# NEOLIBERAL ECONOMIC REFORMS AND CHALLENGES OF INSECURITY IN AFRICA

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**Abstract**

*Extant literature have identified socio-economic dysfunctionality, governance deficits, heterogeneous composition of African and power contestations among elites as the principal factors fuelling and sustaining insecurity in the region. However, these varied opinions and explanations held by scholars appear to have been inappropriate and inadequate in understanding the dynamics and as well, resolving the spate of insecurity in the region. Against this background and radically departing from the conventional knowledge, this paper interrogated the nexus between the implementation of neoliberal economic reforms and the intensification of insecurity in Africa. Relying on the secondary sources of data collection largely drawn from textbooks, journals, newspapers and internet materials together with content analysis method, this paper in compliance with the basic propositions emanating from the political economy analytical framework argued that the increasing rate of insecurity in Africa cannot be divorced of fully comprehended without recourse to the role neoliberal reforms in the continent. Indeed, the study observed that the neoliberal economic framework was designed to alienate the African government from discharging their statutory responsibilities, thereby giving opportunity for the appearance of violent groups, fighting against the incapacity of African states to meet the demands of the governed. In this light, we called for the prioritization of economic policy that will enhance and maximize the welfare of the Africans.*

**Keywords:** Governance-deficit, Insecurity, Neoliberal Economic Reforms, Power Contestations, Socio-Economic Dysfunctionality.

**Introduction**

The contemporary international system is replete with enormous and deep-seated challenges threatening the survival of man as he struggle to eke out means of his material existence. In this direction, man has been in consistent adventure in search of knowledge-based approach that would be fundamental in providing succor to the myriads of problems that threatens his survival. This is essential as man's continued existence is largely dependent on his capacity to evolve appropriate explanatory and analytical frameworks to diagnose and salvage problems militating against his survival. Evidently, the present global order, particularly the developing countries are grappling with development crisis which can be situated and analyzed from a tripartite viewpoint namely; political, economic and social. Politically, the developing societies are beleaguered with leadership crisis, authoritarianism,

prebendal politics, human right atrocities, nepotism, and legitimization crisis arising from election irregularities. At the social circle, indices such as war, ethnic hatred, conflict, terrorism, illiteracy, corruption, outbreak of diseases, resurgence of ethno-religious militia groups are the defining character of the developing societies. Furthermore, the effects of economic crisis in the world can easily be seen in the third world countries owing to the cases of high poverty and unemployment rate, food crisis, debt crisis and high inflation rate which have continually and increasingly found expression in that part of the world.

As an integral constituent of the international system, both the colonial and post-colonial Africa can best, be described as a region with myriad of problems and has over the years, been entrapped in the crisis of development. This can easily be substantiated based on the available socio-economic and political indicators which portrayed a gloomy situation. According to IMF (2013), Africa has more than 75% of the poorest segment of the world while 18 out of the 20 most wretched countries in the world are located in the continent. Also, the global child mortality ratio in 2011 revealed that Africa has 50% of the world's total child mortality rate (UNICEF, 2012). Also, a study conducted by WHO in 2013 has shown that about 24,715,000 people representing 70% of the global population living with the dreaded HIV/AIDS reside in Africa (WHO, 2013).

Meanwhile, of the numerous problems that confront the African states, the intractability together with the intensification of insecurity in the region has remained a burning issue and as well, attracted the attention of scholars, policymakers and even the layman. According to DFID (2001:10):

> During the last two decades, sub-Saharan Africa has been the most conflict-affected region in the world. Ten of the 24 most war-affected countries between 1980 and 1994 were African, and four of these (Liberia, Angola, Mozambique and Somalia) were ranked within the five most severely affected countries in the world. Conflict has been responsible for more death and displacement than famine or flood.

Corroborating, Obasanjo (2014) observed that from 1960 until the present day, fifty percent of Africa's states have been ravaged by one form of conflict or another. Stressing further, Obasanjo (2014) noted that conflicts in Africa can be categorized into:

a. Post-colonial conflicts arising from agitations for liberation from the control of colonial settlers in countries such as Zimbabwe (1980); Namibia (1990); and apartheid in South Africa (1994).

b. Boundary and territorial conflicts such as the Angolan Bush War in South Africa (1966-1989); the Algeria–Morocco conflict over the Atlas Mountain area (1963); the territorial tensions between Ethiopia and Eritrea (1998–2000); the Kenya–Somali war (1963–67); the Somali–Ethiopian conflict (1964–78); the Egypt–Libya conflict (1977); and the Cameroon–Nigeria

conflict over the disputed Bakassi Peninsula (1994) – the settlement of which I was part of.

c.  Conflicts linked to secessionist ambitions such as the case of Sudan and South Sudan (1983–2011); the age-long Cassamance rebellion in Senegal; the Cabinda agitations in Angola; and the Biafra civil war in Nigeria (1967–70).

d.  Resource-based conflicts such as the Sudan and South Sudan conflict over the Abyei region; the Congo Brazzaville conflict (2007); the Senegal/Mauritania conflict (1989); and the conflict raging in eastern Congo over the last decade.

e.  Identity-based conflicts such as inter-ethnic or inter-tribal conflicts. Examples of these are the 1994 Rwandan Genocide; the Burundi massacres; the Tuareg uprising in Mali; clan fighting in Somalia and Liberia; Algerian Berbers fighting against the ruling Arab class in Algeria; and the ongoing South Sudan conflict.

f.  Annexationist conflicts such as the occupation of the Western Sahara by Morocco in 1975; and British Southern Cameroons in 1961.

g.  Poverty, denial and perceived or real injustice induced conflicts like the militancy in the Niger Delta of Nigeria or the current Boko Haram insurgency.

However, the extant literature has identified poor governance, struggle for control of power, unconstitutional changes of government, corruption, struggle for ownership, management and control of natural resources, unequal distribution of these resources, inadequate capacity for diversity management, the real or perceived inequality and discrimination against minorities, marginalization along ethnic and religious lines as well as the alienation and consequent disillusionment of the youth as causative factors responsible for the intensification of insecurity situation in Africa (DFID, 2001; Mbugua, 2013; Obasanjo, 2014; Ajodo-Adebanjoko & Okorie, 2014; Okolie & Agbo, 2016). As a way of filling the identified intellectual gap in the previous studies, this paper explored the linkage between the institutionalization of neoliberal economic reforms and the spate of insecurity in Africa with a view to providing the appropriate explanations and unraveling the underlying cause of insecurity in the continent. This paper will be guided with the following sections: Theoretical underpinning of the study, conceptual analysis, causes of insecurity in Africa, trends and dynamics of neoliberal reforms in Africa, dimensions and incidences of insecurity in Africa, nexus between neoliberal reforms and spate of insecurity in Africa, conclusion and prognosis.

## Theoretical Underpinning of the Study

The theoretical analysis of this study is situated within the basic propositions emanating from the Marxist paradigmatic prism of Political Economy as expounded by Karl Marx in *his Magnum Opus*, *A Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy* in Marx (1884), Marx (1967) and Marx (1977) and used by Ake (1981), Nikitin (1983), Ihovbere (1989), Akpuru-Aja (1998), amongst others. The Political

Economy approach is essentially based on dialectical materialism. Ake (1981: 1-3) delineated the underlying features of dialectical materialism which are the primacy of material condition, the dynamic character of social reality and the relatedness of different elements of society. The theory is anchored on the notion that man is principally motivated by economic or material needs. Labour is the essence of material existence, hence, economic activity is man's primary concern. According to Akpuru-Aja (1998:16), the thrust of this perspective is that the understanding of a society's politics and culture depends primarily on the understanding of its economic structure as defined by the relations between employers of labour and the working class in the process of production. To Marx, every political system corresponds to and reflects its kind of economic structure. Thus, in the Preface to his work: *A Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy*, Marx places premium on the sub-structural component of the society (otherwise called the base or foundation) which plays a determinant role on its super-structural counterparts like politics, ideology and culture of society.

Accordingly, he asserts that:

> neither legal relations nor political forms could be comprehended whether by themselves or on the basis of a so-called general development of the human mind, but that on the contrary, they originate in the material conditions of life...in the social production of their existence, men inevitably enter into definite relations, which are independent of their will, namely relations of production appropriate to a given stage in the development of their material forces of production. The totality of these relations of production constitutes the economic structure of society, the real foundation, on which arises a legal and political superstructure and to which correspond definite forms of social consciousness. The mode of production of material life conditions the general process of social, political and intellectual life (http://www.marxists.org/archive/marx/works/1850/pol-econ/appx2.htm).

Thus, from the substructure, one easily understands the nature of internal relations, how a society organizes, manages and reproduces itself, the causes of tension, conflicts or contradictions in any given society as well as the direction of social change. Marx holds that the primary cause of tension and other social dislocation in a society is economic factor. He first employed the political economy approach for analyzing the root causes of conflicts and contradictions in human societies. Corroborating the above argument, Akpuru-Aja (1998:17) asserts that if one understands the economic structure of a society, the relations between the people in production process, it is easier to understand the nature of politics, culture, national security, socio-psychological consciousness, and the ideological inclinations.

In interfacing the theory to the subject matter of the study, we argue that the

intensification of insecurity in Africa cannot be fully comprehended or divorced without recourse to the premature incorporation of African economy into the global capitalism. The process of integrating the African economy was made possible through colonialism and imposition of structural adjustment programme by the advanced capitalist societies through their institutional mechanisms such as World Bank and International Monetary Fund. Obviously, the nature and character of neoliberal policies had severe implication on the growth and development of African economy. First, it distorted and disarticulated the economy of African countries and perpetually assigned the region second fiddle role in the international division of labour. Secondly, it was directly responsible for the tactical alienation of African states from participating in decisions vis-à-vis the economic wellbeing or material needs of the people. Thus, the implementation of SAP in Africa weakened the capacity of African countries to provide social safety nets, fund health and education programmes and even secure law and order. It further widened income inequalities and undermined economic security, thereby aggravating social tensions. No doubt, when states malfunction in the sense that they fail to provide basic public goods for their populations, their societies are likely to experience steeply escalating problems that spill over to the rest of the world, failed states are seedbeds of violence, terrorism, international criminality, mass migration and refuge movements, drug trafficking and disease.

**Conceptual Analysis**
**a.  Insecurity**
Security remains among the major priority and indispensable need of man as he contends with nature to meet with his material means of existence. Thus, man's voluntary relinquishment of his right of governing himself to the state was essentially to secure his lives and properties against perceived enemies and external aggressor. However, the increasing rate of terrorism, maritime piracy, kidnapping, and armed robbery that pervades the international system has ignited intellectual discourse aimed at evolving a suitable definition and clarification of insecurity. But as Okolie & Agbo (2016) noted, efforts deployed at defining the term insecurity will be fruitless without first, understanding the concept of security.

The concept of security no doubt, is replete with ambiguity. This difficulty in achieving exactness in definition arises from the traditional or state-centric notion of security which confines it to safety and survival of the state and its citizens from harm or destruction through the military apparatus (Zebadi, 2007). However, over the years particularly with the end of the cold war, attempts have been made by scholars to redefine the concept of security from the narrow state-centric viewpoint to a wider perspective where emphasis will be placed on individuals, in which human security that embodies elements of national security, human rights and national development will ultimately remain the major barometer for explaining the concept (Ewetan, 2014).

In the light of the foregoing, Fayeye (2007) argues that security of a nation requires moving away from the traditional militaristic and state-centric definition of

security towards human security. To him, security includes the personal and communal state of being secured from a wide range of critical and pervasive threats. As a corollary, Nnoli (2006) defines national security as a cherished value associated with physical safety of individuals, group and nation states. Similarly, the Mo Ibrahim Foundation (2009 & 2011) offers an operational definition of security at the individual and national level. At the individual level, security connotes safety from domestic political persecution, social unrest and safety of the person. Others are freedom from violent crimes and human trafficking. At the national level, security means safety from cross-border tensions, government involvement in armed conflict and the extent of domestic armed conflict. It is also concerned with the number of political refugees and internally displaced people. Objectively, security denotes safety from threats, anxiety and danger. It is also subjective and psychological to the extent that it can be measured by the absence of fear that threat, anxiety or danger will occur. Accordingly, security is physical and psychological, objective and subjective as well as multi-dimensional; social, economic, political and environmental (Zebadi, 2007, quoted in Okolie and Agbo, 2016).

Conversely, the concept of insecurity connotes different meanings such as: absence of safety; danger; hazard; uncertainty; lack of protection, and lack of safety. According to Beland (2005), insecurity is a state of fear or anxiety due to absence or lack of protection. Achumba et al (2013) defines insecurity from two perspectives. Firstly, insecurity is the state of being open or subject to danger or threat of danger, where danger is the condition of being susceptible to harm or injury. Secondly insecurity is the state of being exposed to risk or anxiety, where anxiety is a vague unpleasant emotion that is experienced in anticipation of some misfortune. In the same vein, insecurity according to Okolie & Agbo (2016) denotes prevalence of physical and or potential threat of fear, anxiety or danger detrimental to the safety and survival of individuals, groups and state at large.

The foregoing definitions of insecurity underscore a major point that those affected by insecurity are not only uncertain or unaware of what would happen but they are also vulnerable to the threats and dangers when they occur. For the purpose of this paper, insecurity is defined as a breach of peace and security, whether historical, religious, ethno-regional, civil, social, economic, and political that contributes to recurring conflicts, and leads to wanton destruction of lives and property.

**b.   Neoliberal Economic Reforms**
The concept of 'neoliberalism' has, during the past twenty years or so, become quite widespread in some political and academic debates. Several authors have even suggested that neoliberalism is the dominant ideology shaping our world today, and that we live in an age of neoliberalism (Thorsen & Lie, 2006).

Neoliberalism is the philosophy that underpins and drives economic globalization. At its core is a belief in the free market and minimum barriers to the flow of goods, services and capital. It is an extension of the traditional liberal philosophy, which argues for a separation of politics and economics, and that markets

should be "free" from interference of government. This approach is based on four principles:

- Economic growth is paramount: corporations and their agents need to be free to pursue whatever gives them an economic advantage and, in consequence, internal and global markets must be free to operate with little government constraint or regulation.
- Free trade benefits all nations - rich or poor - because every nation has a comparative advantage.
- Government spending creates inefficiency and waste: although most neo-liberals agree that not all public expenditure is wasteful, many argue that it can be reduced.
- In the distribution of economic goods, individual responsibility replaces the concepts of public goods and community (http://www.who.int/trade/glossary/story067/en/).

Essentially, neoliberalism operates under some tenets as enshrined in the Washington Consensus and expounded by the International Financial Institutions such as International Monetary Fund and World Bank. Thus, Martinez & Garcia (n.d) and Williamson (1990) highlighted these cardinal tenets which include:

1. Low government borrowing. Avoidance of large fiscal deficits relative to GDP;
2. Redirection of public spending from subsidies ("especially indiscriminate subsidies") toward broad-based provision of key pro-growth, pro-poor services like primary education, primary health care and infrastructure investment;
3. Tax reform, broadening the tax base and adopting moderate marginal tax rates;
4. Interest rates that are market determined and positive (but moderate) in real terms;
5. Competitive exchange rates;
6. Trade liberalization: liberalization of imports, with particular emphasis on elimination of quantitative restrictions (licensing, etc.); any trade protection to be provided by low and relatively uniform tariffs;
7. Liberalization of inward foreign direct investment;
8. Privatization of state enterprises;
9. Deregulation: abolition of regulations that impede market entry or restrict competition, except for those justified on safety, environmental and consumer protection grounds, and prudential oversight of financial institutions;
10. Legal security for property rights.

Conceptualizing, neoliberal economic reforms represent sets of capitalist-oriented economic policies and structural adjustment programmes articulated in the Washington consensus and imposed on countries as condition for assessing financial and technical assistance by World Bank, International Monetary Fund and US

Treasury Department.

**Causes of Insecurity in Africa: Examining the Contending Viewpoints**

The achievement of self governance in Africa starting from 1957 was anticipated to be a watershed that would propel all-round growth and development in the region. In contradiction, African states appears to be embroiled in incessant terrorist activities and ceaseless intra and inter-states conflict which has over the years, worsened the insecurity situation in the continent. As a result, diverse scholarly viewpoints have arisen to offer explanations on the impetus that deepened the insecurity situation in the region. Studies that interrogated insecurity triggers in Africa can be seen in the following works of Ryan 1990, Osaghae (1992), Liolio (n.d), Nathan (1998), Lewis (2002), Eminue (2004), Apogan-Yella (2005), Salawu (2010), Ezeoba (2011), Adagba *et al* (2012), Joseph (2013), Ajodo-Adebanjoko and Ugwuoke (2014), Ajodo-Adebanjoko & Okorie (2014). At this juncture, it is apposite to explore these contending perspectives.

Firstly, there is an agreement among scholars that the dysfunctional socio-economic condition of Africa was and still remains the major trigger of insecurity in the continent (Liolio, n.d; Adagba, *et al*, 2012; Joseph, 2013; Ajodo-Adebanjoko & Ugwuoke, 2014). To this group of scholars, poverty, gross inequalities, illiteracy and burgeoning unemployment rate remain the core factors that have continued to fuel and sustain insecurity in Africa. In his study, Adagba *et al* (2012) observed that unemployment/poverty among Nigerians, especially the youths is a major cause of insecurity and violent crimes in Nigeria. Further, Adagba *et al* (2012) emphasized that youth's unemployment have contributed to the rising cases of violent conflict in Nigeria. He summed it by positing that one of the major causes of insecurity in the country is the failure of successive administration to address challenges of poverty, unemployment, and inequitable distribution of wealth among ethnic nationalities. Aligning with this school of thought, Joseph (2013) believed that deepening inequalities and rapid progress juxtaposed with group distress can generate uncertainty and violent conflict in Africa.

Secondly, another group of scholars beyond the views held above rather implicated governance deficit prevalent in the post-colonial Africa as the causative factor deepening insecurity in the continent (Nathan, 1998; Olaosebikan, 2010). According to this perspective, inept leadership, endemic and systemic corruption, human right abuses and administrative injustices are the manifestations of governance deficit in Africa. Olaosebikan (2010) gave an overview of the role of governance deficit in engendering insecurity in Africa. According to him:

> Africa has consistently suffered from the problem of inept leadership which has retarded political integration and unity in almost all African states. Given the heterogeneous composition of most African states, perhaps what they needed most are the virtues of administrative tact, political tolerance and social justice. These essential ingredients are to

> be provided by the continent's leadership. Unfortunately however, the realities on ground in most African nations have revealed that most African leaders are weak, corrupt and unpatriotic. Apart from retarding national integration and socioeconomic developments, the attitudes of these rulers have sparked off widespread bloody violence. Sudanese, Nigerian, Algerian and Liberian civil wars lend credence to the fact that African leaders have failed to forge national unity in their respective countries (Olaosebikan, 2010: 552-553).

Similarly, a study by Voz di Paz & Interpeace (2010) indicated that violent conflict in Guinea-Bissau in 1998 was occasioned by the impunity for human right abuse by state officials. Here, local authorities were often accused of engaging in beatings and oppression of the local citizens creating a culture of 'Matchundade' (aggressive behaviours) which bred major conflict with brutal consequences (Voz di Paz and Interpeace 2010).

Thirdly, there are extant studies that radically departed from the aforementioned viewpoints and instead, indicted the heterogeneous composition of African states as the root cause of insecurity in the continent. In line with this persuasion, Bujra (2014) noted that the multi-ethnic character of most African states makes conflict more likely often leading to ethnicity, the distortion in the political economy and the activities of the international arms merchants. Consequently, Osaghae (1992: 214) submit that of all the factors, multi-ethnicity is the most frequently associated with conflict. Truly, given the fact that ethnic cleavages are already deep and political discrimination against minority groups is widely practiced in Africa, ethnicity cannot but be a great potential for separatist activities. Ethnicity has bred the feelings of suspicion, hatred and distrust among members of the various ethnic groups in Africa and has no doubt re traded political integration in Africa. It is therefore not surprising to note that at least twice (1967-70 civil war and 1993 -1999 friction), ethnic rivalry has been the major cause of internal conflicts in Nigeria. Similar stories may also be told of Liberia, Uganda, Rwanda, Burundi, Somalia, Sudan, Congo and a host of other Africa states.

Conversely, other studies identified the proliferation of small arms and light weapons, porous borders, collapse of the institutional mechanism of governance, historical factors, struggle for ownership, management and control of natural resources, unequal distribution of these resources, and inadequate capacity for diversity management, as the remote and proximate causes of insecurity in Africa (Taekyoon, 2009; Olaosebikan, 2010; Oyeniyi, 2011; Achumba, Ighomereho & Akpor-Robaro, 2013, Annan, 2014).

Nevertheless, given the abundance of literature on the causes of insecurity in Africa, it appears strange that the problem has persisted over the years and rapidly assuming the character of intractability. To us however, these apparently divergent

views are incapable of providing the sufficient, exact and suitable theoretical background information for understanding and explaining the factors responsible for the intensification of insecurity in Africa, thereby, tendentiously obscuring the possibility of finding lasting solutions to the problem. Thus, the need to move beyond the conventional knowledge and explore the organic synergy between the implementation of neoliberal economic reforms and security challenges in Africa.

## Historicizing and Understanding the Trends and Dynamics of Neoliberal Economic Reforms in Africa

At independence especially in the 1960s, the African nationalists that fought for the self-rule of the continent were preoccupied with how to initiate policy frameworks that would engender rapid economic growth and development. As a result, new energies were released and African leaders' minds were focused on catching up with the developed world. "Africans must run while the others walk" captures the spirit of those early years. Within this era, two disparate economic policies dominated the world namely; the state-centric economic framework and the capitalist economic system. Meanwhile, many African states such as Ghana, Nigeria, Tanzania, Zambia, Angola, Mozambique, and later Ethiopia opted for the state-centric economic development policy, involving central planning and large public sector. The growing appeal for the central planning model in general, and of public enterprises in particular, arose from the recognition that the public sector is a very important instrument at the disposal of the state for the achievement of sustainable development. Moreover, nationalist African leaders embraced a state controlled development strategy because it gave them the opportunity to control private and foreign enterprises, which they viewed as agents of colonialism, exploitation and domination (Kumssa, 1996). Furthermore, the African leadership believed that the private sector was too backward and that government had to play dominant role in determining the economic direction of the state. This notion was largely responsible for the adoption of the socialist approach to development in which all aspects of economic development were primarily government-driven. Guided by this approach, governments drew up comprehensive plans to invest in state-run basic industries and also enacted comprehensive regulations to control prices, restrict trade, and allocate credit and foreign exchange (Owusu, 2003).

Nevertheless, in 1970s, African being an integral component of the world was engulfed in an economic recession arising from the oil glut in the international market which reflected in poor growth of the productive sectors, a declining level and efficiency of investment, waning exports, mounting debt, deteriorating social conditions, and an increasing erosion of institutional capacity. These developments led to high budget and balance of payments deficits and significant public debt (Heidhues *et al.*, 2004). By 1980, output was actually declining. By the end of the 1980s, most African countries were facing fundamental problems such as: high rates of population growth, fluctuating prices of the continent's major export, low levels of investment and saving, low level of technology, increasing debt, widespread poverty, inefficient use of resources, weak institutions and human capacity, and a general

decline in income and living standards (Rono, 2002; Nwagbara, 2011).

To assuage the economic crisis of 1980s, African states were compelled to adopt various prescriptions enshrined in the Washington Consensus and propagated by international financial institutions such as World Bank, International Monetary Fund, US Treasury Department, Paris Club of Nations and London Club of Nations. These prescriptions include adoption of appropriate pricing policies in all sectors with greater reliance on market forces; restructuring and rationalization of the public sector through privatization, commercialization, and removal of subsidies; trade liberalization; and adoption of a realistic exchange rate. Meanwhile, the Structural Adjustment Programs were principally designed among other things to reduce the preponderance of unproductive investments in the public sector; to restore efficiency in all sectors of the economy; to raise the rate of economic growth; to achieve viable balance of payment; to reduce dependence on mono-economy and on imports by restructuring and diversifying the productive base of the economy (Nwagbara, 2011). Regrettably, empirical and theoretical studies have demonstrated that the SAP strategies instead of salvaging the economic depression prevalent in the continent rather worsened the living conditions of the people (OAU, 1980; Onimode, 1983; Osman, 1994; Rono, 2002; Nwagbara, 2011; Okolie, 2015; Nnamani, 2015). Accordingly, Naiman & Watkins (1999) while lamenting over the adverse effects of implementing the neoliberal economic reforms in Africa in the 1980s noted that:

> Increasing debt burdens, poor growth performance, and the failure of the majority of the population to improve their access to education, health care, or other basic needs has been the general pattern in countries subject to IMF programs (www.hartford-hwp.com/archives/30/111.html).

Hence, the Structural Adjustment Programs could not deliver on its numerous promises of resolving the economic challenges of Africa.

Meanwhile, in the early 2000, there was an attempt by the imperialist nations and its allied institutions under the guise of the Millennium Development Goals initiatives to reincarnate the neoliberal economic policies of which some developing countries particularly the Africa, have expressed deep disenchantment and reservation for, owing to the ugly outcome of the 1980s episode. For instance, in Nigeria, the neoliberal induced economic reforms were introduced in 2003 during the second term of the then President Olusegun Obasanjo. Known as National Economic Empowerment and Development Strategy (NEEDS), the hallmarks of the NEEDs strategic framework include privatization, deregulation and trade liberalization. Also, Libya under Prime Minister Shoukri Ghanem made significant effort towards institutionalizing the neoliberal framework in the country in early 2000. However, these efforts yielded fruits sometime in 2007 when the Libyan government pursued market-oriented reforms which culminated into the privatization of about 360 state owned enterprises, unbundling of the financial sectors, establishment of the Libyan

Stock Exchange in Tripoli, reduction of about 5 billion dollars subsides of the basic commodities, and opening of the economy for foreign and local investors (Alafi & Bruijn, 2009; Bertelsmann Stiftung, 2010). In addition, countries like Cape Verde, Kenya, and Egypt are known to have sustained the market driven reforms from the 1990s to the present epoch while states like Tanzania, Ghana and Tunisia which hitherto exercised deep reservation in implementing market driven reforms are currently experiencing transition from command economy to Western-oriented economic reforms.

**Dimensions and Incidences of Insecurity in Africa: An Overview**
        The assurance of security of lives and property remains paramount to man's existence and also influences the degree of the development of the productive forces. As a result, one of the vital responsibilities of the modern state is to guarantee the security of lives and property of the citizens. Nevertheless, the African region is currently facing security challenges aided by the accelerated processes of globalization and cross-border flows of information, communication, money and materials. The socio-political and economic landscape in the continent has been blighted by the endemic twin evil of crime and violence which manifest in forms of militancy, kidnapping, bombing, armed robbery, destruction of government properties, among others. From the increasing security threats posed by the activities of Alshabab terrorist in Somalia and Kenya, to Boko Haram in Nigeria as well as Al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (*AQIM)* in North Africa, including the maritime pirates in the Gulf of Guinea and Gulf of Aden and not forgetting the ongoing civil wars and ethnic clashes in some states in Africa, and recently the atrocious activities of the Fulani herdsmen, have no doubt made Africa one of the most unsafe region in the world. However, to appreciate the manifestations and enormity of insecurity in Africa, we shall rely and extrapolate on certain variables such as terrorism, maritime piracy, ethnic clashes, interstate and intrastate Wars, and armed robbery and their contributions in undermining the safety of Africans.

**a.   Terrorism in Africa:**
    Contemporarily and particularly in the last decade and half, African countries have not only grappled against domestic terrorism, they have also witnessed the emergence and resurgence of intercontinental terrorist groups that have used the continent as a theatre to perpetrate brutal attacks against both domestic and international targets as well as to develop and maintain operations. Additionally, the past decade has witnessed the transmutation of some relatively domestic groups, some of whom have adopted transnational objectives. Most notably, the 2007 merger of Algeria's Salafist Group for Preaching and Combat (*Groupe Salafiste pour la Prédication et le Combat*, or GSPC) with Al-Qaeda resulted in the formation of the Organization of Al-Qaeda in the Lands of the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM). Also, in 2015, it was reported that the Nigerian Islamist terrorist group, Boko Haram, in a bid to fortify its stronghold pledged allegiance to the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria. These developments were largely responsible for the designation of Africa as the

hotbed for terror activities which no doubt, has exposed the continent to security risks.

Meanwhile, the increasing activities of terrorism is not restricted to a particular sub-region, rather, it is a phenomenon that is widespread in the continent. In North Africa, the 2011 Arab Spring uprisings which toppled authoritarian leaders in Tunisia, Libya and Egypt, provided space and safe haven for terrorist groups to commit heinous acts that pose security challenges not only for the African continent but also for Western nations struggling to contain terrorism throughout the Middle East and beyond (Flamini, 2011; Jost, 2013). For instance, within Algeria, al-Qa'ida in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM) and al-Murabitoun, led by Mokhtar Belmokhtar, in April 19 2014 attacked an Algerian military convoy in Tizi Ouzou province, killing 11 soldiers, and wounding five. In Egypt, the two principal terrorist organizations Ansar Bayt Al-Maqdis (ABM) and Ajnad Misr coordinated attacks between January to November 2014 that led to the death of more than 120 people while uncountable numbers were wounded. Also, somewhere in Libya, the activities of Ansar al-Shari'a (AAS), Darnah, al-Qa'ida in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM) and al-Murabitun terrorist organizations were responsible for the death of 55 persons in 2014. In the same vein, the rise of violent extremist organizations in Tunisia since the January 2011 revolution – including Ansar al-Shari'a in Tunisia (AAS-T) and al-Qa'ida in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM) – posed serious security challenges to the country as the country witnessed the deaths of more than 35 people between February and November 2014 (US Department of State, 2016).

In East Africa, the Somalia-based terrorist group al-Shabaab remained the primary terrorist threat despite a series of significant setbacks. African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM) forces were able to supplant al-Shabaab control of several urban areas inside Somalia in 2014, forcing al-Shabaab out of lucrative port cities and further into the countryside. In addition to the group's declining revenues, al-Shabaab lost three critical members of its leadership circle to airstrikes – the group's leader, the head of intelligence, and the chief of external operations and planning. The loss of territory, revenue, and leadership hampered al-Shabaab's operational capabilities for a time, but the organization regrouped in new safe havens to continue planning and launching attacks and suicide bombings in Somalia, Kenya, and Djibouti. In Somalia, al-Shabaab conducted a complex assault against the Mogadishu International Airport on December 25, killing three contractors – one American, one Kenyan, and one Ugandan - and eight Ugandan AMISOM soldiers. Djibouti suffered its first bombing in May when two suicide operatives detonated their explosive devices at a French restaurant in the capital. One Turkish citizen was killed along with the two suicide bombers. Al-Shabaab launched mass-casualty attacks in several Kenyan towns and villages along the porous border with Somalia that resulted in over 200 deaths, Kenya's deadliest year against al-Shabaab to date (US Department of State, 2016). While still focused on striking targets outside Somalia, particularly within countries contributing troops to AMISOM, al-Shabaab attempted to delegitimize the Federal Government of Somalia through assassinations, suicide bombings, and other asymmetric attacks within the country.

In West Africa, conflict in Nigeria continued throughout the northeast, with Boko Haram and related actors committing hundreds of attacks, resulting in over 5,000 casualties in 2014. This violence spilled over into neighboring Cameroon, Chad, and Niger. The kidnapping of 276 female students from a secondary school in Chibok, Borno State, brought global attention to the conflict and highlighted Boko Haram's deliberate targeting of non-combatants, including children (http://www.state.gov/j/ct/rls/crt/2014/239404.htm).

In South African sub-region, there is increasing and palpable fear over the rise of militant Islamism in Tanzania in recent years. For instance, in 2013, it was reported that a group known as Jumuiya ya Taasisi za Kiislam (Community of Muslim Organisations) successfully planned an attack that eventually led to the death of three people while 67 were badly wounded.

### b.  Maritime Insecurity in Africa

The Gulf of Guinea and the Horn of Africa as well as the Gulf of Aden which constitute the principal maritime spaces in Africa is of strategic interest to the world particularly, the advanced capitalist societies. This can be attributed to the large deposit of widely 'sought after' natural and aquatic resources such as fishes of all kinds, gold, crude oil and diamonds, among numerous others. Regrettably, despite the massive presence of the aforementioned resources, Africa's waterways have provided veritable avenue for illicit activities such as illegal oil bunkering, pipeline vandalism, piracy, sea robbery, drug trafficking, women trafficking, and arms smuggling, which no doubt, have practically fuelled and sustained insecurity in the region. As noted by Onuoha (2012), Africa's waters now represent one of the world's most dangerous waterways for vessels and their crew members in terms of pirate attacks.

Thus, available statistics from the International Maritime Bureau indicate a sub-regional spread in the attacks orchestrated by the maritime pirates in Africa with Somalia and Nigeria topping the list. Between 2001 and 2008, Central Africa recorded 10 pirates' attacks, East Africa had 274 attacks, Southern Africa stood at 21, West Africa recorded 370 attacks while African Island nations had only 8 (Nincic, 2009). Of the total of 683 pirates attacks on the African waterways, Somalia and Nigeria with record figures of 206 and 213 pirates attacks within this period represent 61.3% of the total attacks in Africa. Also, based on statistics from the International Maritime Bureau's (IMB) *Piracy and Armed Robbery against Ships Annual Reports*, there were a total of 1434 incidents of piracy in Africa between 2003 and 2011. Beginning from 2007, the number of attacks has been on the increase. It jumped from 61 in 2006 to 293 in 2011. The reason for this astronomical rise was the outbreak of piracy off the coast of Somalia and Gulf of Aden (Onuoha, 2012).

Meanwhile, the pattern of pirate attacks in Africa has tended to be different from that in Asia, with mariners more likely to be kidnapped for ransom and more likely to be victims of violence in African waters than in Asian waters. Of the 889 crew members taken hostage in 2008 worldwide by pirates, 815 were taken in Somalia and the Gulf of Aden. Pirates operating in Africa are more frequently armed with automatic weapons, rocket-propelled grenades (RPGs) and AK-47s than the

crowbars and knives more typical of Asian attacks: of the 139 attacks in 2008 in which guns were reported being used, 122 (87,8 per cent) occurred in Africa (120 in Nigeria and Somalia alone), compared with 12 in South-East Asia. Of the 32 crew members reported injured globally, 14 were in Nigeria. Of the 11 crew members reported killed by pirates in 2008, four were in Somalia and Nigeria (Nincic, 2009).

**c.   Ethnic Clashes in Africa**

Africa is a conglomeration of states characterized by presence of relatively autonomous nations in which major political issues are vigorously and or violently contested along the lines of the complex ethnic, religious, and regional divisions in the continent. By virtue of its multifaceted web of politically salient identities and history of chronic and seemingly intractable conflicts and instability, Africa can be rightly described as one of the most deeply divided continents in the international system. Ever since the achievements of independence by majority of African states between 1957 and 1963, the region has been engulfed in many protracted and deadly crises which can rightly be situated in the deep-seated acrimony and crass intolerance between and amongst multi ethnic nationalities in the region. Obioha (1999) posited that over 2/3 of the emergent African nation-states have undergone or are undergoing serious ethnic conflicts.  From the southern down to northern sub-regions, moving to the eastern and western geographical configurations of Africa, the existence of diverse nations with varied cultural, political and historical dispositions together with power contestations and perceived dominance among different elites that represented those groups have fueled and sustained civil strife in the region. According to Ikeazor (1996), Nigeria, Congo, Sudan, Sierra Leone, Ghana, South Africa, Rwanda, to mention but a few among others has been reduced to theatres of conflicts and ethnic struggles.

For instance, in 1967, Africa most populous nation Nigeria after a years orgy of ethnic conflict and violence, descended into a full scale civil war. At the end of the Nigeria civil war 1970, over a million lay dead, bombed, shot or starved to death. The Congolese civil war which broke out shortly before Nigeria had reduced the country to shamble and left it with one of the vile dictatorships the continent had known by the time it was over. Evidence of civil wars and bloody genocide are still in countries like Sudan, Liberia, Sierra Leone, Rwanda and Burundi to mention but a few. In Rwanda, half a million to a million people were slaughtered in a matter of months in middle of 1994 (Obioha, 1999). Contemporarily, the African countries continues to witness incessant ethnic crises which have assumed ugly dimension and has acquired the status of intractability amidst numerous policy options that have been initiated and applied to salvage the situations. The Burundi civil war claimed over 200,000 lives as at the year 2000. In Liberia, over 250, 000 lives were lost in the country's fourteen year civil war between 1990 and 2004. The same may also be said of Sierra Leone in which an estimated 200, 000 people were killed during the nation's civil war between 1991 and 2001. In Sudan, ethnic clashes involving Misseriya and the Rizeigat tribes claimed about 70 lives in 2008 while fighting between nomadic tribes killed around 900 people in 2009. Also, towards the end of May 2013, clashes

between Al-Gimir and Bani Halba left 64 people dead while 133 deaths were recorded in a clash between Awlad Omran and Al-Ziyoud groups of the Messiria tribe in 2014 (https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sudanese_nomadic_conflicts).

More recently, the ethnic clashes between Fulani herdsmen and other ethnic groups in Nigeria have assumed worrisome dimension to the extent that the Global Terrorism index designated the Fulani Militants as one of the deadliest terror group in 2015 (GTI, 2015). According to official report, between 2010 and 2013, Fulani militants killed about 80 people in total, but by 2014, they had killed 1,229 people. On February 2016, no fewer than 300 persons were killed following a series of attacks launched by Fulani herdsmen in Benue state. According to reports, several villages were razed with decomposing remains of people in sight. The number of internally displaced persons is also on the rise in these communities as people desert their homes for neighbouring towns (Egbedi, 2016). In the same vein, the Fulani herdsmen orchestrated an attack in a village called Nimbo in Enugu State that resulted to the death of more than 50 citizens in April 2016.

d.   **Violent Crimes in Africa**
Crime is as old as human society. This is borne out by the fact that, at all times in history, societies have had taboos, customs and laws designed to contain crime. Crime is an indicator of lawlessness and disintegration of social order. Such lawlessness has a debilitating effect on society. It disturbs its security and necessarily provokes a situation of insecurity. A United Nations report states, among other things, that crime:

> impairs the overall development of nations, undermines spiritual and material well being, compromises human dignity and creates a climate of fear and violence, which endangers personal security and erodes the quality of life *(United Nations,* 1992:6 quoted in Gimode, 2001)

Meanwhile, as the African continent offers ever more economic opportunities and unique places to visit, many of its burgeoning major cities are concurrently more susceptible to violent crimes which manifest in forms of homicide, armed robbery, kidnapping and rape, which no doubt, have undermined the safety of lives and property of both the nationals and foreigners. African societies are widely perceived to suffer from chronic levels of violent crimes. Since the mid-twentieth century down to the present epoch, it appears that the majority of the world's violent crimes were perpetrated in the continent. While crime itself is not new, the levels of armed violence that accompanies them is cause for alarm. There is growing apprehension among scholars and analysts that if the increasing waves of violent crimes that pervade the African region is not properly handled and checkmated, its far-reaching implication is capable of undermining human existentialism.

Disappointingly, attempts made by the African governments both at state, sub-regional and regional levels to address the persistent factors responsible for the

increasing violent crimes in the region seems to have achieved meager or no result. As a result, this development has further exacerbated the level of crimes in Africa as demonstrated in the table below showing international crime index in 2016:

**Table 1: International Crime Index 2016**

| S/N | Country | Crime Index | Safety Index |
|-----|---------|-------------|--------------|
| 1. | Venezuela | 84.44 | 15.56 |
| 2. | South Sudan | 82.32 | 15.68 |
| 3. | South Africa | 78.43 | 21.57 |
| 4. | Papua New Guinea | 77.58 | 22.42 |
| 5. | Honduras | 76.43 | 23.57 |
| 6. | Nigeria | 74.17 | 25.86 |
| 7. | Trinidad and Tobago | 72.60 | 27.40 |
| 8. | El Salvador | 72.04 | 27.96 |
| 9. | Brazil | 71.23 | 28.77 |
| 10. | Kenya | 69.49 | 30.51 |
| 11. | Bangladesh | 68.56 | 31.44 |
| 12. | Malaysia | 68.55 | 31.45 |
| 13. | Puerto Rico | 65.92 | 34.08 |
| 14. | Jamaica | 65.53 | 34.47 |
| 15. | Peru | 64.00 | 36.00 |
| 16. | Guatemala | 63.54 | 36.72 |
| 17. | Argentina | 63.28 | 36.72 |
| 18. | Dominican Republic | 63.25 | 36.75 |
| 19. | Namibia | 60.89 | 39.11 |
| 20. | Zimbabwe | 60.02 | 39.98 |
| 21. | Tanzania | 60.02 | 39.98 |
| 22. | Libya | 57.81 | 42.24 |
| 23. | Mongolia | 57.58 | 42.42 |
| 24. | Algeria | 57.58 | 42.42 |
| 25. | Costa Rica | 57.56 | 42.44 |
| 26. | Pakistan | 56.63 | 43.37 |
| 27. | Bolivia | 56.56 | 43.44 |
| 28. | Egypt | 56.53 | 43.47 |
| 29. | Somalia | 55.72 | 44.28 |
| 30. | Vietnam | 55.69 | 44.31 |

**Source:** http://www.numbeo.com/crime/rankings_by_country.jsp

Recall that crime index is an estimation of overall level of crime in a given country. Here, crime levels lower than 20 are considered as very low, crime levels between 20 and 40 are deemed to be low while crime rate within the range of 40 and 60 seen as moderately high. On the other hand, those between 60 and 80 are known to be high while those above 80 are very high (UNODC, 2012). Deriving from the

foregoing analysis together with the data illustrated in the above table, it is evident that African countries are occupying disgraceful positions in the international scene. Out of 30 countries with highest crime index, Africa has 10 countries, thereby justifying the popular axiom that the continent is home of violent crime.

Also, UNODC (2012) in its study of crime index in the international system released the following shocking information depicting the rate of homicide in different regions of the world and presented in table 2:

**Table 2: Homicide by Region in 2012**

| Region | Rate | Number of Deaths |
|--------|------|------------------|
| Africa | 17.0 | 169,105 |
| Americas | 15.4 | 144,595 |
| Asia | 3.1 | 127,120 |
| Europe | 3.5 | 24,025 |
| Oceania | 2,9 | 1,180 |

**Source:** UNDOC, 2013.

The data reflected in the table 2 represents the rates of homicide in the world. As can be glanced above, Africa has the highest rate of homicide with about 169,105 murder deaths recorded in the 2012 while Oceania has the least with 1,180 in the same year.

Similarly, for a comprehensive data showing the increasing rate of armed robbery in Africa, see the official information released by the UNDOC in 2015 and illustrated in the table below:

**Table 3: Armed Robbery Statistics in some selected African countries from 2010 to 2013**

| Country | 2010 | 2011 | 2012 | 2013 |
|---------|------|------|------|------|
| Algeria | 18,490 | 19,103 | 10,709 | 17,750 |
| Morocco | - | - | - | 14,857 |
| Burundi | 3,039 | 4,266 | 4,246 | 4,885 |
| Kenya | 2,843 | 3,262 | 3,262 | 3,551 |
| Nigeria | 2,240 | | 2,988 | 3,685 |
| Egypt | 694 | | 2673 | 2807 |
| Rwanda | 2072 | 1766 | 2617 | 2772 |

**Source:** https://knoema.com/atlas/topics/Crime-Statistics/Assaults-Kidnapping-Robbery-Sexual-Rape/Robbery-count

The report above is a clear manifestation of high incidence of armed robbery attacks across the continent of Africa. As captured above, the data from all the sampled countries deployed in this study shows that rate of armed robbery attacks in Africa have witnessed dramatic progression from 2010 to 2013, which no doubt have jeopardize the security situation in the continent.

The implication and deduction to be made from the foregoing section is that insecurity pervades the atmosphere, biosphere and hydrosphere of Africa; hence, justifying the popularly held view that continent is one of the most dangerous regions in the world.

**Interrogating the Nexus between Neoliberal Reforms and spate of Insecurity Challenges in Africa**

As noted in the introductory part of this paper, the world's problems have become increasingly complex and the preoccupation of the modern states is to initiate strategic and purposeful course of action suitable for resolving the pressing needs of the people. In a similar sense, governments all over the world exist to authoritatively take decisions on issues that bother on the challenges of men as they grapple with the reality of survival in an environment characterized by intense competition. One of the ways government has devised in resolving the identified problems is through policy making.

Policy making is a systematic and pragmatic step taken by government to address some of the issues channeled into the system by the citizens. Government's policies can take place at political, social and economic spheres of the society. Political policies are geared towards addressing issues relating to how collective bindings and decisions are reached in a state. Economic policies are meant to address the problems of unemployment, inflation, poverty, economic growth and development while social policies are designed to promote order and society in a setting. Issues such as maternal and child mortality, outbreak of diseases, social vices and social welfare, among others constitute variables that are addressed in the social policies. Worthy to note that of all the typologies of policies adumbrated above, the economic segment remains the chief decisive factor in determining the success and stability of other sectors of life. The economy is the life-wire of a society exerting preponderant influence on the social and political fields. Changes in the economy usually have trickle effects on the social and political structure of the society. This corresponds with Marx assertion that the mode of production (economy) in material life determines and conditions the social, political and intellectual life processes in general (Marx, 1859).

Viewed from this perspective, the emerging African leadership at the point of independence prioritized economic development as the panacea for achieving political and social stability and development. In this era, the ambitious African leaders were preoccupied with initiating pragmatic and workable economic policies and reforms that would not only rejuvenate a continent whose development has been retarded, disarticulated and distorted by the imperialistic policies of the West, but also enhance the overall development of the region. Indeed, the African leaders expressed deep reservation in following the capitalist path to development owing to the wide-held view that capitalism is associated with colonialism and that since the latter was inherently evil and exploitative so too was the former. Also, the western oriented economic prescription was seen as nothing but vestiges of imperialism which should be rid of in the continent. This decision culminated into the adoption and

experimentation of state-centric or socialist economic policy framework as the only road to Africa's prosperity.

State-centric or socialist economic approach to development connotes an ideological framework where the state determines what to produce, how to produce, when to produce and mode of distribution of material means of existence. The increasing demand for Socialism and the central planning model in general, and of public enterprises in particular, arose from the recognition that the public sector is a very important instrument at the disposal of the state for the achievement of sustainable development. Moreover, nationalist African leaders embraced a state controlled development strategy because it gave them the opportunity to control private and foreign enterprises, which they viewed as agents of exploitation and domination (Kumssa, 1996; Ozor, 2004). Against this backdrop, there was either partial or full-scale incorporation of socialist approach in the policy and planning of post-colonial countries in Africa. In Tanzania, the socialist backed economic policy was christened *Ujamaa* and revolves around provision of social welfare services and infrastructural amenities to the citizens. In Ghana the government of Nkrumah guided by *consciencism*, from 1961 to 1966, followed a socialist strategy with state ownership of industry and land. Based on a centrally planned economy, the Ghanaian government offered free or largely free primary, secondary and tertiary education, as well as other subsidized social services to the citizens. Zambia also, from 1964 to 1982, had a semi-socialist economy based on centralized planning with capital-intensive import substitution industries, to the neglect of agriculture. When Angola achieved independence in 1975, the government embraced a socialist development strategy with the collectivization of agriculture and partial nationalization of industry, except for the oil industry. Around the same time, Mozambique in its post-independence fervor adopted a plan that involved the government nationalizing assets in land (through state farms), banking, industry, healthcare, education, and housing. Others like Nigeria, South Africa and Cameroun were inclined to mixed economic approach.

Indeed, the socialist economic framework achieved relative success in some countries like Tanzania and Ghana. For instance, it was observed that Julius Nyerere's leadership of Tanzania commanded international attention and attracted worldwide respect for his consistent emphasis upon ethical principles as the basis of practical policies. Tanzania under Nyerere made great strides in vital areas of social development: infant mortality was reduced from 138 per 1000 live births in 1965 to 110 in 1985; life expectancy at birth rose from 37 in 1960 to 52 in 1984; primary school enrolment was raised from 25% of age group (only 16% of females) in 1960 to 72% (85% of females) in 1985 (despite the rapidly increasing population); the adult literacy rate rose from 17% in 1960 to 63% by 1975 (Cranford, 1999; Plaut, 2012; Legum & Mmari, 1995).

Meanwhile, the global economic recession of the 1980s resulting from the oil glut in the international market exposed Africa to economic hardship and near collapse of the economy. The collapse of the central planning system in the former Eastern bloc countries and the economic crisis of Africa have both fostered a mood

that has become increasingly hostile to the public sector and state intervention in the economy. Some analysts had raised questions about the effectiveness of public enterprises and their economic performance, arguing that public enterprises have not only failed to produce the required surplus to finance their operations, but that the state subsidies spent to maintain their activities have become a drain on government treasuries. It is argued that the centralized development strategy not only hindered economic growth but also created subtle bureaucratic system that became an impediment to development (Jones and Kumssa, 2000).

In this light, many African countries like Nigeria, Ghana, Tanzania, Angola, Mozambique, Uganda, Ethiopia, Namibia, and Kenya among others, embraced the neoliberal economic reforms under the nomenclature of Structural Adjustment Programmes in the 1980. Structural Adjustment Programme anchored on liberal economic philosophy and propagated by the International Monetary Fund and World Bank, was designed to limit the role of the African states in engineering their economies. It also aimed at reducing or removing external and internal imbalances and bringing long-term structural changes in the economy through institutional reforms that would guarantee sustainable growth. This can be achieved through the implementation of policy prescriptions like privatization of state-run programs, fiscal austerity and retrenchment, trade liberalization, subsidy withdrawal, deregulation, and currency devaluation. Nevertheless, the new millennium witnessed another brand of neoliberal economic reforms in Africa. According to Carmody (2007), the themes and values underlying the new development aid regime and architecture is 'partnership' between different actors; NGOs, donors and states. This infuses the discourse at different levels, such as social capital (local), Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers (national) and the United Nations Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) (global). It also informs African regional initiatives, particularly the New Partnership for African Development (NEPAD) launched in 2001, which is meant to dovetail with the PRSP and MDG agendas. In this regard, many African countries like Nigeria (through National Economic Empowerment and Development Strategy), Libya, Egypt, and Tunisia, among others have successfully transited to full-scale market economy.

More than three-decades after SAP was launched in Africa; it had not generated the desired sustainable development. On the contrary rising unemployment rate, poverty, growing income and social inequality are spreading in Africa amidst the much touted economic growth attributed to the economic reform. According to the studies by International Monetary Fund in 2013 and collaborated by other developmental agencies, Africa have the poorest people in the world as statistics has it that more than 75% of the world poorest countries are located in Africa (IMF, 2013). Among the 20 most poorest countries in the world (Democratic Republic of Congo, Liberia, Zimbabwe, Burundi, Eritrea, Central African Republic, Niger, Sierra Leone, Malawi, Togo, Madagascar, Afghanistan, Guinea, Mozambique, Ethiopia, Mali, Guinea Bissau, Comoros, Haiti and Uganda), Africa has 18 countries representing disgracefully in the world chart.

**Figure 1: Map of the World showing the 20 poorest countries in the world**
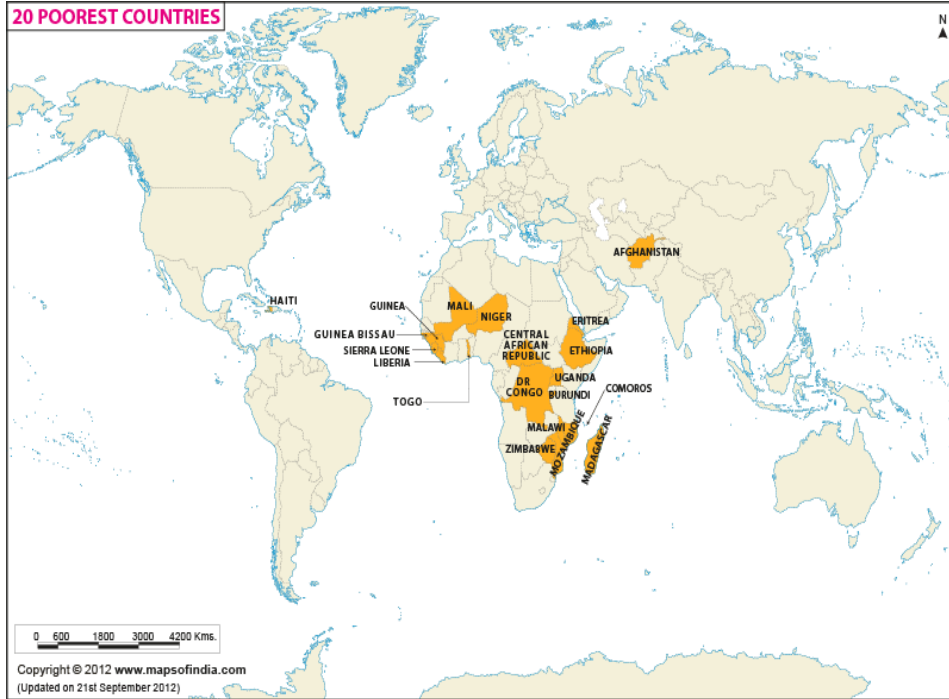


On the other hand, empirical studies have shown that African region has continued to record the highest infant mortality rate among other regions in the international system. This can be substantiated with the data presented by the World Health Organization.

| Table: Global Child Mortality Ratio between 2000 and 2011 | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Region** | **2000** | **2005** | **2010** | **2011** | **% in 2011** |
| Developed Regions | 127 | 111 | 99 | 58 | 1.4 |
| Northern Africa | 146 | 117 | 92 | 87 | 1.3 |
| Sub-Saharan Africa | 3,988 | 3,783 | 3,435 | 3,370 | 48.7 |
| Latin America and the Caribbean | 390 | 295 | 238 | 203 | 2.9 |
| Caucasus and Central Asia | 85 | 78 | 75 | 72 | 1.0 |
| Eastern Asia | 746 | 406 | 288 | 268 | 3.8 |
| Southern Asia | 3,366 | 2,786 | 2,422 | 2,341 | 33.9 |
| South Eastern Asia | 514 | 433 | 328 | 312 | 4.5 |
| Western Asia | 187 | 165 | 158 | 152 | 2.2 |
| Oceania | 15 | 14 | 13 | 13 | 0.2 |
| India | 1,010 | 792 | 706 | 686 | 9.9 |

| China | 30 | 16 | 17 | 17 | 0.2 |
|-------|-----|------|------|------|-------|
| **World** | **9,562** | **8,198** | **7,148** | **6,914** | **100.0** |

**Source**: UNICEF Child Mortality Rate, 2012

Meanwhile, results from the Human Development Index studies of the United Nations Development Programme have shown that Africa remains the only continent with low Human Development. The studies are presented below:

| Table: World Human Development Index as at 2012 | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | **Human Development Index (Value)** | **Life Expectancy at Birth (Years)** | **Mean Years of Schooling (Years) 2012** | **GNI Per Capita (2012 PPP S) Value** | **Non-Income HDI Value (2012)** |
| **Regions** | | | | | |
| Arab State | 0.652 | 71.0 | 6.0 | 8,317 | 0.658 |
| East Asia & Central Asia | 0.683 | 72.7 | 7.2 | 6,874 | 0.712 |
| Europe & Central Asia | 0.771 | 71.5 | 10.4 | 12,243 | 0.801 |
| Latin America & the Caribbean | 0.741 | 74.7 | 7.8 | 10,300 | 0.770 |
| South Asia | 0.558 | 66.2 | 4.7 | 3,343 | 0.577 |
| Sub-Saharan Africa | 0.475 | 54.9 | 4.7 | 2,010 | 0.479 |
| **World** | **0.694** | **70.1** | **7.5** | **10,184** | **0.690** |

**Source**: UNDP, 2013.

**Analysis of Human Development Index Group:**

| HDI Groups | HDI | Life Expectancy | Mean Years of Schooling | Expected Years of Schooling | GNI Per Capita | Non-income HDI |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Very high human development | 0.905 | 80.1 | 11.5 | 16.3 | 33,391 | 0.927 |
| High human development | 0.758 | 73.4 | 8.8 | 13.9 | 11,501 | 0.781 |
| Medium human development | 0.640 | 69.9 | 6.3 | 11.4 | 5,428 | 0.661 |
| Low human development | 0.466 | 59.1 | 4.2 | 8.5 | 1,633 | 0.487 |

Similarly, the study jointly coordinated by the United Nations on AIDS and the World have revealed that more than 70% of people living with the dreaded HIV/AIDS reside in Africa. This can be substantiated from the table below:

| Table: Global Distribution of People Living With HIV/AIDS in 2013 | | |
|---|---|---|
| **Region** | **No. of People With HIV/AIDS** | **%** |
| Sub-Saharan Africa | 24,715,000 | 70.61 |
| Asia & Pacific | 4,800,000 | 13.71 |
| North America, Western and Central Europe | 2,300,000 | 6.57 |
| Latin America | 1,600,000 | 4.57 |
| Eastern Europe & Central Asia | 1,100,000 | 3.14 |
| Caribbean | 250,000 | 0.71 |
| Middle East & North Africa | 235,000 | 0.67 |
| **World** | **35,000,000** | **100** |

**Source**: UNAIDS and WHO, 2013
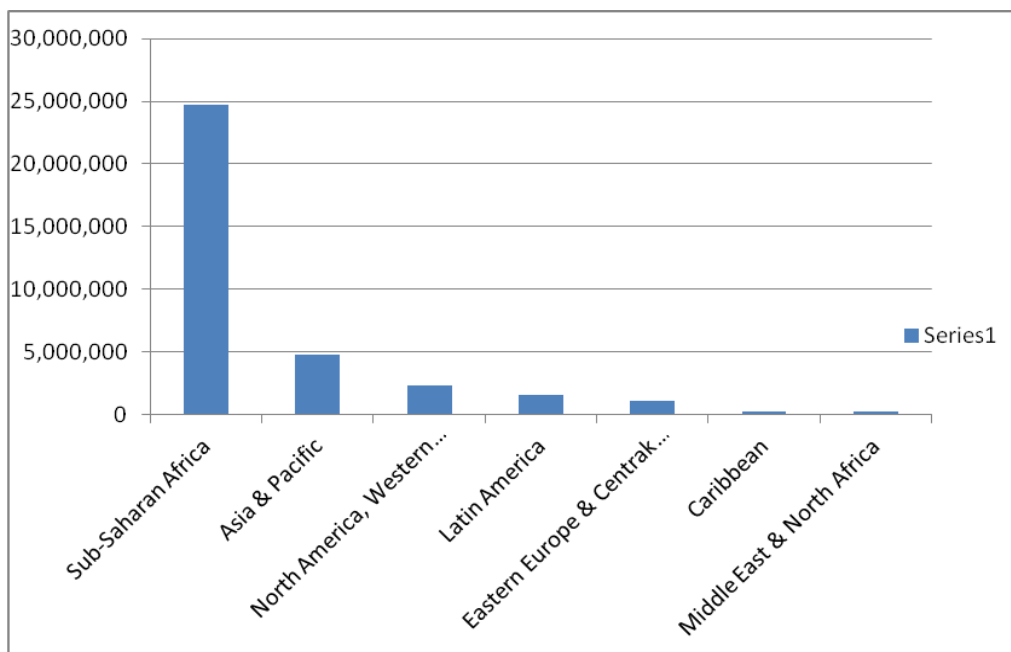


On the other hand, over the years, it was observed that Africa, despite its enormous material and human resources, has been consistently marginalized in the international political economy as its share in the global trade continue to decrease significantly, making it the least among regions in the international system. Data from the World Trade Organization indicated as at 1948 down to 1970s, Africa's share stood at 8%. However, the table below will show her present share in the international trade.

**Table : Global Contributions to the International Trade 2002 and 2013**

| Region | Share in 2002 (%) | Share in 2012 (%) |
|---|---|---|
| North America | 15.8 | 13.2 |
| South and Central America | 3.0 | 4.2 |
| Europe | 45.9 | 35.6 |
| Africa | 2.4 | 3.5 |
| Asia | 26.1 | 31.5 |
| Commonwealth of Independent States | 2.6 | 4.5 |
| Middle East | 2.1 | 7.5 |
| World | 100 | 100 |

**Source**: World Trade Organization, 2013

In the same vein, an appraisal of Africa's trade unraveled an unusual trend which has had adverse implications on the economic growth and development of the region. Empirical studies have shown that Africa's intra trade has been on decline while significant results have been achieved in external trade. Intra regional trading has been noted to be catalyst that stimulates employment generation, revenue generation and economic development. In this case, African trade has been externally oriented, thereby impacting negatively on her development. This is presented in the table below.

**Table: Showing Africa's Trade with the World from 2007 to 2011**

| Region | Percentage |
|---|---|
| Europe | 70 |
| Asia | 50 |
| Latin America/Caribbean | 21 |
| Intra-African | 11 |

**Source**: World Trade Organization: 2012

Meanwhile, the global poverty rating appears to have placed Africa in the league of most impoverished nations of the world as empirical studies have shown that majority of her population lives in extreme poverty despite the much touted Millennium Development Goals which claimed to reduce the incidence from 1990 to 2014. A critical review of the poverty distribution in the international system will rationalize our position.

**Table: Showing Distribution of Poverty in the World as at 2015**

| Continent | Number of People Living in Extreme Poverty |
|---|---|
| Asia | 551,000,000 |
| Africa | 436,000,000 |
| South America | 15,000,000 |
| North America | 5,900,000 |

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Europe | 300,000 | |
| Oceania | 50,000 | |

Retrieved from www.ourworldindata.org/data/growth-and-distribution-of-prosperity/world-poverty/ on 05/10/2015

**Table Showing the population and GDP of Continents in the World in 2013**

| Region | Population | GDP (Trillion $) |
|---|---|---|
| Asia | 4,164,252,000 | 18.5 |
| Africa | 1,022,234,000 | 2.6 |
| Europe | 738,199,000 | 24.4 |
| North America | 542,056,000 | 20.3 |
| South America | 392,555,000 | 4.2 |
| Oceania | 29,127,000 | 1.8 |
| Antarctica | 5,000 | (n/a) |

**Source**: World Bank, 2014.

As a corollary of the information illustrated in the above tables, it is apt to demystify the competing views and explanations in relation to the intensification of insecurity in Africa. Firstly, within the mainstream of intellectual inquiries, there have been studies that established the nexus between poor governance and spate of insecurity in Africa (Voz di Paz and Interpeace 2010; Anah, 2014). These scholars implicated non-emergence of genuine leadership, human right violations and the unjust social formation as the underpinning factor fuelling and renewing security challenges in Africa. According to this school of thought, bad governance and corruption are deep-rooted in the social, political, judicial and economic system of Africa, thereby, leading to bitter pent-up feelings among the local population which are sometimes expressed through violence (Voz di Paz & Interpeace, 2010). However, while we may not out-rightly relegate the above view held by scholars, we have to reiterate here that this unilateral perspective is inadequate to explain the increasing insecurity in the African region. To us, the institutionalization of neoliberal reforms in Africa paved way for primitive capital accumulation which negates good governance and create opportunity for the disadvantaged segment of the population to ventilate their anger against social and economic injustices. In rationalizing our viewpoint, Agbaje & Roberts (2002:154) observed that: the post independence leaders in Africa not only personalized power but also privatized the state for the purpose of primitive accumulation, clientelism, repression and all forms of opposition. Instead of using the state for initiating development, African leaders utilized it as a vehicle for terrorizing the citizenry, thereby leading to the disengagement of the populace from the public realm.

Secondly, there has been popularly held views by scholars that implicated unemployment, poverty, social inequalities and increasing illiteracy as the principal drivers and triggers of insecurity in Africa (Akande & Okuwa, 2009; Awake, 2012; Akwara *et al*, 2013). According to Awake (2012), about 90% (percent) of all

violence-related deaths have occurred in the world's less prosperous nations; and the poorer neighborhoods of cities are often high-crime areas. Similarly, Akande and Okuwa (2009) posited that youth unemployment and poverty are playing a major role in African conflict experiences. The prevailing socio-economic environment is enticing youths to turn to war, crime and violence as a means of livelihood. However, contrary to this perspective, it is apt to state that while we may not relegate poverty and unemployment as responsible for the thriving insecurity in Africa, we, however, contend that the explanation remains incomplete as it failed to unravel the hidden cause of the aforementioned socio-economic defects in the country. Undoubtedly, the emergence of terror and pirate groups in Africa can be located in the nature and character of neoliberal economic frameworks which tactically encouraged the state to abandon its statutory and contractual duties/obligations. By retrenching workers through the privatization programmes, government has succeeded in retrenching officials who eke out means of livelihood through the medium, and exposed them to the vagaries of unemployment, poverty and poor health condition. By emphasizing on withdrawal of the state and drastic cut in the budget provision of the educational sector, health and other social safety nets, the end product remains food crisis, decayed infrastructural facilities, poor health care system and decimation of the educational sector. Neoliberal economic reforms in Africa created way for negligence of agricultural sector, deindustrialization, public sector retrenchment, decayed infrastructural facilities and debased educational system. Naturally, when people are deprived of their means of survival, there is tendency for violent reactions.

Thirdly and most fundamentally, the heterogeneous composition of African continent, according to some scholars, has been adduced as driver propelling insecurity in the region. Thus, Eminue (2004:19) and Osaghae (1992) submit that of all the factors that triggers insecurity, multi-ethnicity is the most frequently associated with conflict. Furthermore, Osaghe (1992:214) noted that:

> Given the fact that ethnic cleavages are already deep and political discrimination against minority groups is widely practiced in Africa, ethnicity cannot but be a great potential for separatist activities. Ethnicity has bred the feelings of suspicion, hatred and distrust among members of the various ethnic groups in Africa and has no doubt re traded political integration in Africa.

Conversely, we assert that it is the authoritarian character of neo-liberal economic reforms that watered ground for rent-seeking behaviour among politicians. This invariably, created room for struggle among the elites to capture power for self-service rather than the good of the majority, thus, leading to the alienation of the people. Also, it is an objective fact that neoliberal policies have tended to produce, on the one hand, weaker states, and on the other, deeper poverty and social exclusion for (informal) workers, peasants and women in Africa. Where there are scant or shrinking economic resources, the state may become the primary locus of

accumulation. This may politicize ethnicity and make politics a zero sum game. Excluded ethnicities and regions may have incentives to try to dissociate or secede from the central state. Together these conditions have sown the seeds of widespread economic insecurity and ethnic division, and struggle to control the state as a site of extraction, as opposed to development strategy-building. However, it is also important to recognize that the so-called new wars are a continuation of a historical pattern of plunder of the African continent by outsiders and elites, rather than a novel feature of neoliberal globalization

**Conclusion and Prognosis**

The paper unfolded the core factor that impel and sustain insecurity in the continent of Africa. The impetus for the study was largely due to the existence of diverse explanations that have proved incapable of diagnosing the perennial challenges of insecurity in the continent, thereby leading to the peripheralization of knowledge. In the course of this study, we identified the institutionalization of neoliberal economic reforms as the root cause of security. We noted that the intensification of insecurity in Africa can be attributed to the nature and character of neoliberal economic reforms which tactically alienated the African states from providing the basic means of survival to citizens, hence, pushing the poor and defenseless segment to the abyss of greater deprivation. This development according to the study was responsible for the emergence and resurgence of the terror organizations, pirate groups, ethnic based militias, and armed robbers, who were disenchanted with the harsh economic policies and exploiting the platform to vent their anger on the state, which no doubt has worsened the security situation in Africa.

As a corollary of the above, the paper calls for policy reassessment with a view to initiating a policy framework that will prioritize development of the productive forces, reintroduction of welfare programs, industrialization, strengthening of state institutions and massive investment in agriculture in Africa. Secondly, the paper recommend for the exploration of regional integration as the alternative and viable development strategy for advancing development in Africa. Thirdly, we upheld the non-kinetic approach to the management of insecurity problems as espoused by Okolie & Nwobodo (2016).

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