledge to the emergence of this concept (Timm 25). According to him, since the surface of the mirror was thought to be hazy or uneven, traditional philosophers tried to produce more accurate representations by "inspecting, repairing, and polishing the mirror" (Rorty 12).

Rorty maintains that our relationship with the world is causal rather than representational, for our activities in the world cause us to hold certain beliefs. These beliefs will prove useful for fulfilling the tasks we have chosen to pursue, but since these beliefs are connected to our actions they are merely contingent on historical circumstance. Our beliefs are not representational of some foundation to our knowledge, instead they are more like habits of action, and when these habits are challenged or broken, new beliefs will be constructed to suit the changed environment (Timm 26-27).

Drawing on Dewey's insights, Rorty opposes traditional philosophy with four theses:

The mind does not mirror nature

Statements are simply tools for achieving certain tasks

An idea is true if it works, and There are no final ends in either philosophy or life.

The radical nature of Rorty's philosophy is captured by his call to abandon the project of epistemology. Epistemology is based on the notion that we can arrive at ideas or statements that will give us the one, true picture of reality. He portrayed traditional philosophy as holding that knowledge is an accurate representation of reality made possible by special mental processes (Popkin and Stroll 374).

## PHILOSOPHY AS CULTURAL POLITICS

Richard Rorty conceives philosophy as a form of cultural politics. In his explanation, the term "cultural politics" covers, among other things, "arguments about what words to use" (Rorty 3). With a clear insight, Rorty says that when we say that Frenchmen should stop referring to Germans as "Boches," or that white people should stop referring to black people as "niggers," we are practicing cultural politics.

Cultural politics in Rorty's view, does not entail hate speech or any form of debate about it. Rather, he sees it as a project for getting rid of whole topics of discourse. This discourse then entails a resolute attempt to lessen the chances that the question "who are his or her ancestors?" will be asked. Many people urge that words like "noble blood," "mixed blood," "outcaste," "intermarriage," "untouchable," and the like should be dropped from the language.

For, they argue, this would be a better world if the suitability of people as spouses or employees or public officials were judged entirely based on their behavior, rather than partially by reference to their ancestry (Rorty 3). For Rorty, therefore, we cannot deny the cultural consciousness of people as any attempt to see a united society free from cultural inclinations amount to playing culturally inclined politics.

Richard Rorty's views on social progress as captured in the analysis of a wide range of his essays and books, reveals two distinct strands of how progressive social change is possible. These are the "prophetic" and the "processual" strands (Baker 698). Rorty's prophetic strand also encompasses his suggestions concerning the vehicles we might use to move to the better world he envisions. Rorty repeatedly asserts that "there is no method or procedure to be followed except courageous and imaginative experimentation" (Rorty 242). Nonetheless, he suggests two vehicles by which social progress has occurred in the past and might occur in the future. He identifies these vehicles as narratives and separatist groups. Rorty does not mean to imply, however, that these are the only two vehicles by which social change has occurred or could someday occur; they are simply the two that he, thus far, has chosen to examine at greatest length.

By narratives, Rorty means novels, docudramas, ethnographies, and journalists' reports, for example that provide "detailed descriptions of particular varieties of pain and humiliation" (Rorty 192). According to Rorty, the narrative can be authored by one of the oppressed or by someone else and is an attempt to interpret the situation of the oppressed group to the rest of their society. Such narratives increase human solidarity by expanding the sympathies of persons who are not members of the oppressed group so that they come to see the oppressed as an "us" rather than as a "them" (Rorty 193).

Rorty's second vehicle that enables society to progress toward his utopian society is separatist groups. For him, the creation of a separatist group requires that at least one member of the oppressed group have the imagination it takes to hear oneself as the spokesperson of a merely possible community, rather than as a lonely, and perhaps crazed, outcast from an actual one (Rorty 240). That courageous individual, according to him, will begin to work out a new story about who she is, which will require that she hear her own statements as part of a shared practice in order to achieve semantic authority over even herself (Rorty 247). Thus, according to Rorty, she may persuade other members of the oppressed group to band together with her in an exclusive club in order to try out "new ways of speaking, and to gather the moral strength to go out and change the world" (Rorty 247). As examples of such clubs, Rorty cites the contemporary feminist movement, and Plato's Academy, among others (Rorty 247). At the center of both the narrative and separatist processes of progressive social change, Rorty says that there is a prophet - an interpreter or a leader with a vision of a better world.

## AN ASSESSMENT OF INSURGENCY IN NIGERIA

The struggle for relevance and subsequent revolt that follows it has a long history in Nigeria. It can be traced to the time where the country gained her independence. In fact, so fierce was it from the beginning that barely three years after independence, the country witnessed her first civil war. From then till now, civic disobedience is a continuous activity in the country and over the years, it has embraced regional colouration.

Aside the agitation that gave birth to the Nigerian civil war of 1967, we can identify several issues that continue to this day. First, the Niger Delta issue is not forgotten. It continues to be on the front burner in matters of security, insurgency and, indeed, the continued existence of Nigeria. Second, a resurgence of the threat of insurgency will likely re-emerge, either as a response to similar threats elsewhere in Nigeria or where there is a lapse in the policy thrust to remedy the imbalances which caused the insurgency in the first place. This is the background to the emergence of the Movement for the Emancipation of the Niger Delta (MEND) which we will discuss later in this section. Third, it is noteworthy that the causative factors in this insurgency are still very much visible in the entire Niger Delta region, namely, extreme poverty in the midst of extreme affluence, degradation of the human living environment to levels requiring concerted humanitarian intervention, discriminatory public policies resulting in political alienation of the human population, unsustainable extractive economies and, finally, the absence of environmental remediation policies and activities. All these, and maybe more, are likely to fuel discontent and exacerbate future conflicts and insurgent tendencies.

Boko Haram reared its ugly head in Nigeria in 2002 in Maiduguri. The term, Boko Haram, comes from the Hausa language. Boko means western education and Haram means sin or evil. The name, Boko Haram, simply means that western education is evil or sin. The insurgent owes its powerful resistance to everything western which it understands as humiliating. Muslims decided to root out any attempt to westernize the north that is predominately Muslims (Chothia 212).

## CAUSES OF INSURGENCY IN NIGERIA

### Social (Class) Inequality and Consciousness

Social class awareness and consciousness have the potential for conflict generation. A society where the middle class is small with an equally small or smaller upper class and a robust lower class is prone to dangerous conflict. Such a society is usually characterised by great instability

### Discrimination

Discrimination comes in a variety of forms. One example is economic discrimination, which is defined as the systematic exclusion, whether prescriptive or de facto, of a person or group from participating in positions or activities of higher economic value, such as employment, trade or profession. Another form is political discrimination, which is defined as a systematic or perceivable pattern of limitations in the form, process, normative or practical outcome of the opportunities of groups to take part in political activities or to attain or keep elite positions of trust (Muzan 61).

### Poverty

It has been noted elsewhere that 'among several other ills, poverty breeds anger, hatred, envy and conflict' (Muzan 66). Poverty is the cause of many of Nigeria's problems. Persistent poverty, particularly amid economic growth and affluence of the upper class, will lead to feelings of frustration among the poor. It will also breed hatred, mistrust, and anger.

### Unemployment

The idleness created by unemployment can lead to anti-social conduct to occupy time. Even if the

person is educated and skilled, it can lead to frustration, aggression and serious conflict.

## Religion

Religious insurgency are acts committed by non-state actors who profess some measure of allegiance to a religion or for whom their acts are believed to represent a sacred duty to the supreme being (Gunning and Jackson 211).

An Assessment of Rorty's Postmodern Philosophy and its Implication to the Rise of Insurgency in Nigeria

### ETHNIC SOLIDARITY AND INSURGENCY IN NIGERIA

As early stated, insurgency rises as a form of revolt. Accordingly, it is an observable fact that one of the divisive instruments that has been judiciously employed to marginalize some certain parts of Nigeria is the tool of ethnicity. According to Rorty, human solidarity has the purpose of avoiding cruelty. Rorty captures this in the following words:

In my utopia, human solidarity would be seen not as a fact to be recognized by clearing away "prejudice" or burrowing down to previously hidden depths, but, rather, as a goal to be achieved. It is to be achieved not by inquiry but by imagination, the imaginative ability to see strange people as fellow sufferers. Solidarity is not discovered by reflection but created. It is created by increasing our sensitivity to the particular details of the pain and humiliation of others, unfamiliar sorts of people (Rorty xvi).

It is clear, from above citation, that Rorty insists human solidarity (avoiding cruelty) comes from sympathy and empathy to the pain of others (Obioha 27). That is, his cognition is based upon the fact that many of us have sympathized with people's suffering. For Rorty the sympathy for the pain of others is not a-priori moral principle based on human nature. Pragmatist Rorty refuses moral universalism that insists the existence of a-historical truth. The sympathy for the pain of others is not the universal fact but an empirical (or sociological) one (Mouffe 42).

According to Rorty, the question "Who are we?" is a political question. And it is asked by people who are willing to create a community united by reciprocal trust. He says that the answers to the "who" questions are "attempts to forge, or reforge, a moral identity" (Rorty 46). Rorty's position is suggestive that at a point of collapse necessitated by insurgency and bad governance, Nigeria must be reawaken only by questions that will reforge a

common ground for our union. All the social strata within the Nigerian space must engage with this "who" question – the political class, the religious groups, the academia etc.

The Idea of Wrong Indoctrination (False Epistemology) and its Role in the Development of Insurgency in Nigeria

The idea of wrong epistemology (indoctrination) is a major cause of insurgency and should be given urgent attention. In Nigeria, it manifests in the form of misleading information such as fake news, conspiracy theories, clickbait, or propaganda. Accordingly, Nigeria has witnessed many crises arising from wrong indoctrination of the masses, especially by those who occupy positions of authority in form of misleading claims. Most of the decisions leading to the rise of insurgency in Nigeria are based on misinformation.

A key pointer to workable democratic system is proper dissemination of information on the activities of government to her citizens. Informed citizenry promotes political inclusiveness. However, when misinformation proliferates, it becomes normalized, thereby creating a culture in which respect for truth and public transparency is eroded. Noting the impact of wrong social epistemology, David cautions that it is pertinent that we construe the epistemic point of view broadly, as involving not just the dual aim of acquiring true beliefs and avoiding false ones, but also the aims of acquiring and sustaining rational, justified, or intellectually responsible belief, knowledge, understanding, or wisdom (David 182).

Similarly, when people consume information that is strictly speaking true but nonetheless misleading, they also acquire misleading beliefs. Such beliefs may not undermine our epistemic aims immediately, but they do put us at greater risk of acquiring false beliefs, because it is easy to infer false beliefs from misleading ones (David 182).

The Objectivity Question in the Nigerian Politics and the Fight Against Insurgency

Rorty's postmodern thought denounces political objectivity. But this does not, in any way, encourage political partiality and prejudice. For him, instead, the relationship between morality and politics should also be local, confined to time and place or culture. He believes that the justification of moral values and political good can be done in our temporal and cultural context. Richard Rorty, proposes "ethnocentrism" as the suitable view of the justification of truth claims;

more particularly truth claims about moral values and political good life. Rorty believes that one cannot go beyond their cultural values. For him, whatever somebody's perception about truth or rationality entails is embedded in the understanding and concepts unique to the society in which the person lives (Rorty 68).

What lessons can Nigeria derive from this position? First, it is very pertinent that we accept our cultural heterogeneity as a major factor that is abating the rise of insurgency. In fact, insurgent groups in Nigeria are culturally based. Each of these regional groups make demands that are culturally significant to their existence.

Often, the government in its attempt to address their grievances fails to take into consideration, some of these cultural issues but instead generalizes her action plans. The outcome is further tension and hate attributed to partiality (Obioha 13). From Rorty's perspective, objectivity negates the reality of human reality. In addressing insurgent uprisings, therefore, solidarity proves a better tool than objectivity.

Second, there is need for true federalism where actions of the government are best exemplified by the need of the people. This calls for a holistic restructuring of the country where economic, social and political inequalities are evenly distributed. The situation where a certain section of the country claims to be against certain businesses but take a larger part of the shares emanating from such economic activity is enough to fuel grievances.

Example is the destruction of alcohol businesses in the Northern part of the country on religious grounds; however, this region earns a large chunk of allocation arising from taxation of this business during federal allocation. There can be no objectivity in the face of oppression and favouritism. And since the heterogeneous outlook of Nigeria is injurious to objectivity, Rorty's pragmatic solidarity, if adopted, could lessen the surge of insurgency in Nigeria and one way to attain this is by a recourse to true federalism where actions are best taken based on the uniqueness of the challenges facing a particular unit of the country at that particular time.

Richard Rorty makes it explicitly clear that no society can attain objective political system. But he does not see it as a barrier to attaining a better society. For him, objectivity entails universality. However, the human nature, characterized by what he calls ethnocentrism and cultural solidarity, makes it hypocritical to assume that objective truth is possible. For him, therefore, solidarity should be the ground on which a good political ideal is built (Obioha 249).

## LANGUAGE BARRIER IN THE RISE AND FIGHT AGAINST INSURGENCY IN NIGERIA

Language difference is perceived here as one of those symbolic cultural realms in which conflict can all too easily leave the realm of politics and become a threat to peace (Laitin 531). Language is used in every discipline, and in each discipline, language is used to capture the structures, injustices, suffering and prejudices of the people. Bloor and Bloor aptly capture this in their expression that "one man's terrorist is another man's freedom fighter" (Bloor and Bloor 129). Relating this to language use, they state that, "freedom fighters are people on our side and terrorists are the enemy" (Bloor and Bloor 130). This expression captures the kind of language proxemics used to manipulate the psychology of insurgency. The use of the possessive side in contrast with the enemy reflects the politics of closeness and farness associated with power politics that sometimes result to attack and counter-attack. Jain et al have argued that language could be used as instrument of discrimination. They maintain that such social discrimination is often employed by:

Self-proclaimed intellectuals and corrupt men (who) condemn those who do not tread their favoured paths. They form groups to bulldoze others with the terror of numbers. Our language then becomes a vehicle of this form of terrorism (Jain et al 140).

One notable product of power play is social inequality. It is one phenomenon which permeates the various strata of social relations in the society: politics, economy, religion, marriage, professional career etc. In these social situations, inequality is intrinsically contained in their operations. Therefore, it is because of this that Umotong (24) and Obioha (48) in separate discussions stress the need for social advancement in structure and policies for development.

## CRITICAL COMMENTS

Richard Rorty attempts to give us a new social and political theory. However, it is worthy of note here that despite his tenacity in bringing to the fore, the real-life challenge that encounters a political society and his pragmatic approach to them, his thought has been described as utopian. Some critics argue that it is unusual that Rorty would not, as a pragmatist, try to offer more political reasons for why the liberal pragmatist should be loyal to liberalism. If, for a pragmatist, the value of

a belief is measured by its practical consequences, Rorty should devote more time to defending liberalism by showing how it fulfils the beliefs and values of liberal pragmatists better than any other polity.

Despite his call for renewed hope, Rorty seems down-right pessimistic about the existence of an egalitarian state (Shiffman 177). Rorty's attempt to draw a connection between liberalism and pragmatism by the social foundation thesis fails. Can we equate the way individuals justify their beliefs with how they should justify their beliefs? Some philosophers, like Dillon, believes that the inference from fact to value must be made - if one forsakes - the abject relativism to which anti-foundationalism commits itself - simply because there is no other ground for value (Dillon 113). Nevertheless, other philosophers in the social turn believe philosophy is not limited to simply offering equating theories.

They think it is an ever-green project that is capable of reconstructing important ideals out of social practices. For these groups of scholars, philosophy looks for ideals of how a community should justify their beliefs that may differ from the way the community does actually justify their beliefs.

But despite these criticisms, it is important to note that, like Rorty's postmodern thought points out, language, knowledge system, political structure, and ethnicity, are important factors that have impacted the rise of insurgency in Nigeria. And in addressing this ugly incidence and also curbing future escalation, there is need for recourse to some of the points raised by Rorty.

## CONCLUSION

A good action plan against insurgency must both be pragmatic and proactive. There is need to address the major factors that are capable of leading to peace. In this work, we have been able to follow through some key points raised by Richard Rorty that are capable of reducing insurgent tensions in a country like Nigeria if taken into practice. The researchers' submission, therefore, is that though struggle and strife are innate part of the human society, public revolts, however, could be minimized when there is a rightful system of public education, reciprocal solidarity and inclusivity.

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