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Original Research Article

SECURITY CHALLENGES AND DEVELOPMENT IN AFRICA: A CRITICAL DISCOURSE

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ABSTRACT: This paper examined security challenges and development in Africa. The paper reviewed the concepts of security and development. Conflict theory was used as the theoretical framework of analysis to better understand and explain the causes of the security challenges and their impacts on development in Africa. Methodologically, the study adopted secondary sources of data collection. Data were generated from books, journals, articles and newspaper publications. Content analysis was used as the tool for data analysis. The paper findings were analysed in two subheadings namely: security challenges in Africa, and the impacts of security challenges on development in Africa. The paper revealed that the security challenges in Africa are terrorism, transnational crime, and political instability. The paper also found that the security challenges in Africa have left frightening consequences for the continent's development. The study revealed that millions of lives have been lost as a result of these security challenges. These security challenges have also affected the people of Africa emotionally. Based on the review, there has been significant risk of cholera and respiratory diseases due to poor access to safe drinking water, food and medicine. The paper recommended that African countries should collaborate more closely to address common security challenges. This will be achieved through initiatives such as joint military exercises, intelligence sharing, and regional security alliances.

Keywords: Security, Security Challenges, Development, Terrorism, Crime, Africa.

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INTRODUCTION

Africa is a continent that has faced several security challenges over the years, ranging from terrorism, civil wars, insurgency, piracy, and cybercrime, among others. These security challenges have had significant negative impacts on the continent's socio-economic development, political stability, and human rights. The performance of Africa in all development indicators is dismal. Attempts to develop the continent, particularly after its independence have produced but meagre outcome (Ibeanu, 2017).

We can therefore say without contradiction that there actually exist gaps in Africa's development. Until these gaps are bridged, it will be difficult for the continent to experience

development. One can assert without equivocation that all countries in the world today started from the state of backwardness. In other words, backwardness is not a unique experience of a few countries. Today, many of the countries that were hitherto in the backward bracket have emancipated themselves from their state of underdevelopment and attained a developed status (Adebayo & Alao, 2016).

According to Bolognani (2015), development as a process of growth and expansion requires an enabling socio-economic environment and peaceful co-existence of citizens and residents of the place. Development will certainly not take place without a harmonious interchange and peaceful co-existence of all and sundry. This can be seen in the popular slogan "peace and progress" which is most commonly used by nations and social organisations aimed at national development. A look at the slogan shows profound appreciation of the fact that peace is a fundamental requirement for progress. It therefore follows that for any meaningful development to occur, peace is a key factor, and must be given a priority attention to be achieved in a nation.

CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

The Concept of Security

The concept of security is multifaceted and can be defined in various ways depending on the context and perspective. In general, security refers to the protection of individuals, communities, organisations, and nations from threats or risks that could cause harm, damage, or loss. The nature of security threats varies widely and may include physical violence, crime, terrorism, cyberattacks, natural disasters, and economic instability. The concept of security has evolved over time, reflecting changes in the nature of threats and the ways in which societies seek to address them. Ibeanu (2017) stated that security is a dynamic and contested concept that involves the balance between freedom and control, individual and collective rights, and the need for protection and the need for openness. According to Adebayo and Alao (2016), security refers to the ability of individuals, communities, and states to protect themselves against physical, economic, political, and environmental threats, while also respecting human rights and promoting social justice.

Security is a multi-dimensional concept that encompasses physical safety, economic wellbeing, political stability, and social harmony (Nwankwo, 2015). Security refers to the protection of individuals, communities, and states from threats that may arise from within or outside their borders, including military, economic, political, and environmental threats (Ogundele & Osuntogun, 2016). Security is a condition in which individuals and groups can pursue their goals and interests without fear of harm, injury, or disruption, whether from physical or non-physical threats (Buzan & Hansen, 2018). According to United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), security is the protection of individuals, groups, and societies from direct and indirect threats to their physical, economic, social, and cultural well-being, enabled by the presence of stable and legitimate institutions and a supportive global environment.

The Concept of Development

Just like so many concepts in the social sciences, there exists no universally accepted definition of development. In fact, the word ‘development’ means different things to different people. The

concept of development is a problematic concept to define because of the many controversies it has generated, as there are different scholars who have varied in their opinions on what constitutes development. As these controversies last, the common observation, however, is that development usually has to do with the social and economic conditions of existence of a people in a given region or state in terms of the system to produce and distribute resources fairly among the citizenry irrespective of class.

According to Chang (2018), development is the process of improving the living standards of a society through the creation of a more diversified, productive, and inclusive economy, as well as the promotion of social, political, and economic rights. The United Nations Development Programme (2016) defined development as the process of enlarging people's choices and opportunities and improving their well-being, as well as the process of transforming the economic, social, and political structures that impede human development. Sen (2017), a Nobel Prize-winning economist, defines development as the process of expanding the real freedoms that people enjoy, including the freedom to live a long and healthy life, to be educated, to be politically active, to worship as they choose, and to be free from fear and violence.

According to Hulme (2019), development is the process of creating an enabling environment in which people can lead productive and fulfilling lives, free from poverty and deprivation and with access to the resources and opportunities they need to achieve their full potential. Therefore development can be seen as the process of creating conditions in which people can live productive, healthy, and creative lives, and the process of expanding the range of opportunities available to them to improve their well-being.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Conflict Theory

The conflict theory has its origins in the works of Karl Marx, a German philosopher, economist, and sociologist who lived in the 19th century. Marx believed that capitalism was a fundamentally unequal economic system that led to the exploitation of the working class by the capitalist class. Marx argued that capitalism created a social class system with the bourgeoisie, or capitalist class, at the top and the proletariat, or working class, at the bottom. According to Larkins (2015), Marx believed that the bourgeoisie maintained their power by exploiting the proletariat and paying them wages that were lower than the value of the goods they produced. Marx believed that this exploitation created a fundamental conflict of interest between the two classes, and that it would eventually lead to a revolution by the proletariat to overthrow the bourgeoisie (Dornelas & Torres, 2017).

Conflict theory is useful in explaining security challenges and development in Africa. Conflict theory posits that society is made up of conflicting groups with competing interests, and that social change occurs as a result of this conflict. In the context of Africa, conflict theory can explain how the continent's security challenges are often the result of underlying social, economic, and political inequalities. The concentration of wealth and power in the hands of a few can lead to conflicts between different groups, such as ethnic, religious, or political factions. These conflicts can be further fueled by external factors such as resource scarcity, territorial disputes, and intervention by foreign powers. Furthermore, conflict theory explains how the pursuit of development in Africa can also exacerbate security challenges, as development policies often prioritise the needs of the elite and neglect the needs of marginalised groups. For

example, large-scale infrastructure projects may lead to displacement and loss of livelihoods for local communities, leading to conflict and social unrest.

METHODOLOGY

Descriptive research method was used in this paper to examine security challenges and development in Africa. The paper adopted secondary or documentary sources of data collection which has to do with information gathered from textbooks, journals, articles, newspapers, online documents and official documents. The data sourced form the basis for the literature review, theoretical framework and results or findings and interpretations of this study. In this scholarly work, no statistical treatment was applied on data. The researcher made use of content analysis in analyzing the data sourced. Content analysis is a research technique used to make replicable and valid inferences by interpreting and coding textual materials. Offiong (2014) stated that content analysis is any technique for making inferences by objectively and systematically identifying specified characteristics of messages.

Security Challenges in Africa

Africa is the world's second-largest continent, covering over 30 million square kilometers, with a population of over 1.2 billion people. The continent has enormous potential for development, with vast natural resources and a growing population. However, Africa also faces a range of security challenges that continue to impede its development efforts.

Terrorism is one of the most significant security challenges facing Africa. Terrorist groups such as Boko Haram in Nigeria, al-Shabaab in Somalia, and the Islamic State in West Africa Province (ISWAP) continue to launch attacks that claim innocent lives and undermine security in the region. These groups operate in different parts of Africa, but their activities are often interlinked. They are motivated by different factors, including religious, political, and economic grievances. The rise of Boko Haram in Nigeria is a significant security threat to the West African region. Boko Haram is an Islamist extremist group that seeks to establish an Islamic state in Nigeria. The group has been responsible for numerous attacks on civilians, including bombings and kidnappings (Amegboh, 2017). In 2014, the group abducted over 200 schoolgirls from the town of Chibok, leading to global outrage. The Nigerian government has been unable to defeat the group, and its activities have spread to neighboring countries such as Chad and Niger.

Al-Shabaab is another terrorist group that poses a significant threat to security in East Africa. The group was formed in Somalia but has carried out attacks in Kenya and other countries in the region. Al-Shabaab is affiliated with al-Qaeda and seeks to establish an Islamic state in Somalia. The group has been responsible for numerous bombings, assassinations, and kidnappings, targeting both civilians and government officials. ISWAP is a relatively new terrorist group that has emerged in West Africa. The group is affiliated with the Islamic State and seeks to establish an Islamic state in the Lake Chad region. ISWAP has carried out numerous attacks on military and civilian targets, leading to displacement and disruption of economic activities (Jansson & Jørgensen, 2017).

Kwarteng and Nsiah-Asare (2018) stated that terrorist groups such as Boko Haram, al-Shabaab, and ISIS have carried out attacks on African soil, claiming innocent lives and undermining security in the region. One of the main drivers of terrorism in Africa is political

instability. Conflicts, civil wars, and political crises create an environment conducive to the growth of extremist ideologies and the recruitment of new members. In addition, poverty and unemployment provide fertile ground for radicalisation, as unemployed youth are more vulnerable to extremist propaganda.

Transnational crime is another significant security challenge facing Africa. This includes activities such as drug trafficking, human trafficking, and smuggling of illegal goods, among others. These activities are facilitated by porous borders and weak law enforcement systems, making it difficult to curb them. Drug trafficking is a major transnational crime in Africa, with drug cartels operating in different parts of the continent. The drugs are transported through sea and air routes, and the proceeds are used to fund other criminal activities. West Africa is a major transit point for drugs from South America, with Nigeria and Ghana being the primary destinations.

Human trafficking is another significant transnational crime in Africa. The continent is a source, transit, and destination for human trafficking. The victims are mostly women and children who are forced into prostitution, domestic servitude, or forced labor. The trafficking is often carried out by criminal networks that operate across different countries. Smuggling of illegal goods, including arms and wildlife products, is also a significant transnational crime in Africa. The arms are used to fuel conflicts, while wildlife products such as ivory and rhino horn are smuggled to markets in Asia, where they are in high demand (Muzondidya & Chitando, 2019).

Political instability is another significant security challenge in Africa. Many countries on the continent have experienced political upheavals, such as coups and civil wars, which have led to the displacement of people and disrupted economic activities. These conflicts are often driven by ethnic, religious, and political differences, and their resolution is often complicated by external factors such as foreign interference. The civil war in South Sudan is a significant example of political instability in Africa. One of the main drivers of political instability in Africa is weak governance. Corruption, nepotism, and poor leadership contribute to the breakdown of institutions and the erosion of public trust in the government (Muzondidya & Chitando, 2019).
Weak governance also creates an environment conducive to the growth of extremist ideologies and the emergence of armed groups. The effects of political instability in Africa are far-reaching. They include the loss of lives, displacement of people, and disruption of economic activities. Political instability also creates an environment that is conducive to the growth of transnational crime and terrorism.

Impacts of Security Challenges on Development in Africa

Security challenges in Africa have had significant impacts on the development of the continent. These impacts are far-reaching and affect various sectors of the economy and social fabric of society. One of the major impacts of security challenges on development in Africa is the displacement of people. Many people have been forced to flee their homes due to conflicts, terrorism, and other security challenges. This has led to the displacement of millions of people, causing humanitarian crises that strain resources and undermine development efforts. Displaced people are often unable to access education and healthcare, and they face high levels of poverty and unemployment. Another impact of security challenges on development in Africa is the disruption of economic activities. Terrorism, transnational crime, and political instability disrupt trade and investment, causing economic losses and limiting opportunities for growth. For

instance, terrorist attacks in Nigeria's northeast region have affected agricultural activities, causing food insecurity and exacerbating poverty levels. Similarly, piracy and armed robbery in the Gulf of Guinea have affected the shipping industry, leading to increased costs and reduced trade volumes (Onyekachi, 2015).

According to Omeje (2016), security challenges also have social impacts on development in Africa. They exacerbate existing social inequalities and deepen divisions along ethnic, religious, and political lines. This can lead to social unrest and further undermine development efforts. For instance, conflicts between pastoralists and farmers in Nigeria have resulted in social tensions and led to the loss of lives and property. In addition, security challenges have had significant implications for human rights and the rule of law in Africa. Conflict and terrorism often lead to human rights abuses and undermine the justice system. This weakens the ability of the state to provide security and enforce the law, making it difficult to hold perpetrators accountable for their actions. The erosion of the rule of law and human rights undermines the legitimacy of the state and can lead to a breakdown in social order.

Security challenges also have implications for regional and global security. Africa's security challenges are not isolated from those in other regions, and they can have spillover effects on neighboring countries and beyond. For example, Boko Haram's activities in Nigeria have spilled over into neighboring Cameroon and Chad, leading to cross-border attacks and refugee flows. Additionally, piracy in the Gulf of Guinea has affected global trade and led to concerns about maritime security. Overall, security challenges in Africa have significant impacts on the development of the continent. They affect various sectors of the economy and social fabric of society, leading to the displacement of people, disruption of economic activities, exacerbation of social inequalities, and erosion of human rights and the rule of law.

CONCLUSION

Africa faces a range of security challenges, including terrorism, transnational crime, and political instability, which continue to impede the continent's development efforts. These challenges are often interrelated, making it difficult to address them in isolation. However, there are some positive developments in Africa's security landscape that offer hope for the future. One of the most significant challenges facing Africa is terrorism. Terrorist groups such as Boko Haram in Nigeria and al-Shabaab in Somalia continue to launch attacks that claim innocent lives and undermine security in the region. In addition to the human toll, terrorism has significant economic and social consequences, including the displacement of people and disruption of economic activities (Onyekachi, 2015).

Transnational crime is another major challenge in Africa. This includes activities such as drug trafficking, human trafficking, and smuggling of illegal goods, among others. These activities are facilitated by porous borders and weak law enforcement systems, making it difficult to curb them. Political instability is also a significant security challenge in Africa. Many countries on the continent have experienced political upheavals, such as coups and civil wars, which have led to the displacement of people and disrupted economic activities. These conflicts are often driven by ethnic, religious, and political differences, and their resolution is often complicated by external factors such as foreign interference (Wani, 2020). Despite these challenges, there have been some positive developments in Africa's security landscape in recent years. For example, several countries have made progress in addressing terrorism through coordinated efforts among security agencies and with the support of international partners.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of this paper, the following are recommended:

- African countries should collaborate more closely to address common security challenges. This will be achieved through initiatives such as joint military exercises, intelligence sharing, and regional security alliances.
- There is need to for African governments to prioritise the development of institutions and legal frameworks that can address corruption, promote accountability, and protect human rights.
- African governments should invest in infrastructure and technologies that can help secure their borders and control the flow of people and goods.
- African governments should address underlying social, economic, and political factors, such as poverty, inequality, and ethnic tension. Addressing these root causes is essential to promoting long-term stability and security.
- African governments should invest in cybersecurity infrastructure and training to ensure that their citizens and businesses are protected against cyber threats.

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