

Security and environmental management in Africa

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Across the globe, security, and environmental problems, manifest in forms of extraction of natural resources, waste disposal, criminal activities, climate change, erosion, drought, violence and sudden outbreak of pandemics. Security and environmental stability underlie the smooth running of societies, including that of Africa. The impact of peaceful and sustainable environment on the socio-economic development of Africa has been well-documented (Swatuk, 2004). This positive contribution has made security and environmental issues a topical one in the international system. And while the connection between security and environmental management has been established and documented (Deudney, 1990), Dalby (2002b) argued that

environmental issues cannot be separated from the discourse of global security, considering the recurrent problems of climate change and "many situations with a vaguely environmental designation." Currently, consequences of climate change and nefarious human activities (such as banditry, terrorism, and insurgency) have made environmental management become major global political discussions.

Environmental management is a veritable means or tool through which African governments and states, can achieve sustainable development goals (SDGs), without it, Africa may find it very difficult to achieve economic growth and development (Adekunle et al., 2020).

Although, globalization continues to see technology transfer into Africa, most African countries, especially the poorer ones, still lack the financial capacity to procure technology needed to combat insecurity, mitigate climate change, and effectively manage their environment (Swatuk, 2004). Poor financial capacity of some African countries has made them prone to insecurity and environment crises. These crises range from the problems of oil spillage, gas flaring, and resource curse due to incessant violence in oil-producing areas in Nigeria and Angola to cattle rustling in Mali and South Sudan and malnutrition in Somalia, Ethiopia, South Sudan, Sudan, and Uganda, the African environmental problems persist, causing huge numbers of deaths in the region (WHO, 2014). Relatedly, as it has been discovered that Africa's development is linked to industrialization, this discovery has made Africa suffer from carbon emissions as the trajectory of these emissions has doubled (Jolley & Douglas 2014). Importantly, African countries, while pursuing inclusive growth through poverty alleviation, neglect to pay adequate attention to how security and environmental problems impinge on growth strategies (Ibrahim, 2020).

It is worthy of note to understand that food security occupies a substantial place in the priorities of African citizens. As such, citizens' consumption patterns in terms of what goes into their mouths and what they inhale play a significant role in human security (Prilleltensky 2012). Environmental pollution due to the flaring of gases and chemical releases by companies into the seas and rivers has all contributed to human health hazards in most African societies. Human lives have been short and burdened with unimaginable health complications due to the inhalation of bad and deadly substances from the atmosphere. This constitutes serious security threats to human lives in Africa, and the herbal solution, which most African rural dwellers rely on to manage or treat some of these diseases as a conventional source of medicine, has become an illusion due to the quest for massive deforestation to aid urbanization in Africa (Ibrahim, 2020; Adekunle et al., 2020). This goes to show that while Africa is overburdened with security and environmental problems, it lacks the managerial capacity to resolve them. This might have led to the conclusion that most African countries lack comprehensive management strategy to address security and environment

problems (Adekunle et al. 2020) and Gu et al (2020).

The environmental management challenges in Africa are partly connected to the collapse and erosion of native intelligence and indigenous local knowledge systems (Gu et.al., 2020). Before the scramble for deforestation or forest mining in Africa, African forests had been synonymous with security, affluence, status, influence, wealth, power, and the sacredness of the African people (Shackleton et al., 2007). All these attributes gradually disappeared and were replaced with more ravaging environmental and security issues because Africa lacks an Afrocentric environmental management strategy. African governments, one way or another, has suffered more from depending on the Eurocentric strategy to resolve her environmental and security challenges. Although, in today's international governance systems, partnership for effective management at the most general level involves shared negotiations and bargaining for societal socio-economic gains, it therefore becomes highly important to ensure that environmental management strategy is socially amenable and environmentally fair. For Africa to achieve her goal of the

African 2063 Agenda (Afrocentric Africa), a pragmatic search for robust policy formulation strategies to address security and environmental problems becomes apt and imperative (Ibrahim, 2020). Africa needs to strengthen her social institutions in charge of security and environmental sustainability to be able to achieve sustainable peace and security.

Government is expected to provide security and welfare of citizens. This is done through the aid of various institutions that extend to the public realm (Mbhalati 2014). These institutions include main security forces such as the police, paramilitary agencies, and military and state security services; authorities in the parliament performing oversight functions on security and environmental management, judges in the judiciary system, who serve justice to the lingering issue of land grabs, encroachment of farms, cattle rustling, among others. Government, through these institutions, have adequately responded to curb and control insecurity in some African states (Olukotun, 2016). However, evidence shows that insecurity and environmental problems persist in most African countries, despite the efforts of these designated institutions (Dambazau, 2007). The failure of these institutions to

effectively manage security and environmental crises in Africa, is due to overbearing influence and interference of government into the affairs of these institution.

One other source of threat to the environment is rural-urban migration. The influx of people from the rural area into the urban area, congests the urban areas (Frumkin, 2002). Congestion comes with serious security problems such as high rate of crimes, the use of banned substances, violence, shortage of basic amenities, and scarcity of idle and undeveloped lands (Ibrahim, 2020). The natural cycles of rainwater in most African urban centers are disrupted from soaking into the ground with the growing number of houses and bridges, as well as road construction projects that edify major cities across Africa (Friedl & Wüest, 2002). Congestion and shortage of basic essential services are major environmental problems in some African countries. It has resulted into cases of violence, opportunistic crimes, violent protests, and in some severe cases, damage of properties and water scarcity. Evidence shows that rural-urban migration, is partly the cause of water scarcity in some African states (Holtz & Golubski, 2021). Water scarcity is a

serious environmental problem that require effective management and distribution. However, Holtz and Golubski (2021) opined that the reason why water is scarce in some African countries is since African countries lack the capacity to understand the water risk of the continent. This understanding is a requirement of good management of water resources that can bolster climate resilience In Africa.

It is a long-established fact, that violence or conflict is one of the factors inherent in the environment, partly due to human or natural activities (Bradlow et al. 2011). Humanly, the environment has been affected by the inappropriate disposal of waste, sudden fire outbreaks due to human negligence, open defecation, and extraction of natural resources, among others (Hewitt 2013). Erosion, flood, drought, famine, and an increased or reduced sea level are some of the natural factors affecting the environment (Hewitt 2013). While some continents have effectively devised mitigation strategies to manage these environmental hazards, which, in most cases, have resulted in violence and crises in most African countries, Africa creates conducive conditions for security and environmental problems to fester through

mismanagement, poor policy strategy, impunity, and a lack of governance and managerial capacity to address security and environmental-related problems (Barasa et al., 2017; Foley et al., 2011). Evidence shows that most African leaders lack the political will to effectively mitigate security issues emanating from changes in the environment (Sowman & Wynberg, 2014). While other continents have acquired technologies and managerial skills to prevent and counter any environmental and security threats, most African countries still rely on developed nations for help and assistance to combat harsh environmental threats. This has made most African countries resort to reactive instead of proactive action to combat security and environmental threats. In resolving these security and environmental ambiguities, ordinances against environmental degradation by African governments are important and needed to be adequately enforced (Ibrahim, 2020). It becomes adequate to rely on and utilize data and methodology to be able to lay empirical credence to the institution-environmental sustainability discourse to inform policy direction and well-researched interventions for effective security and environmental management in Africa. Africa needs its own well-

established and comprehensive plan for security and environmental management rooted in African indigenous knowledge and not just any westernized, imposed approach, which may further aggravate security and environmental concerns.

It is evidently clear that for a secure and environmentally safe Africa, African governments need to be more engaged in innovative environmental management strategies (Hewitt, 2013). One of the major goals of the government is to protect lives by securing the environment and ensuring a clean, safe environment free of crises and hazardous ecological footprints. How the government can effectively enforce innovative environmental management practices remains largely unclear and will require further scientific interrogations and research. This is because there is very little evidence to show that African governments understand and are committed to security and environmental management. It is very difficult to understand whether the government genuinely prosecutes and punishes perpetrators of insecurity and polluters of our environment. Thus, the theme of this special edition titled "Security and Environmental Management in Africa" comes to the fore. In this special edition,

scholars note that Africa's security and sustainable environment could only be achieved through robust investment in innovative environmental management.

In the first article in this special edition of the journal, "Managing the disabling environment in the South African secondary schooling system to promote safety and security," the author critiques the inability of the South African government to provide adequate safety and security in public secondary schools. In an attempt to re-awakening the South African government to its role of providing adequate security in the country, including public secondary schools, the author provided adequate information on what it takes to stop learners from compromising safety and security measures in public secondary schools in South Africa. The author concludes that a restorative approach to safety and security is an innovative management strategy that can be deployed by the government and other critical stakeholders to enhance tight security in public secondary schools.

Recognizing the link between security and nation-building, Raquel A. Asuelime, in "Military Legitimacy Question in Democratic Transitions of Zimbabwe and Algeria," examined the nexus between

security and nation-building in Zimbabwe and Algeria. Using a comparative content analysis method, the findings showed that the two countries were similar in terms of their prevailing situations, which compromised efforts to legitimize governments in both countries. This calls for the fact that the military variables in the transition processes and civilians in the uprisings that led to the fall of the long-term leaders of Zimbabwe and Algeria highlight the vulnerability of the state in search of a sustainable nation-state. It is recommended that African countries put in place mechanisms to reduce military interventions in politics, which are usually hinged on the traditional brief of defending the state, while at the same time preventing the temptations of the same military from intruding into the political arena no matter their relationship with the independent struggles of their countries.

Examining the theoretical and empirical linkages between insurgency and natural resource extraction in Nigeria, Ojatorotu Victor argued that because of the weakness of the Nigerian state and the lack of political will to address the underlying causes of insurgency, armed insurgents have taken control of many of the country's extractive processes. The

author observed that massive resource theft creates an allure for the spread of theaters of insurgency across the country and that it has partly been responsible for Nigeria's abysmal oil production per day and earnings from oil, despite Nigeria's increased production quota by OPEC due to the ongoing Russia-Ukraine war. The author concludes that ungoverned artisanal resource extraction remains a source of insecurity in Nigeria but recommends that strong political will is required to effectively manage insurgency and its drivers in Nigeria.

Renell Chetty, Andrisha Beharry-Ramraj, and Pfano Mashau considered the impact analysis of climate change on entrepreneurial behavior towards business sustainability in South Africa. The authors provided a South African perspective on entrepreneurial business sustainability and an analysis of business sustainability using a qualitative research method that was sourced through desktop reviews and analysis. Findings of the study showed that security and environmental problems, influence entrepreneurial decisions. The study concludes that through adequate legislation and machinery for implementation, pollution, gas emissions,

and industrial waste would be better controlled and checked.

Kelechi Johnmary Ani, in "COVID-19 Lockdown and Domestic Violence in Nigeria," discussed how COVID-19 forced national governments to come up with laws and government policies of lockdown, preventing or reducing physical contacts as well as social gatherings. Consequently, the citizenry was forced to stay at home in their different countries in an attempt to reduce the pandemic threats. Indeed, the COVID-19 pandemic is a security challenge, even though it is health-related. The author concludes that the lockdown triggered domestic violence across African countries, as many husbands, wives, and children were victims of the negative force of lockdown. Pertinent recommendations, such as increased gender-based empowerment and consultation with psychologists and counselors, as well as civil society-sponsored media programs on the post-lockdown healing process, were proffered to end domestic violence amid the COVID-19 pandemic.

In discussing the government's response as one of the strategies for managing

security and environmental crises in Africa, Bello, Agunyai, and Amusan considered armed non-state actors, insecurity, and the government's response to banditry in Nigeria. The authors examined how the idiosyncrasies of the Nigerian president stimulated the surge in insecurity and the government's response to banditry. They concluded that despite the military background of the Nigerian President, the country still remains largely unsafe due to the weak political will of the country's head of state. The authors identified strong political will as one of the components of effective security and environmental management in Africa.

Recognizing the impact of the Russia-Ukraine war at a time when Africa is gradually recovering from the harsh effects of the COVID-19 pandemic, Thobejane, in "Human Mobility, Covid-19, and Survival in Africa: Revisiting the Coronavirus pandemic as the Russia-Ukraine war rages," investigated the aftereffects of the COVID-19 pandemic and the ravages of the war between Ukraine and Russia in Africa and argues that while Africa is yet to fully recover from the socio-economic repercussions of the COVID-19, it is ravaged by the consequences of the war. The article uses

an archival method of collecting the data that is documented in books, articles, and other sources to seek mitigating factors to the COVID-19 pandemic and the war in Ukraine. Contrary to theoretical expectations, the findings showed that Africa needs a new crop of leaders who are more driven by the development of the continent in areas of economics, governance, and self-reliance. The policy implication is that Africa's capacity to manage its security and environmental crises largely depends on strong-willed leadership.

Understanding insecurity from the perspectives of terrorism and insurgency, Abioro and Mutambara in "Understanding Insecurity in Nigeria from the Prism of Terrorism and Insurgency in the Fourth Republic" sought to empirically verify how insecurity is caused by terrorism and insurgency. The study specifically examined the effects and strategies adopted to combat the activities of terrorists and insurgents in Nigeria. Drawing on conflict and political economy theories, the authors argued that economic disenfranchisement, ideological orientations, and religious convictions have mostly influenced the support base for terrorism and insurgency, thus making the situation

intractable. The authors concluded that while the security situation has improved in the southern region due to the timely response and approach adopted by the federal government, the same cannot be

said about the northern region, which still consists of ideologically brainwashed sympathizers of the members of the groups.

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