

**A CRITICAL DISCUSS ON THE IMPACT OF INSECURITY, CONFLICTS AND FRAGILITY
IN AFRICA ON THE GLOBAL FUTURE**

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Abstract

The impoverishment of many African nations despite having an abundance of natural and human resources are inextricably linked to political, ethnic, and religious conflicts as well as instability, which has made the continent more fragile and unable to convert its natural resources to national wealth. Political crises and the need for humanitarian aid are made worse by armed conflicts that persist in Mozambique, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, and the Sahel. As a result of insurgencies, instability, and poor governance there is a persistence of democratic regression, as demonstrated by the military coups that occurred in Burkina Faso, Mali, Guinea, Chad, and Sudan in 2022 Ironically, many developed nations rely heavily on the abundant mineral resources found in most African nations, including gas, uranium, and oil. Since no nation can progress in an atmosphere of chaos it follows therefore that the continued chaotic state of most African countries will spell doom not only for African nations but will negatively impact on the global future. It is this glaring observation that has motivated this paper that critically examines the nature causes and consequences of insecurity, conflicts and fragility of many African states its impact on the global future. This paper argues that the elimination of insecurity, conflict, and the fragile nature of many African states will lead to improvements in the developmental strides of many African nations and, as a result, influence positive outcomes for the global community.

Keywords: Insecurity, Conflict, Fragility, development , underdevelopment

Introduction

The devastating consequence of conflicts, insecurity and fragility has left many African countries in a very perilous situation. Since the independence of many African nations from colonial domination, they have been embroiled in series of devastating conflicts with several coloration (Alabi 2006 41). These conflicts which are ethnic, religious and political in nature, have left many African nations devastated. These conflicts have not only unleashed wanton destruction of lives and property, it has punctuation of economic activity and brought about a reign of insecurity and fragile political landscape that has left them impoverished or struggling to come out of the woes of such conflicts. This devastating consequences are evident in mass unemployment, underdevelopment, extreme poverty impoverishment and disillusionment of the populace. The most aggravating observation is the ancillary effects of these conflict which manifests in violent ethnic or inter communal clashes, increased crime wave, inter and intra religious conflagration, kidnapping banditry, terrorism and the destabilisation of many African nations through numerous coups and counter coups. Though extremely rich in human and natural resources, many African nations are not able to convert their God-given natural resources into material gains for the benefit of the continent and its people. The people's republic of Congo boast of natural resources such as uranium the volume of which dwarfs whatever the richest of the oil producing nations in the world can boast of. Yet, they rank among the poorest in the world. The rich oil and gas nation like Nigeria is touted as the poverty capital of the world. Same goes for many other African countries suffering in penury despite huge mineral deposits that can transform them into mega cities with a high GDP and improved standards of living. Surprisingly, several scholars and analysts are of the opinion that the etymological roots of conflicts, insecurity and fragility of many African states, cannot be extricated from foreign interference in the socio economic and political lives of these African nations. The natural resources of many African nation are the ingredients that serve as catalyst for technological advancement of many developed countries. And for this reason they seek to have some form of subtle or indirect control of the economic wealth of many African nations. This situation raises several

questions begging for answers; Are African nations incapable of harnessing their God-given wealth to better their lot? Is it impossible for African nation to unite and create an enabling environment for development to thrive? Or do lack visionary leaders capable of steering the ship of state without foreign dependency? What are the causes of the debilitating conflicts and state of insecurity militating against Africa's developmental progress? And what can be done to remedy the situation?

The quest to answer are the probing questions raised above, verify the root causes of the perennial conflicts, insecurity and fragile state of many African nations and find a solution to this problems form the basis of this paper that hopes to investigate and ascertain how best African nations can overcome the several aberrations militating against their progress. The paper will examine the concepts of insecurity, conflicts and fragility in African, their causes and consequences and proffer solutions on how they can be remedied

Conflict, Insecurity and Fragility Conceptualised

Scholars have defined conflict in a variety of ways. According to Holsti (1983:350), a conflict is a specific relationship that exists between states or opposing factions within a state and denotes tension or subjective hostilities that may materialize as hostilities on the battlefield or in the economy. For his part, Coser (1998) sees conflict as a struggle for scarce status, power, and resources, with the goals of the contending parties being to harm or destroy their rivals. On the other hand, conflicts can be resolved or not, dominant or recessive, violent or uncontrollable, etc. This assumes that conflict is not inherently violent, but rather that violence is a possible form that conflict may take (Omotosho, 2004:4). However, historical developments indicate that most conflicts are violent and cause victims to suffer permanent injuries in addition to a significant loss of life. There are two main types of conflicts that have been determined. These Internal conflicts, also known as intra-state conflicts, occur when factions within a state oppose its governing authorities and attempt to topple them through the use of force (Eminue, 2004:15). Another way to define internal conflict is as one in which most armed violence takes place inside a single state's borders (David, 1997). On the other hand, international conflicts, also known as interstate conflicts, occur between two or more countries and involve forces from multiple states (Puchala, 1971:142). A country is considered to be insecure if its borders or independence are not sufficiently protected from external threats or aggression. The balance of power among nation states leads to insecurity. There is a correlation between domestic and global insecurity, with wars becoming more and more destructive as a contributing element. The intricate strategic equilibrium between superpowers and the arms race, the enduring nature of armed conflicts, and the issue of state borders and territorial claims are some possible causes. Other non-military coercive actions, such as indirect economic measures, can also be used to limit a state's freedom of action and achieve its national goals. Non-military risks are becoming more significant in global life, not. Conflicts that in the past would have most likely been resolved by the use of military force can now be resolved through the use of indirect coercive measures, such as economic, religious, or political ones. Other possible causes of international insecurity include the possibility of nuclear war, the disparity in wealth between developed and developing nations, the scarcity of food worldwide, pollution, and earth's resources.

Perhaps the term "fragility" best captures the myriad uncertainties of our day regarding a variety of topics, from the complex interplay between demographic and migratory dynamics to energy and ecological transition, political and economic instability, and climate change. (Chiffi, and Curci 2020 p1-3) Fragility can be defined broadly as the ability of an object or system (but also, figuratively, of a person, a social group, a territory, etc.) to be readily "broken" even by a small, common, or non-violent force. In actuality, fragility can really rise or fall with time and even manifest itself in the absence of upsetting incidents or interventions as a result of the natural aging process or simple exposure to external stimuli. In a strict sense, however, fragility is an inherent property that is linked to a particular fracture modality (be it short, sudden, or abrupt) and is unrelated to the particular kind of shock. (Chiffi, and Curci 2020 p 3).

State of Conflict and Insecurity in Several African Nations.

Insecurity, Conflict and the fragile state of Nigeria has become a polemical issue occasioning grave concern to all well-meaning citizens, who are amazed and befuddled as to how Nigeria and many African nations arrived at such a dastardly situation where safety and security of lives and property has become elusive (Agbelusi 2022 par 1). More aggravating is the escalating rate of insecurity that is fast getting out of control. Infact, Olaosebikan (2010 p549) stated that nearly all parts of Africa: have experienced some form conflict and wars since the 1960's. Examples include: Sudan (1995-1990), Chad (1965-85), Angola since 1974,

Liberia (1980- 2003), Nigeria (1967-70), Somalia (1999-93) and Burundi, Rwanda and Sierra Leone (1991-2001). He further goes on to categorise the other forms of conflicts and wars between some African countries to include inter border and inter-state conflicts. These conflicts are; Nigeria- Cameroon dispute over Bakassi peninsular since the 1970's; ii. Algeria- Morocco conflict over the Atlas Mountains area in October 1963; Eritrea- Ethiopian crisis between 1962 and 1979; Somalia-Ethiopia` dispute of 1964 to 1978 over the Ugandan desert region; Chad- Libya crisis of 1980- 1982; Kenya- Somalia border war of 1963 -1967 in which Somalia aimed at recovering its lost territories including the Northern frontier district of Kenya. Others include the Tanzania- Uganda crisis in 1978-79 (Barkindo et al, 1994: 279-321, Cook and Killingray, 1983: 183-84; Europa, 1987: 187). However, it is apt to note that conflict and wars are not peculiar to Africa as other parts of the world are also embroiled in conflict. These include Bosnia, Serbia, Turkey and Northern Ireland are among the trouble parts of Europe.

Among the conflict-ridden countries in Asia are Burma, Iraq, and Cambodia, to name a few. Conflicts also plague Latin America, as demonstrated by nations like Peru, Guatemala, Mexico, and Columbia. (Adedeji, 1999:1). There are the current conflicts between Israel and Palestine and Ukraine and Russia. Due to the prevalence of conflicts, a number of scholars have proposed that conflict may never go away because it is an essential part of human interaction. They observe that there will always be disagreements, disputes, and conflict as long as individuals, countries, and groups pursue competing interests. (Otite, 1999; Zartman 1991: Azar 1990:5; Deutsch, 1991: 26–28).

Nigeria's current state of insecurity poses a serious threat to both the country's survival and the welfare of its people. In Nigeria, there has been a consistent increase in banditry, armed robberies, kidnappings, extrajudicial killings, herder-farmer conflicts, cybercrime, and domestic crime. The current wave of ritual killings, commercial crime, secessionist agitation, attacks by unidentified gunmen, militancy, and environmental agitation are coupled with the aforementioned. In addition, the Islamic State and the Boko Haram insurgency in West Africa Province are causing a humanitarian crisis. In the meantime, murders committed by ethnic or religious groups and illicit mining are widespread in the northwest. Nigeria's political and religious divisions have contributed to the country's insecurity, which has claimed thousands of lives and caused significant property loss and damage. The impoverished state of many African nations in the face of huge natural resources is inextricably linked to insecurity and conflicts ravaging many African nations including Nigeria. This disparaging situation has created a fragile political landscape. It has not only punctuated economic progress but has devastated the developmental strides of many African nations. This trend has exacerbated poverty and impacted terribly on the standard of living in most African countries. The wave of insecurity are hinged on violent religious, conflicts, secessionist moves and turbulence caused by politics turbulence, militancy, kidnapping and the increasing wave of crime, attributable to weak, visionless and corrupt political leaders in Africa,

Cause and consequence of insecurity in Africa.

There are myriad causes of the insecurity in Nigeria and Africa with far reaching consequences (Salawu, 2010; Achumba and Akpor 2013). The causes include; leadership tussle. There is constant animosity between the ruling party and the opposition parties as well as among political leaders, even within the same party. Numerous assassinations related to business are also occurring nationwide, which hinders the country's ability to grow and develop economically. In addition, politicians who intentionally promote the acquisition of weapons in order to further their excessive political ambitions engage in power struggles and exhibit excessive ambition (Egbewole, 2013). Tom (2012) argued that religion, politics, and ethnicity—all of which are tainted by corruption, poverty, and insecurity—are the three interconnected factors that contribute to the struggle for power in Nigeria and throughout Africa. Sadly, these crops of political leaders use the money they steal from the public to oppress the populace and to train thugs and hooligans who, when left behind by the politicians after elections, become armed robbers, kidnappers, drug dealers, and other criminals, posing a serious threat to the progress and development of the country. Another is the high rate of poverty and unemployment among Nigerians and Africans, particularly among the youth, which makes them committing violent crimes (Adagba, et al, 2012). According to Nwagboso (2012), one of the main causes of insecurity in Nigeria and Africa is the inability of successive administrations to address issues of poverty, unemployment, and unequal wealth distribution among ethnic nationalities.

There is also the factor of ethno-religious conflicts. Ethno-religious conflict has been identified as a major source of insecurity in Nigeria by Ibrahim and Igbuzor (2002), Hazen and Horner (2007), Salawu (2010), and Igbuzor (2011). These have arisen from mistrust among various ethnic groups and among the major religions in the country. Ethnoreligious conflict is characterized by a lack of amiability, mutual suspicion, fear, and a propensity for violent confrontation between members of one ethnic or religious group and those of another in a multiethnic and multireligious society. The nation faces a serious security threat from ongoing ethnic conflicts and religious tensions between the two main religions, Islam and Christianity. There are ethno-religious conflicts throughout Nigeria, and according to Ibrahim and Igbuzor (2002), these are the product of new, particularistic forms of political consciousness and identity that are frequently based on ethno-religious identities. Large-scale killings and violence amongst groups in Nigeria have resulted from claims over scarce resources, power, land, chieftaincy, local government, councils, control over markets, and sharia, among other insignificant issues (Adagba, et al, 2012).

Porous boundaries are another important consideration. According to Achumba, Ighomeroho, and Akpor-Robaro (2013), a number of African countries have porous borders that permit unrestricted movement, which has led to a high level of insecurity in Nigeria. Nigerian militancy and criminality have benefited from an uncontrolled influx of small arms and light weapons into the nation (Hazen and Horner, 2007). According to data available, Nigeria is home to more than 70% of the approximately 8 million illicit firearms in West Africa (Edeko, 2011). For example, the porousness of Nigeria's borders has contributed to the unchecked flow of migrants—mostly young men—from neighboring countries like the Republic of Niger, Republic of Chad, and Republic of Benin, who are accountable for some of the country's criminal activities. (Adeola and Oluyemi, 2012).

Insecurity on the continent is aided by weak security systems in a number of African nations. This is the result of the government's security arm having insufficient training and armament (Achumba et al. 2013). This is on top of the security personnel's negative behavioral and attitudinal traits. Security personnel assigned to handle specific security situations frequently lack the knowledge and tools necessary to handle the situations in a way that prevents them from happening. Even in cases where these are present, some security personnel are susceptible to the influence of communal, religious, or ethnic sentiment and are quickly consumed by their own desire to serve their community rather than the country.

Conflicts and insecurity are a result of institutional and governmental failure in many African countries. It seems that there is a connection between government failure and the level of insecurity in Africa, as noted by Igbuzor (2011). This is demonstrated by the government's inability to meet the basic needs of the populace and to provide public services. People's inability to provide for their basic needs creates a reservoir of resentment that can be readily stoked into violence by any incident. Even though many African countries have the means to meet their citizens' needs, corruption in public office at all levels has prevented officials from concentrating on meeting the needs of the general public. This is a situation which makes Hazen and Horner (2007) describe as a "Paradox of Plenty".

Aside the above mentioned one of the bane of insecurity in Africa is the interference of foreign countries in the affairs of African nations. The quest to control the rich natural resources of African nations has resulted in the conscious destabilisation of many African nations. The rich oil and gas industry in Nigeria for example is explored and exploited by foreign multinational companies who derive huge income for their countries. In the very mineral rich Congo the insecurity and poverty stricken state has been attributed to the stranglehold of foreign exploiters who has continued to milk the nation dry of its vast mineral resources. It is on record that France has been exploiting the economic main stay of Niger Republic until the recent coup that reversed the trend. This act has caused a strain among members of the African union. The same goes for many other parts of Africa.

Consequence of the Insecurity Conflict and Fragility in the Global Economy.

The continued crisis in most African state has had adverse consequences for African nations. It has entrenched poverty, underdevelopment in many African nations. Several mineral rich African nations are yet to fully exploit their God-given wealth which is capable of transforming them into mega cities or nations. This is because of the continued conflicts and insecurity that has diverted attention from maximisation of the economic benefits of their natural wealth. In Nigeria for example that is laden with abundant varied natural

resources attention is focused on oil and gas to the exclusion of other resources like agriculture, mining of Gold and other precious minerals that could have generated huge income in exports.

Surprisingly, most of Africa's untapped natural wealth could if tapped could increase food production and enhance technological development of not only Africa but the world at large. World food shortage can be a thing of the past if the vast arable land in Africa are cultivated to boost food production. Additionally the mammoth human resources can will be properly engaged in the various economic activity if the myriad resources are exploited since it will spur industrialisation that will suck up the avalanche of unemployed youths in Africa. This will in turn reduce unemployment, increase productivity and avert attention from crime and conflict to meaning and productive activities.

Another consequence of the current conflict and insecurity in the Africa is that it may result in the dumping of westernised form of government that has been badly managed in Africa for a more robust people oriented form that is indigenous to the African people. This will in turn result in the breaking of the control wielded by most foreign countries. It may also result in a rebalancing of affiliations between African countries and their western and European allies. Where this is the case many foreign countries whose economy are dependent on Africa's rich mineral resources will suffer.

The way forward

Curtailling the Incidence of conflicts and Insecurity in Nigeria and African countries will require the implementation of several strategies. They include strengthening the rule of law, establishing good governance, and outlawing bribery and corruption. According to Anekwe, Ndubuisi-Okolo, and Anigbogu (2015), corruption is the antithesis of progress and development because it breeds inefficiency, incompetence, mediocrity, unethical values, and other negative human instincts like greed, malice, envy, avarice, and rapacity. It also causes political instability, social unrest, and an environment plagued by crime. In Africa, corruption is pervasive. According to Onimajesin (2013), Nigeria is one of the top ten most corrupt countries in the world. Injustice and corruption in Nigeria must be completely eradicated. It is imperative that we reject nepotism and a culture of impunity from our national consciousness in order to promote sustainable development and progress.

Another solution is to create jobs for young people without jobs who meet the requirements. This is due to the fact that unemployment has negative social effects such as depression, personal hardship, deterioration of learned but unutilized skills, involvement in criminal activity, and family conflict. It can also lead to parents being unable to provide for their children's needs, including adequate feeding and education, which could make them a burden on the country.

Strengthening the security agencies and personnel through proper orientation and provision of needed equipment to function is another way out. Where the security personnel are well trained and the needed equipment are provided the incidence of conflicts and insecurity can be adequately curtailed.

Strengthening the legal or judicial system is another solution to the empass. Implementing a legal system where criminal elements in the political set up adequately punished for crimes against the nation will deter others from becoming aberrant. In a case like Nigeria where office holders loot billions of naira and go scot free it will be impossible to wipe out corruption. Same goes for many African countries whose leaders loot the treasury and provide a life of luxury for their immediate and extended family while the masses languish in squalor and penury.

Provision of structures that will enhance the maximisation of the countries natural resources will bring about industrialisation and massive employment that will not only economically engage the youths but also make them self-sufficient. Where the standard of living is high the lure to take to crime will abate.

Conclusions and Recommendations

Cankerworm-like, insecurity has gnawed away at the foundation of natural and human resources. As a result of this development, it is essential to fortify the security system with the earnestness and tenacity that it merits in order to enable both native and foreign residents of Nigeria to live there. These suggestions are in accordance with what we have noticed:

- The government must strengthen physical security measures across the nation by setting up secure facilities and creating strict policies that will be applied to those who violate security protocols. This suggests that in

order to effectively handle security concerns and threats, the government must be proactive in handling them. This can be achieved through implementing cutting-edge technology, logistics, training, and contemporary techniques for obtaining and exchanging intelligence.

(It is recommended that governments take seriously their role as custodians of the people and address issues of victimization, marginalization, discrimination, and security. They should also establish a secure and welcoming environment for investments that will accelerate industrialization and sustainable development, improving the quality of life for the greatest number of their constituents.

- The Nigerian government must incorporate security management into the curriculum of all educational levels, including primary, secondary, and tertiary institutions. Children and young people alike will be able to understand the importance of security as a result.

- The focus of development assistance should be on addressing perceptions of unequal access to opportunities and on underperforming areas. Putting money where the opportunities are greatest runs the risk of escalating hostilities. Collaboration and cross-border economic exchanges could be beneficial.

- There is a need for improved land management and the resolution of complaints pertaining to land access.

- The surge in discoveries related to extractives necessitates paying more attention to conflict risks, handling local and regional grievances, and combating corruption.

Enhancing the handling of migrants is a pressing concern.

- To boost youth livelihoods and expand the skilled labor force, significant investments in basic and technical education are needed.

- New security threats increase the need for reforming the security sector and enhancing justice and the rule of law.

It's also critical to provide ECOWAS and other regional organizations with more support.

- More citizen participation, enhanced social accountability, transparency, and improved services are all necessary for strengthening local governance. Encouragement of decentralization is one strategy.

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