

## GLOBAL POLITICAL AND ECONOMIC RELATIONS IN THE NEW WORLD ORDER: THE IMPLICATION FOR THE INTERNATIONAL SECURITY SYSTEM

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### Abstract

*The new world order of global peace and security that was envisioned to follow the Cold War era has remained a mirage. The post-cold war era has continued to witness an intensification and globalization of security challenges which were predominantly localized during the Cold War era. Insecurity has become a major characteristic of global relations and there is no continent that is spared from insecurity problems. Despite every measure that has been taken by international organizations and their various agencies, global insecurity, including intra states, inter states conflicts and terrorism, keeps intensifying by the day. The study employed the descriptive analysis of secondary data to establish a relationship between growing inequities and rising violence in the New World Order. The study is premised on the dependency, frustration-aggression and human needs theories. It ascribed the problem of insecurity in the New World (dis)Order to the deep inequities in global relations, especially in political and economic relations between the global North and the global South. It averred that if the global system is not restructured to promote political and economic equity, fraternity and liberty, international security will continue to be an illusion.*

**Keywords:** Global economic relations, global political relations, globalisation, international security system, new world order.

### Introduction

With the dissolution of the Soviet Union (SU) and the subsequent end of the Cold War in the early 1990s, it was envisaged that the world would be ushered into a new dispensation of global peace and security (Adenuga, 2003; Willett, 2001). This was not to be, as global insecurity which was subsumed in the rivalry between the United States of America (USA)

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and the then Soviet Union (SU) in the Cold War era, rose to the fore. In the wake of the Cold War, violence has risen to alarming dimensions and has ultimately become a major currency in inter and intra states relations. Emphasis on the use or the threat of force, at both global and national levels, became a major pre-condition for bargaining and arriving at compromises. Decisions reached were hinged on the perceived capacities and capabilities of actors to use force to gain desired results (Adenuga, 2003).

Several researches and studies have shown that perceived injustice based on unequal access to resources and political patronage lie at the root of the problem (Adenuga, 2008; Adenuga, 2012). Despite the claim that democracy is the governing ideology in the global system, the opposite is really the case. The United Nations (UN), which is the umbrella body for global politics, is essentially an oligarchy of the permanent members of its Security Council which has rendered it almost ineffectual in maintaining international peace and security. The Bretton Woods institutions, that is, the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund (IMF), also favour developed countries over and above the less developed countries. At the national level, most democracies are in fact elitist in nature and thus, breed a culture of animosity and violence (Adenuga, 2019). Rising ethnic, religious and political conflicts that bedevil various sections of the global society have been traced to growing inequities between the industrialized countries of the global North and the developing countries of the global South. Given the fact that the global North and global South divide became more pronounced at the end of the Cold War, it may well account for rising insecurity in the global system (Adenuga, 2003; Pieterse, 2002).

Where insecurity prevails, peace becomes a rare commodity and development stagnates (Ahmed, 2004; Willett, 2001). This is the reality in the global system and it is thus imperative that a quest to locate the reasons for the prevalence of insecurity in the global system is conducted in order to stem and roll back the tide of violence so that the desired world order of peace and security can materialize. The main objective of this study is to analyze the effect of the lopsided relationships between the global North and the global South on the international security system.

The study is made up of six sections. Section one is the introductory part. In section two, literature review of the main concepts, the New World Order, the International Security System and Globalisation, is conducted. Section three gives the theoretical foundations of the study which include the dependency, frustration-aggression and human needs theories. Section four examines global political and economic relations in the New World Order while section five discusses growing inequities and rising violence in the international community. The sixth section concludes and makes recommendations needed for maintaining security in the international community.

## **Conceptual Framework**

### **The New World Order**

To fully understand the concept of the 'New World Order', there is the need to delve into the nature of the old order it displaced. At the end of the Second World War in 1945, the victorious Allied Powers decided to set up an international organization which would ensure the prevention of the re-occurrence of the loss of lives and properties that characterized the war. To this end, the United Nations (UN) was established to maintain international peace and security through:

- a. Effective collective measures for the prevention and removal of threats to international peace
- b. Suppression of acts of aggression or other breaches of the peace.
- c. To settle by peaceful means and in conformity with the principles of justice, international disputes and situations which might lead to a breach of peace (Peters 2000)

Thus, states join the UN on the belief that it would create the necessary conditions for international peace and security. However, this could not be achieved as the intense rivalry between the two major super powers that emerged after Second World War, that is, the United States of America (USA) and the Soviet Union (SU) made impossible an effective collective security system. The SU preached the ideology of communism as the needed political and economic system for the liberation of mankind from the shackles of oppression and she vigorously attempted to 'save' mankind by taking this ideology to every corner of the world. The USA, on the other hand, championed the cause of capitalism and sought to curtail and roll back the frontiers of communism in the international arena. As there was no middle ground between these two ideologies, the world got polarized into two ideological camps VIZ the USA led Western bloc of capitalism and the SU led Eastern bloc of communism. Williams (1976) explained that the rivalry between these two blocs was called a 'cold' war because the rivalry was sufficiently intense to be termed a war but that instead of tanks and guns, its principal weapons were propaganda, economic aids and diplomatic maneuvers. The cold war greatly hampered the capacity of the UN to discharge its functions as issues were often viewed from the lenses of ideological bias and this prevented effective collective security (Peters, 2000).

However, in the late 1980s, the SU gradually but steadily discarded its communist stance and embarked on a political and economic reformation designed to turn it into a capitalist stronghold. With the formal dissolution of the SU in 1991, the world entered a new order which was envisaged to promote and enhance effective collective security. It was opined that the new world order would enhance the relationship between peace, development, and democracy. It was also predicted that more focus will be placed on mutual assurance and cooperative security (Adenuga, 2003). Falk (1995) also posited that the new world order will not only witness the development of reliable institutions for the settlement of disputes but will also enable a development of social, political and economic dignity for all people.

The first Gulf War, the first major international incident after the end of the cold war, fought between 2 August 1990 and 28 February 1991, also raised the hopes of a more secured and peaceful new world order. When Saddam Hussein, the Iraqi dictator, sent the Iraqi army to annex Kuwait, a next door oil rich neighbor, the USA was able to organize a coalition of states under the auspices of the UN to liberate Kuwait. This would have been impossible if it were to be during the Cold War era as Russia would have used her veto power to oppose UN's involvement in the war. Though Russia did not join in the coalition against Iraq, she however gave her assent to the crusade to dislodge Iraqi soldiers from Kuwait by condemning the occupation of Kuwait by Iraqi forces. Based on this experience, the hope for a new world of interdependency among nations prompted the then American President, George Bush, to declare, in his address to the American Congress in September 1990, that:

... Out of these troubled times, our fifth objective—a new world order—can emerge: a new era—freer from the threat of terror, stronger in the pursuit of justice, and more secure in the quest for peace. An era in which the nations of the world, East and West, North and South, can prosper and live in harmony. A hundred generations have searched for this elusive path to peace, while a thousand wars raged across the span of human endeavor. Today that new world is struggling to be born, a world quite different from the one we've known. A world where the rule of law supplants the rule of the jungle. A world in which nations recognize the shared responsibility for freedom and justice. A world where the strong respect the rights of the weak (The Miller Center, 2015).

From the above, it becomes clear that there was a burning hope that the end of the Cold War had ushered in the much awaited and anticipated el-dorado of global peace and security.

### **The International Security System**

The American Heritage Dictionary of the English Language (2011) defines security as 'freedom from risk or danger'. The UNDP report (1994) sees it as safety from threats such as hunger, disease and repression. The US Department of Defense (2005) describes it as a condition that results from the establishment and maintenance of protective measures that ensure a state of inviolability from hostile acts or influences. The international security system can thus be described as conditions that ensure that the members of the global community are safe from risk or danger.

In the Cold War era, mutual deterrence provided the condition of relative safety in the world as the two super powers embarked on an arms race, which had to do with development and stock piling of weapons of mass destruction which were capable of destroying the whole world. The fact that each of the two countries could destroy, not only themselves, but also the entire world essentially deterred them from direct confrontations and made peaceful negotiations more attractive than violent confrontations. However, with the dissolution of the Soviet Union and the triumph of capitalism, it was believed that the acquisition or the use of destructive weapons would no longer be a political instrument. The rule of law and

democratic governance, which are necessary and sufficient conditions for peace and security, would hold sway all over the world (Adenuga, 2003).

Contrary to expectations, the New World Order has been characterised by greater insecurity traceable to growing inequalities in political and economic relations in the international community. It is instructive to note that most of the locales of conflicts in the international community are in the global South which signals the intensity of the competitions over depleting scarce resources (Ahmed, 2014; Bata & Bergesen, 2002; Willett, 2001). A former President of the United States of America, Barack Obama, was quoted to have described global inequality as the "defining challenge" of the international community (Dabla-Norris, Kochhar, Suphaphiphat, Ricka & Tsounta, 2015:5; Memon, Jamil & Khan, 2019:215)

### **Globalization**

Adenuga (2003) quoting Held (1991) sees globalization as "the growth of complex interconnections and interrelations between states and societies, the intensification of worldwide social relations which link distant localities in such a way that local happenings are shaped by events occurring miles and miles away and vice versa". Adenuga (2012) simply defines it as the growth of relations between peoples and states in the international system in such a way as to integrate the world into a global village.

There are differing opinions on the role globalization plays. While some theorists view it in positive lights, others claim that its adverse effects far outweigh its benefits. Stiglitz (2002) posits that globalization enormously reduces the costs of transportation and communication by breaking down the artificial barriers to the flow of goods, services, capital knowledge and even people across national borders. However, Hurrell and Wood (1998) assert that globalization, as an integrative process, is lopsidedly structured to favour the developed countries of Europe and America. Mimiko (1997) and Willett (2001) subscribe to this view by insisting that globalization enhances the competitive edge of developed countries over that of developing nations. Adenuga (2008) thus described globalization as an imperial device.

Political and financial institutions in the developing world are daily impacted by the globalized economy, especially by the monetary fluctuations that are exacerbated by poor economic base of the third world countries. Increasing poverty levels in the global South create disillusionment and despair for the people of these countries and which often results in the instability of most of the fragile political systems and the spillover of these challenges are often felt in the developed societies (Ahmed, 2004; Willett, 2001).

### **Theoretical Foundations**

#### **Dependency Theory**

The dependency theory, which gained currency in the 1960s and 1970s, especially after many African states joined the international community as independent state, sought to explain economic disparities between the developed and developing countries. The theory,

popularised by scholars including Paul Baran and Andre Gunder Frank, avers that the international community can be basically grouped into two-the global North, which is made up of developed countries and the global South, made up of underdeveloped/developing countries.

The theory holds it that most of the countries in the global South find it difficult to break out from the cycle of underdevelopment because they were forcefully integrated into a global economic order which has the developed countries as its core members while the members of the global South were incorporated into its peripheries. This assumption was founded on the fact that most of the countries in the global South, notable African, Asian and Latin American countries, were at various times colonised by major European powers. In the first instance, the colonial powers had pillaged the economies of their colonies to further the development of their own economies. In the second instance, the international economic order had been structured in favour of the global North before the global South joined (Amin, 2017; Olukoshi, 2017; Romaniuk, 2017). Thus, for these scholars, external factors created by the developed countries, make the global South to be underdeveloped and dependent on the global North.

This theory is applicable to the study because it explains global inequality and puts global relations in the new world order in good perspectives.

### **The Human Needs Theory**

The human needs theory, popularized by Abraham Maslow, posits that individuals, groups and societies resort to violence when their basic needs are not met. The theory argues that human beings are not by nature disposed to violence but use it as a means of attaining the desired ends, that is, meeting their needs (Danielson, 2005; Marker, 2003; Ilo & Adenuga, 2013).

Premised on the above, a violence prone society is a society where the needs of a segment of the people are not met. Thus, the security challenges of the global system largely stem from fact that the larger population of the people residing in the global South countries find it difficult to make ends meet.

### **Frustration-Aggression Theory**

The study is also founded on the frustration-aggression theory which postulates that the cause of aggression is frustration and that aggression is always the end result of frustration. Individuals, groups and even states resort to violence when they perceive inequity in the distribution of power and resources (Berkowitz, 1969; Whitley & Kite, 2010; Ilo & Adenuga, 2013).

A cursory study of global and national politics lends great credence to the stand of this theory. The main locales of violence are found in developing countries and they often tend to be the main aggressors in international politics. Libya, Syria, Iran and Afghanistan are good examples.

## **Global Relations in the New World Order**

### **Political Relations**

Global politics is fraught with inequity and injustice. Pieterse (2002) avers that unequal relations of power in global relations is at the heart of the problem. Though democracy, which in its simplest form refers to majority rule, is often recommended as the best system of government all over the globe, yet the United Nations (UN), which is the main international organization influencing global politics, has an elitist government. The main essence of the establishment of the UN is to maintain international peace and security and the Security Council is arguably the most powerful organ in the UN giving the fact that it is the only organ invested with the primary responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security (The United Nations Charter, Article 24). To achieve this, the Security Council has the power to determine the existence of any threat to the peace, breach of peace, or act of aggression. The Security Council is also conferred with the power to decide the measures to be taken to maintain or restore international peace and security and all members of the UN must abide by its decisions (The UN Charter, Articles 25, 39, 40, 41 & 43). Thus, Saliu (1999) succinctly concluded that all the activities of the UN revolve around the Security Council.

Though the UN preaches the principle of the sovereign equality of its members, the composition of the Security Council attests to the fact that the UN sees some states to be superior to the others. The Security Council has fifteen members including five permanent members (the United States, Russia, the United Kingdom, France and China) and ten non-permanent members elected for a term of two years. In reality, every decision of the most important organ of the UN, the Security Council needs the concurring votes of all the permanent members. If any of the five permanent members refuses to give its assent to any decision of the Council, the decision becomes jettisoned. Essentially, what this translates into is that the five permanent members act as a kind of international oligarchy that makes the binding decisions of the UN. The UN is made up of 190 sovereign states with the developing countries accounting for almost two thirds of that population. Thus, for the permanent seats of the Security Council to be the exclusive preserve of some developed states goes a long way to show the injustice that is prevalent in the international system and the UN is thus perceived as a tool of western imperialism (Anyaku, 2008).

It has also been alleged that the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank (the Bretton Woods Institutions), two specialized agencies of the UN, are tools of imperial domination. Mimiko (1997) pointed out that whenever the IMF and the World Bank are persuaded to make loans available to any third world nation; they impose loan conditions that are antithetical to economic development. Loans are granted "if and only if" such would augment export receipts of the developed western countries. It is alleged that these loan conditions put these developing countries in a debt and poverty trap from which escape may prove impossible (Ahmed, 2004; Willett, 2001).

## **Economic Relations**

Jones (1996) posited that the confrontation between the global North and the global South is mainly a derivation of the lopsidedness in their economic relations. Elliot and Pilkington (2015) quoting the new Oxfam report show that in 2014, 1 percent of the world's population owned 48 percent of its wealth while the poorest 80 percent owned just 5.5 percent. The report also has it that by 2016, the richest 1 percent would own 50 percent of the world's wealth. World Centric, a socially responsible company set up in 2004 with a vision for a just and sustainable world, in a recent report presents very interesting data. It reports that:

1. Over 840 million people in the world are malnourished; 799 million out of this population live in the developing world.
2. Every day, 34,000 children under five die of hunger or other hunger related diseases and this results into 6 million deaths every year
3. Of 6.2 billion people in the world, 1.2 billion live on less than \$1 per day while nearly 3 billion people live on less than \$2 per day
4. 1.2 billion people lack access to clean water, 2.4 billion live without decent sanitation, and 4 billion without waste water disposal
5. 12 million people die every year from lack of water, including 3 million children from waterborne diseases

Onimode (2000) also locates the crisis of the present world system in the problems of poverty and rising global inequalities. He ascribes the persistent poverty in the third world countries to the cumulative effects of foreign domination and exploitation. The centuries of exploitative colonial rule in the global south and neo-colonialism in the present world order have ensured the continued economic domination of the global south by the global north countries. Pieterse (2002) also shows that in the era immediately after the Cold War, there was a significant increase in global wealth. However, in the same era, extreme poverty in the global South, became more pronounced. He notes that at the height of the Cold War in 1960, the estimate of the income gap between the fifth of people residing in the global vis-à-vis that of the global South was 30:1 but by 1997, it had increased to 74:1. From these observations, he concludes that “discrepancies in livelihoods across the world are so large that they are without historical precedent and without conceivable justification-economic, moral or otherwise” (p. 1023-1024).

Scholars agree that the new world order is marked by increasing inequality in the international community (Dabla-Norris, et al., 2015; Frieden, 2001; Nino-Zarazua, Roope & Tarp, 2017). Adenuga (2012) quoting Adedeji (1996) succinctly describes the imbalance in economic relations between the global north and global south by reporting that while the developing nations which account for over 70 percent of the world's population wallow in abject poverty, the developing nations with just about 20 percent of global population enjoy its wealth.

As a result of technological development coupled with political stability, there is a high level of productivity in the global North leading to the generation of massive wealth and the



enhancement of the socio-economic development of the citizens of the global North. The global South, on the other hand, is characterized by poverty, instability and tyranny. He however shows that the global North has been able to achieve its successes mainly because she controls and regulates international trade to give her the advantage over the global South (Odeh, 2010; Pieterse, 2002). De Rivero (2001) also succinctly captures the implication of the continued inequities between the global North and the global South by stating that:

If the present trends continue, and nothing indicates that they are going to change, in the year 2020, the world population will reach 8 billion, of whom 6.6 billion will live in the under developed world, where there will be 3 billion poor, plus 840 million who are starving and hundreds of millions who are unemployed, or, at best underemployed.

The above succinctly show that the major feature of the new world order is rising inequalities in global relations.

### **Growing Inequities and Rising Violence**

As Odeh (2010) rightly observed, comparative studies between the global North and global South became prominent after the end of the Cold War in 1991. It is thus no coincidence that the focus of scholarly activities on the disparities between the global North and global South became heightened with the increase of violence in the global system. As Ake (1992) puts it, the North-South divide portends more threats to the global system than the Cold War. It is noteworthy that in the New World era, most of the incidences of violence of international significance either occur in the global South or are carried out by nationals of the global South in the nations of the global North (Willett, 2001). As Jones (1996) reports, most of the intra-state conflicts in the New World Order occur in the global South. Countries including Somalia, Rwanda, Burundi, Sierra Leone, Liberia, the former Yugoslavia, Chechnya, Chechnya and Ukraine have experienced or continue to experience Civil Wars since the 1990s.

Traditionally, studies on security often link it with territorial security and the capacity of governments to maintain law and order within the territories of their states. However, globalisation has made global relations 'borderless' and has greatly limited the abilities of governments to control the influence of global events on national affairs. Rising poverty in the global South, stemming from widening global economic inequalities, has also made people lose faith in the abilities of their governments to promote their welfare. Loss of confidence in the institutions of the states has promoted rebellions and insurgencies in the global South leading to many ungoverned spaces which serve as locales for terrorist, bandit and insurgent groups (Ahmed, 2004; Willett, 2001).

However, the most frightening form of violence in the New World Order has been in the form of terrorism. Wilkinson (2000) defines terrorism as the systematic use of coercive intimidation usually to service political ends. The United Nations (1994) broadly defines it as "criminal acts intended or calculated to provoke a state of terror in the general public, a group of persons or particular persons for political purpose, which are in any circumstance,

unjustifiable, whatever the considerations that might be invoked to justify them". Of great concern also is international terrorism, that is, terrorist activities across international borders.

Though terrorism has been a political tool for centuries, it assumed a very frightening dimension with the bombing of the United States by the Al-Qaeda group on September 11, 2001 which saw over 6,000 lives lost when the World Trade Center in New York and the Pentagon in Washington were hit by terrorist hijacked planes. Though almost every corner of the world has experienced international terrorism, either through direct experience or involvement in the global war against terrorism, the United States and other nations of the global North seem to be its main target. The US Secretary of Defense, Chuck Hagel, in a press conference at the Pentagon describes terrorism as the greatest threat to the US (Westcott, 2014). Depetris (2014) avers that terrorism will continue to affect the US and her allies, a fact that European statesmen and security chiefs allude to (Jones, 2015). Indeed, every major terrorist group, no matter the locale, be it the ISIS in the Middle East, the Boko Haram group in Nigeria, the Al Qaeda in Afghanistan or the Al-Qaeda in Islamic Maghreb (AQIM) in Algeria, they always tend to target the US and European interests. The reason for this development is not far-fetched; it is because these countries are seen to have dominated global politics and economy to the detriment of the other peoples of the world.

## **Conclusion**

It was expected that the New World Order would usher in a reign of peace and security in the global system but instead, there has come to be an increase in the use of violence in achieving objectives. The study, through a critical analysis of the problem, showed that the prevalence of injustice in the global system, especially with regards to the political and economic relationships between the global North and the global South, is at the crux of the issue. Recommendations that would improve global relations and thus guarantee global peace and security were also proffered by this study.

## **Recommendations**

*Yet inequality is not inevitable – it is a political choice (OXFAM, 2021).*

There is the need for all global institutions, especially the UN and her sister agencies, to be restructured to reflect global equity. The UN was founded on the premise of the equality of member states and, thus, the composition of the Security Council and all other organs of the UN must reflect this fundamental principle.

The nations of the global North have the moral responsibility of helping the global South nations to develop through the transfer of wealth and technology. It is the opinion of these researchers that the developed nations of the world, especially the nations of Western Europe need to make reparations to the nations of the global South, especially the countries of Asia, Africa and Latin America for the centuries of slavery, colonialism and neo-colonialism. Debt forgiveness should become a critical dimension of relations between the global North and South.

The onus is also on the governments of the nations of the global South to develop true democratic governance, stimulate and encourage local technology and businesses, and eradicate corruption so that their economies will develop and will not be tied to the apron strings of European and American economies.

There should also be a concerted effort by all the members of the global system to stamp out terrorism anywhere in the world. The states of the global North should actively support the states of the global South in curbing the activities of terrorists and terrorist groups using their countries as bases.

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