Politics Of New Normal And Africa's Human Security Crisis In The 21st Century: Covid-19 Pandemic Era In View

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Abstract
The purpose of this paper is to examine the nexus between the politics of new normal and Africa's human security crises in the 21st Century in view of the challenges of COVID-19 pandemic. The paper is qualitatively oriented and relies on secondary sources for data collection and critical content analysis. It is observed that whereas internal and external factors are at the root of Africa's human security crises in the 21st Century, the politics of new normal exacerbates them. For instance, the case of the current COVID-19 pandemic and other similar crises before it such as the 9/11 terrorist attack and its attendant global war on terror, 2008 global financial crisis and global economic recession that followed it, as well as the 2009 global food crisis and zika pandemic where despite that the crises did not start in Africa, triggered and in some cases, exacerbated already endangered human security situations in the continent. The paper adopts transnationalism as a theoretical framework and argues that since the pandemic like similar human security crises of the past never originated from Africa but had sever impacts on the continent due mainly to their global new normal politics African leaders and actors must this time socially reconstruct this type of social relations where the choice they make seemingly favours international capital instead of their people and nations by placing the people at the centre of governance above collection of loans from donor agencies and institutions which shall keep the nations perpetually indebted and so in servitude and dependency in the guise of joining the bandwagon called the new normal.

Keywords: Africa, COVID-19 pandemic, crisis, globalisation, human security, new normal.

Introduction
Global human security in the 21st Century is seemingly in crisis. The 9/11 terrorist attack and many other terrorist activities around the world including those of the Boko Haram, the 2008 global financial crisis, the 2008-2012 global recession, the global exponential rise in food and hunger crisis, health crises like Zika and the now-ravaging COVID-19 pandemic are some of the attestations to this fact. The position of the World Health Organisation (known also as WHO) via its Director-General that CORONA VIRUS-19 hereafter referred to as COVID-19 is once-in-a-century health crisis which its effects will last for decades (Aljazeera, 2020) is a further affirmation of the claim that the 21st Century human security is in crisis. COVID-19 is a pandemic and as such, a human security challenge for many countries of the world including those in Africa which, as the United Nations Secretary General warns, may turn to be a generational catastrophe (Aljazeera, August 8, 2020). Pandemic in Weller (1999, p.308) is “an epidemic spreading over a wide area, sometimes all over the world.” Obviously, the infection that started in Wuhan in China in December, 2019 speedily spread across so many countries in the world with a surge in the second half of the year 2020 due mainly to the ubiquitous nature of hybrid globalisation's transnationalism in the 21st Century. John Hopkins Institute placed COVID-19 pandemic infections worldwide around 16 million and nine days later, the figure has jumped to 18.2 million (Aljazeera, August 4, 2020), and on the 12th August, 2020 China Global Television Network in its footage reported that global cases of COVID-19 pandemic has surpassed 20 million (CGTN, August 12, 2020). The impact of the pandemic though arguably more than that of Zika and some other human security crises in Century such as the 9/11 terrorist attack, 2008 global financial meltdown, the 2008-2012 global economic recession, the global rise in food and hunger crisis, has brought so much human and material losses, deaths, sorrows, anguish, panic and worries to the world especially Africans. These negative global outcomes by implication indicate that there exists a significant relationship between transnationalism and the worsening human security situation in the 21st Century world especially as they pertain to Africa. "The effect of the pandemic is no less critical in Africa dotted with neo-colonial, pseudo-capitalist states and dependent economies" (Madubegwu, 2020, p.1). These challenges notwithstanding, it is the surge of the pandemic in the second half of the year 2020 and the politics of new normal behind it namely; the lockdown, social distancing and face masking and the fate of Africa in the prevention, cure of the dreaded virus and management of international relations that called for this paper.

Presently, the term new normal has become a catchphrase for many due to COVID-19 pandemic practices such as the lockdown, social distancing and face masking. Although these practices has been commonly referred to as the new normal in the COVID-19 pandemic era, in this paper, this type of politics is analysed as politics of new normal not primarily due to the lockdown, social distancing and face masking but as well the politics of business-as-usual in the handling of global relations in human security crises periods such as the pandemic especially when Africa is adversely affected. The concept of new normal is relatively new considering the fact that it arose as a result of the crisis of globalisation faced by the world in the first decade of the 21st Century. The term has been used by (El-Erian, 2010) following the financial crisis of 2007-2008 and its aftermath of
the 2008-2012 global economic recession and has been in use in many ways since then. Thus, as it appears to be a scholarly tradition that the beginning of every decade is greeted with a lot of review of the past decades’ events and their outcomes in other to predict what the new decade may be like, this paper is positioned to review the significant relationship between the global human security crises and politics of new normal in the first two decades of the 21st Century so as to be able to predict what the new normal politics is going to be for the world especially Africa in COVID-19 pandemic era from the year 2020.

Although COVID-19 pandemic as some people like Akpuru-Aja (2020) and the Director-General of Nigerian Railway Corporation, Fidet Okhira opine is no respecter of anybody (NTA TuesdayLive, 2020), the lopsided relationship between the rich, technologically-advanced nations and poor, technologically-least advanced nations has continued to be favoured by globalisation and this has made it that while the pandemic has been declared a human security crisis as it infects and kills people from both divides of the world, the issues of human security appear to be highly politicised if the way and manner the preventive and cure medicine is handled. This thinking stems from the way international politics is being played, that is, to the point of undermining the importance the United Nations (see UNDP, 1994; Akpuru-Aja, 2020; Nnam et al, 2020) places on human security since the demise of the Cold War. This fact can be seen in the way the US pulled out its membership from WHO accusing it of not being transparent in dealing with the issues pertaining to the pandemic, how criticisms have been rained on the world leaders whom many have accused of not being serious with a cure for the disease while people are losing their lives and means of livelihood on daily basis, and how Russia, following these accusations and politics quickly produced a vaccine for the prevention/ cure of coronavirus which the West is politically criticising. This Russian breakthrough in August 2020 amidst the surge of the pandemic and fear of the unknown date for the coming out of a globally accepted vaccine, (the US research team having in July 2020 announced its optimism of unveiling a vaccine for the cure of the pandemic by December 2020 which will be in use for their citizens first) however, throws a spanner into the wheels of global politics on COVID-19 pandemic. For example, whereas the presidential candidate of the Democratic party in the US in 2020, Joe Biden has accused the incumbent president, Donald Trump of mismanaging the issues that relate to the pandemic (Aljazeera, 31/7/2020) in line with the accusation the former Brazilian president levelled against the incumbent president earlier of not being serious about the same issues, mouths are waging about what the politics of the New Normal in the pandemic era is going to be like.

As new normal has remained globally relevant in the era of COVID-19 pandemic, its politics seems to be unfolding and shrouded in controversy and so requires to be scientifically and scholarly followed and analysed in view of what it will likely look like as the pandemic rages on and in the post-pandemic period. The foregoing therefore makes it expediently imperative for this paper to criticise the new normal with focus on the re-echo of certain elements of politics that manifested in the past human crises periods that bear similarity to those of the COVID 19 pandemic era in
which Africa for the fact of not being fully integrated into the “global village” and its leaders still making choices that favour the international capitalists has been meant to bear the burden of the 21st Century human security crises occasioned by transnationalism. Crises like the 9/11 terrorist attack, global financial crisis of 2008 and economic recession that followed it, global food crisis, Zika virus pandemic to mention a few unlike the Ebola outbreak which originated from Africa and subdued by Africans, were consequentially more challenging to Africa's human security. In this criticism, the paper centres its argument on the fact that since the poor and vulnerable in the world (nations and peoples) especially those in Africa have been marginalised and exploited in all these global crises situations without minding the human security consequences, the politics of the new normal in the COVID-19 era is not going to be largely different for the fact that it is still an intrinsic aspect of global human security politics. From an African perspective therefore, the germaine questions are: why is Africa the most adversely affected by every new normal in the 21st Century; how can African leaders this time unlike never before eschew business-as-usual which has placed the continent's human security on the lowest order of global priority in other to overcome the adverse effects of COVID-19 pandemic and it's new normal politics?

**Methodology**

Although literature on COVID-19 pandemic is scarce because it is just evolving (hence the necessity for moderate leaning on the mass media for data collection) those on human security (UNDP, 1994; Akpuru-Aja, 2020; Nnam et all, 2020 for instance) and globalisation (Odeh, 2012; Ahmed, 2004; Edukugho, 2002; Ihonvbere,1996) are not in want and as such, this research dominantly relies on secondary sources for general data collection. More so, since the COVID-19 pandemic era, attention on the crisis of human security crisis as occasioned by the forces and processes of globalisation has increased to the extent that most necessary information about its myth and realities have become intensely explored, re-examined, reappraised, debated, discussed, analysed, reported, published and aired through numerous electronic and print media and this serves as a boost to the making of this paper. Thus, authenticated books, private and public local, national and international television channels, the internet, newspapers, magazines, journals are the media routes through which the data for the paper were gathered. Although books on COVID-19 pandemic and the new normal are scarce on bookstands for the fact that issues about the pandemic are still evolving, the ones on globalisation are numerous and are of immense help to the making of this paper. Combined with these sources are skeletal pieces of information obtained from eye-witness account as a result of the researcher being an affected member of the 21st Century globalisation and human security crises such as COVID-19 pandemic, currently experiencing the impact of the New Normal and living in a part of Africa in the era of COVID-19 pandemic. This, no doubt, helps the paper to adopt the qualitative research approach in data collection and analysis since it does not want to go into statistical quantitative research and analysis. The ex post facto (after the fact) research design following the foregoing, is therefore considered suitable for the study. Having done this, critical content analysis is employed to provide an exploratory and descriptive analysis of the secondary data collected. This follows the steps
adopted by some social scientists in their various studies which have been widely accepted and acknowledged as being authentic and reliable. For instance, Nnam, Ugwoke, Njemanze and Akwara (2020) have adopted the step in their study of the matters arising from the nexus between Boko Haram terrorism and human security in Nigeria citing some other scholars such as Haralambos, Holborn and Heald (2008). The relevance of citing these sources lies on the fact that when conducting a research of this nature, according to Nnam, Ugwoke, Njemanze and Akwara (2020), the main focus is on content analysis, particularly thematic analysis. Elucidating this point further, the authors refer to Haralambos, Holborn and Heald (2008) thus:

The idea is to understand the encoding process, especially the intentions that lie behind the production of mass media documents....The usual strategy is to pick on a specific area of reportage…and subject it to a very detailed analysis in the hope of unearthing the underlying purposes and intentions of the authors of the communication (Nnam, Ugwoke, Njemanze and Akwara, 2020, p. 8).

On this ground, the mass media documents used in this work are specifically those that focused on COVID-19 pandemic which is just an emerging pandemic. In addition to this, the mass media documents as well as the other secondary data used in this work are those that are publicly and widely accepted as authentic and reliable sources of information which in no narrow ways, have been scrutinised and licensed by national and international authorities and agencies. Some of them are Aljazeera Television, China Global Television Network, Nigerian Television Authority, Channels Television, TVC News Television, Sky News Television, the BBC channel amongst other channels, books and journals, as well as the internet.

Theoretical Framework

This paper adopts the theory of transnationalism as a theoretical framework. Transnationalism is adopted considering its nexus with the process of globalisation and human security crisis such as COVID-19 pandemic and it's new normal because it has been referred to, more generally in the globalisation literature as an umbrella concept that encompasses a wide variety of transformative processes, practices and developments that take place simultaneously at a local and global level (Robinson, 2007). Look at the COVID-19 pandemic as an example. COVID-19 is a pandemic and as such, a human security challenge for many countries of the world including those in Africa at the same time. Pandemic in Weller (1999, p.308) is “an epidemic spreading over a wide area, sometimes all over the world.” Obviously, the infection that started in Wuhan in China in December, 2019 speedily spread across more than a hundred countries in the world with a surge in the second half of the year 2020 due mainly to the ubiquitous nature of globalisation and transnationalism in the 21st Century. With this, it has become obvious that in the 21st Century the global processes are closely related to transnationalism (Huff, n.d.).

The origin of the concept of transnationalism can be traced to 1916 when Randolph Bourne used it to argue for integrating American immigrants into society and decades later, in the 1970s, some social scientists like Joseph Nye and Robert Keohane used it in their investigation of the activities
and effects of transnational organisations on international relations (Januarie, n.d.). After this period, more attempts have been made by scholars and researchers in using transnationalism in their studies. Huff (n.d.) for example has conceived transnationalism as processes that extend beyond national boundaries in the form of cultural, economic and political relations. Following this, Robinson (2007) stresses that transnationalism denotes a range of social, cultural and political practices and states brought about by sheer increase in social connectivity across borders, a fact Luthwak (1999) stated in a different way when he defined globalisation colourfully as a process connoting the much celebrated revolutionary unification of the puddles, ponds, lakes, and seas of village, provincial, regional and national market into a single ocean. Transnational processes and practices as broadly conceived are all about the multiple ties and interactions – economic, political, social and cultural that link people, communities and institutions across the borders of nation-states (Robinson, 2007). Buttressing the fact that links transnationalism and globalisation further, Taylor (2003) emphasises that at the turn of the millennium, the world has continued to be configured and reconfigured by heterogeneous processes that enervate the globe and its peoples which resulted to a global political economy that is increasingly integrated and in a state of perpetual flux. Due to this fact, the theory of transnationalism (like other theories that have their own limitations) notwithstanding its limitations is relevant to this study as it guides it to argue that due largely to high level of erosion of national boundaries occasioned by the globalisation process and practices and closely inter knitted relationship between peoples and nations in the villigased global system in the 21st Century crises that originated from far places such as the 9/11 terrorist attack in the US, 2008 financial crisis in the US; Zika virus which started from Latin America and spread across different sub-regions in Africa, Asia, Europe, the America's and Oceania (Adams, 2016); the now COVID-19 pandemic from China among others, swiftly become human security challenges to the whole world at the same time.

As De (2020) puts it, the world order has been changing fast and is facing humanity’s biggest crisis since World War 11, almost every country has been affected by the devastating COVID-19 as a result of an outbreak from China. To prove the efficacy of the theory of transnationalism in this paper evidence is adduced which shows that countries during the peak period of COVID-19 pandemic simultaneously invented the practices of locking down inter and intra national boundaries and social distancing to curb the swift spread of the disease globally. This is an indictment of the the link between transnationalism and globalisation processes that are at home with the concept and practice of a borderless world commonly referred to, in most quarters, as a global village. Imagine a disease which started a few weeks earlier towards the end of 2019 in Hubei Wuhan China but swiftly entered into Nigeria through an Italian. In fact, in a few months, COVID-19 epicentre has been shifted from China to Europe, United States, Brazil, South Africa, India, among other places challenging the global human security architecture of pre-pandemic era. Presently, the number of COVID-19 cases surpasses 22 million globally (TVC NEWS, 20/8/2020) just within a few months of report of its first case.
Further support for the choice of the theory of transnationalism in this paper situates in De (2020) observation that as the world order is changing fast, several theories are being postulated, chiefly, that since the pandemic is a global challenge, global response is required; and that in such unfolding “New Normal” the consensus is that countries need to save the earth from the pandemic if all needs to live together. In view of this, Africa as part of global transnationalism adopts the new normal that is on in different countries of the world especially the lockdown, social distancing, face masking and so on. Being part of this global new normal notwithstanding, in order to avoid the politics of “new normal” as obtained in the pre-COVID-19 era in which Africa especially Nigeria was the weeping child of global human security crises and global North as well as China’s exploitative and profit making theatre, there is need for the leaders of the countries in the continent to adopt another new normal that throws up a new regime between government and the governed in the COVID-19 pandemic era in order to enhance the continent's human security. This is where the idea of constructivism comes in and takes its relevance in the study, bearing in mind to a significant extent, that globalisation is a project and programme that is constructed against genuine African, and by extension, Third World development as some scholars have contended (Obianyo, 2009).

Conceptual Analysis

Human Security
Human security is a pre-21st Century concept which according to Nnam, Ugwoke, Njemanze and Akwara (2020, p. 5) “was officially introduced in the early 1990s by peace and security advocates” following the end of the Cold War. Critical security studies as they stated further gave wider recognition to the concept as attention on the study of the Super Powers, nuclear power based on national interest, national security, war and peace which during the Cold War period dominated studies and discussions on international relations tilted toward human security (see also Akpuru-Aja, 2020). The quotation below from Akpuru-Aja (2020, p. 59) elucidates this fact further;

> There is nothing absolute that gives meaning and essence to life except security. It is that condition of being free from threat, stress, strains, or fear of losing life and other valuables. Security, therefore, cannot be taken to be all about gun....There is security in bread. There is also security in social harmony and there is, yet, security in good health....It is practically about human security.

This, therefore, follows the currency the concept of human security gained internationally after the United Nations Development Programme conceived it as a framework which centers more directly on the protection of people, the scope of their freedom within society, their access to market and social opportunities and whether their society is in a state of peace or conflict (UNDP, 1994). To say that the people and the global society are in a state of peace in the era of COVID-19 pandemic and other human security crises is to shy away from the fact, or that the scope of people's freedom is wide this time is fallacious considering that the practices of social distancing, lockdown and face
masking are inhibitors of freedom. These practices factually affect security in bread and social harmony.

Similar to this, the fear, stress, threat and strains associated with the event of September 11, 2001, the global war declared against international terrorism and multiple attacks by terrorists that continued since thereafter, proliferation of small arms and ammunition, the Zika pandemic, global financial meltdown, global economic recession, global food crisis, global climate change coupled with the now-ravaging pandemic known as Coronavirus have called for a thorough examination of the nexus between global human security architecture and the crisis of globalisation in the 21st Century considering the way and manner human lives among others are threatened and lost in the face of the politics of new normal associated with them. This, in the notation of Ahmed (2004, p.1) "has created a phenomenon that can be accurately described as the globalisation of insecurity, by firstly...destablising nations and communities and secondly escalating impoverishment, disease...."

A deduction from the foregoing passage is that human security framework centres more directly on the protection of people, the scope of their freedom within society, their access to market and social opportunities and whether their society is in a state of peace or conflict (UNDP, 1994) and this type of framework is referred to as human-centred framework. As a matter of clarification, the UNDP identifies about seven key components of human security namely:

- Economic security (e.g. assurance of a basic income)
- Food security (e.g. access to food)
- Health security (e.g. access to health care and protection from diseases)
- Environmental security (e.g. protection from harmful effects of environmental degradation).
- Personal security (e.g. freedom from threats by the state, groups, or individuals)
- Community security (e.g. freedom from harmful community practices)
- Political security (e.g. enjoyment of human rights and freedom from political oppression).

The foregoing identified aspects of human security by and large illustrate that the 21st Century globalisation is intimately connected to the concept of human security because of the coincidence of human security mounting the center stage of the post-Cold War politics prior to the birth of the new millennium (see Ahmed, 2004; Nwosumba, 2016). This is a fact which is seen and felt when one looks critically into the nexus between the 21st Century globalisation processes and the seven components of human security. It is not in doubt that globalisation has affected these components more negatively in Africa in particular in the forms of worsening health security, food security, economic security, personal security and community security especially in this time of the COVID-19 pandemic. A situation where human lives are threatened and lost due to rapid spread of deadly diseases such as Zika and COVID-19 pandemic and terrorism across state boundaries for instance implies that both health, community and personal security aspects of human security have been jeopardised. In the case of Zika virus Undoubtedly, observes Prabir De, this COVID-
19 has put the world economy at a risk and for this the world is going to face recession (http://economictimes). This also is a reminder that the pandemic just like terrorism poses grave consequences for economic security simultaneously with personal and community security and these consequences, Africa bears their brunt most. The case of 2008 global financial meltdown and the global economic recession and global food crisis that took place before the end of the first decade of the century so affected Africa's economic and food security that the continent was still struggling with their effects before the emergence of COVID-19 pandemic. As a matter of elucidation, the concept of human security attempts to provide an overarching framework through which the fundamentally interconnected and cumulative nature of the global processes and their impact on people’s security on a world scale can easily be understood (Ahmed, 2004). Thus, as globalisation creates new opportunities in terms of making internet and telephone and their services available for Africa unlike before the present century, it at the same time generates social, political and economic crisis and diseases that threaten and jeopardise human security.

New Normal

“New normal” is a phrase that has garnered much interest and press in the past few weeks as the world attempts to come to grips with how things have changed, and what is to come (Edgerly, 2020) due to the presence of COVID-19 pandemic. This, however, does not mean that the term new normal started with COVID-19 pandemic. Rather, following the 2008 global financial crisis the term, according to El-Erian (2010), was coined at PIMCO in early 2009 in the context of cautioning against the prevailing market and policy view that post-crisis industrial economies would revert to their most recent means. The PIMCO coinage however stems from the fact that in English new normal refers to a previously unfamiliar or atypical situation that has become standard, usual, or unexpected (https://www.lexico.com/definition/the_new_normal, 15/8/2020). In a similar vein, a new normal has been conceived as a state to which an economy, society, etc. settles following a crisis, when this differs from the situation that prevailed prior to the start of the crisis.

While navigating the new normal in industrial countries El-Erian (2010) stresses that their use of the concept was an attempt to move the discussion on the post-2008 global context, El-Erian observes that it did not take more than a year for it to catch on as researchers such as Carmen Reinhart and Ken Rogoff produced admirable and comprehensive empirical work that supports the view of a protracted and complex recovery process just as Warren Buffet has found elegantly simple but powerful ways to convey the wound. From this time, new normal has been applied to discuss different issues before and during the COVID-19 pandemic (for instance see, Sala-I-Martin, 2015; Carare et al, 2018; OECD, 2018; Yaya et al, 2020) but none was anchored on the significant relationship between the trio of globalisation, human security and the new normal, this does not mean that they failed to touch on it indirectly without referring to it. Carare, Candelon, Haase and Lu (2018) for example while discussing about globalisation and the new normal focusing on using the findings from the global competitiveness index of 2015-2016 explore the
world economy against the new normal of lower economic growth, lower productivity and high unemployment which arose from the global financial crisis of 2008. Issue relating to global economy though an aspect of human security is not in wholesome, human security. In a similar way, in the COVID-19 pandemic era and impliedly includes what seems to be like a new normal without mentioning or making use of the concept, something like, the pandemic has ushered in a new climate of uncertainty which is fuelling protectionism and playing into nationalist narratives. Other writers have mentioned new normal in their work but interchanging it with new normal of the world order (De, 2020) and uncertain times (Edgerly, 2020). On the whole however, the term and concept of new normal though not regarded widely as being controversial remain a subject of discussion in crisis or post crisis complex and critical moment due to the fact that, as OECD (2018, p.9) observes, “changing public policy is ultimately about changing mind-sets.” On Edgerly’s (2020) view, new normal in the era of COVID-19 pandemic refers to a new norm of reactionary policies elicited by world leaders, another phase of transition for the world. No matter how conceived, new normal is a new condition or situation that arises from the old normal in which case, some aspects or at least, some elements of the old norms or order are not totally absent in the new one.

Globalisation

Globalisation, though an age-long historical phenomenon has increased in both dimensions, capacity and processes since the new millennium. Thus, there are social, political, economic, cultural, military, religious, security and other dimensions and aspects of globalisation. The logic therefore is that since globalisation is presently facing some crises, there is no doubt that all the above aspects of International Relations are not bearing their consequences. In this paper, the reality that globalisation is in crisis and that the consequences of the crisis are found in all the aspects of human and state existence especially human security is not in doubt.

Thus, as Williams (2008) opines that it is impossible to make a sense of politics, whether national or international without reference to security matter, this paper observes that the 21st century global security threats are indeed no longer restricted to military threats and state security (see Akpuru-Aja, 2020). As Akpuru-Aja explains state security is no longer the only source of threat due largely because of the events that occurred in the post-Cold War era which in no small ways are with increased dynamics. These events have brought about far ranging and significant changes and challenges in international politics (Kesselman, 2013). Events such as the 9/11 and other terrorist activities, proliferation of small arms, the 2008 international financial meltdown, rising food insecurity, Arab Spring, spread of deadly diseases especially COVID-19 and others have contributed to making the 21st century a crisis-prone century. To this end, Akpuru-Aja (2020) for instance, has opined that arguably, the 21st century can be regarded as the “globalisation century” due to the central role it plays in global relations. On the foregoing therefore, it is imperative to understand the correlation between the different aspects of security within that context.
Consequently, many arguments and debates have followed these events and their consequences on the international system. Most of the debates have been on how globalisation has been at the centre of these crises that are in themselves threats to human security and peace. To some, globalisation process of the 21st century itself is in crisis (see Madubegwu, 2020; Nwosumba, 2013). Globalisation has largely failed to improve the lives of many that it was projected to save out of hunger, disease, poverty, war, unemployment, threats of different kinds and so on. Poverty increased in the face of the rich being richer. War of different shades and forms at different places are on the increase, migrations are taking an increasing dimension, terrorism, insurgencies, climate change and its partner global warming, worsening food insecurity and many more others are realities of the global system in the 21st century.

Former President Thabo Mbeki of South Africa for instance, on noticing how globalisation was tilting to the favour of the international capitalists was reported by Ekoriko in News Africa (2004, p.5) as having argued in 2002 that a “global human society based on poverty for many and prosperity for a few, characterised by islands of wealth surrounded by a sea of poverty, is unsustainable.” In elaborating this point, Ekoriko is of the notion that limited resources have weakened the capacity of some governments especially in Africa to maintain security and check the rise of terrorism and by extension many other global human security threats in the continent and this is caused by globalisation’s unequal treatment to the peoples and nations of the world. This has generated what is referred to as a source of globalisation of insecurity (Ahmed, 2004). With increased and “unrestricted” trans-border movements of people, technology, knowledge, goods and services enhanced by the revolution in information, technology and communication, strategic information, weapons, terrorism, diseases such as Zika virus, COVID-19 pandemic, and other threats to human security easily and swiftly crossed around the world and as usual, the new normal is that Africa is the most hurt.

**Consequences of Transnationalism and Increased Global Unrestricted Trans-Border Movement in the 21st Century**

Although it is a fact in the discipline of International Relations that no nation is an island, whole and entire in the contemporary international system, it is only in the 21st Century that science and technology’s revolution in communication and transportation seems to have reached its apogee and with this unrestricted movement of people, goods and services trans-boarder movement quickly eroded national boundaries. It is also a reality that due significantly to increased unrestricted movement of almost everything the terrorist activities increased astronomically leading to AQaeda’s terrorist attack on the two important sites in the United States of America on the September 11, 2001, an attack which took about 3000 lives, a year after the beginning of the 21st Century. With this, international security and securitisation dramatically changed both as an academic discourse and in action. As a result of this, attention to personal security which is an integral part of human security in this case, has become globally increased. This was conceived as an attack too many on human security world wide, a major reason why the American President
George Bush Jnr., declared an all-out war against global terrorism. This war which has been referred to as global war on terror, Bush war on terror, the long war (Louw, 2003), et cetera thus became a new normal. However, like in most other cases of local events becoming globalised, terrorism has become contagious in the world since the 9/11 US attack in spite of the new normal, the global war declared against terrorism and the terrorists. To state the obvious, terrorist attacks in the world since 9/11 have increased especially in North and West Africa.

Although the new normal in this context can be regarded as the global war on terror, it is agreeable that the United States unilateral moment in international politics is also a new normal. The emphasis here is that with the demise of the Soviet Union at the end of the Cold War the new normal of that era, that is, international politics based on bilateralism paved the way for the emergence of moment of unilateralism within which the US announced itself as the global hegemon. Following this, America’s policies and actions shifted after the 9/11 terrorist attack towards the new normal that is, global war on terror in the context of unilateralism. To elucidate this point, the citing of the US unilateral decision to invade Iraq in 2003 in the name of global war on terror is apt and imperative. Thus, Edgerly (2020) in line with the foregoing observes that there were other countless events that occurred in rapid succession around the world after the 9/11 attack and in coincidence with the conflict in Afghanistan namely; the invasion of Iraq and many smaller counter-terrorism operations which occurred under the strategic goals of the global war on terror. Through this observation Edgerly points out that with this new normalisation via the US towards the global war on terror, the nature of warfare changed and ideas began to appear more frequently, entire militaries were transitioned into new formations to better conduct counter insurgency, and greater numbers of extremist organisations were correlated to have risen due to the tactics utilised in many countries.

A corollary to the above is that the 21st century globalisation encourages the movement of terrorists through migration and through this channel drugs are trafficked as much as human beings (Nwosumba, Ngwube & Abah, 2016). All these are contemporary challenges to Africa’s human security by extension.

Boko Haram insurgents for instance have severally been linked to foreign organisations that are internationally recognised as terrorists namely; Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS) and Al Qaeda. Even in this era of COVID-19 pandemic lockdown grenade is still fired from the outskirt into Maiduguri (Aljazeera, 30th July 2020) as part of the terrorist attacks. The fact is that the proliferation of small arms and light weapons arising from global migration and terrorism is a big challenge to human security in the 21st century. It is on the foregoing that Ahmed (2004) views about the devastating consequences of the globalisation process are upheld in this work. As Ahmed stresses, the foregoing has created a phenomenon that can be described as globalisation of insecurity which destablises nation's and communities thereby escalating impoverishment, disease and so on. Take another example below for the sake of further lubrication to the point already
Global Financial Crisis and Economic Recession

The 2008 global financial crisis which started in the US eventually triggered a global recession that lasted to 2012. However, even when the crises never originated from Africa, the continent is still bearing their heavy burden. To buttress this point, Development + Cooperation (2010), stresses that the financial crisis of 2008 helps to worsen Africa’s food security problems. While citing the data from FAO which reveals that more than one billion people are affected by hunger worldwide, Development + Cooperation reveals that a hundred million out of that figure have been made poor by the impacts of the financial crisis. Further, the source asserts that as a result of the crisis, food security in many countries especially where levels of undernourishment stance were already high, was exacerbated in this case, the situation is worse in Democratic Republic of Congo, Burundi, Eritrea, Sierra Leone, Chad and Ethiopia (all in Africa).

O'Connor (2002), reacting to the consequences of the financial crisis of the 1990s had earlier before 2008 affirmed that while much of the world embraces globalisation, it does appear that global economic stability is jeopardised. This affirmation rests mainly on the danger of what he refers to as financial contagion in a highly interdependent global economy. Financial contagion on the other hand is “the spread of a financial crisis from one country or region to other countries or regions” (O’Connor, 2002, p.22). Thus, as the 2008 financial contagion affected the entire globe, many countries including Africa have found themselves in this situation of sharing the economic blight without enjoying much of its bliss. It, therefore, becomes obvious that in an interdependent global economy “when one economy sneezes other countries catch the flu” (O’Connor, 2002, p.23). Following the consequences of the 2008 global financial meltdown, Osuntokun (The Nation, 2008, p.54) reiterates that “when the United States sneezes the world catches cold.” This is largely factual as Holt-Gimenez (2008) observes that another conjectural generator of the rise in food prices during this period that further facilitated worsening food security in Africa and some poor countries has been the growing speculative investment in raw materials since the crash in the dotcom and real estate markets in the United States which as a follow up, made institutional investors such as banks, insurance companies, investment funds among others sought for safer and more cost-effective places to invest their money and the implication of this is that a significant part of financial investment in the agricultural sector assumed a speculative character. This is to the extent that as food prices arose, the speculators directed their capital to the futures market thereby pushing the prices of grain upward, an act which further worsens food price inflation in the world. The implication of this is food crisis in many countries across the world as many people could not afford the food they needed, and malnutrition was on the increase (Lacey, 2008). This is also what is happening now as a result of the ravaging COVID-19 pandemic new normal. The global financial crisis of 2008 and the global economic recession that followed them however generated their own new normal. The new normal following the them can be captured from Edgerly (2020) note that after the recession began, large swaths of societies across the globe faced unemployment,
foreclosures on homes, and many detrimental occurrences. These negative effects on both the advanced, developed nations and least advanced and developing ones in the world notwithstanding, by contrast, for the least developed economies in Africa, the impact of the recession is more challenging due mainly to the fact that there is a widening per capita income gap between “Africa and the rest of the world - not only in absolute terms, but as well in relative terms. From this viewpoint, African countries have been left behind by globalisation” (Petersen, 2017, p.5). Emphatically, the financial crisis, economic recession, food crisis and their like have gone beyond the notion that they were mere flesh wound, easily healed with time, it rather has cut to the bone. Put in another way, the new normal of the era “postulated the world that would evolve devoid of a significant change in policy and business approaches” (El-Erian, 2010, p.12) but this never happened as Africa has remained the weeping child of the world in crises periods since then, and this is expected in this paper as what is going to happen in the COVID-19 pandemic era.

**Criticism of the Covid-19 Pandemic Era New Normal**

In the era of COVID-19 pandemic, evidence of the new normal obviously appears to be more physically felt without searching for convincing data as in some of the cases of pre- COVID-19 crises already discussed above for instance, lockdown and stay-at-home order, washing of hands more frequently more than ever before (using both water and hand sanitiser), wearing of face masks which never obtained in the previous crises moments, maintaining high level of hygienic lifestyle, and closing of national and international borders against cross-border movement of persons, goods and transport as never before and so on. These norms are prescribed as global best practices in the pandemic era. Indeed, while some of these new norms are positive to some cultures others are negative. For instance, the practice of social distancing is against many African cultures where the life of communalism has been the order of the day. Hitherto, in the Northern hemisphere countries, stay-at-home orders, restaurant and shop closures as happened in this period were never heard of (Edgerly, 2020). Yet, there is no need for disobeying the new normal notwithstanding its odds because coronavirus is a non-respecter of persons no matter class, race or clime. According to Edgerly, the US for instance, following the magnitude of the impact of COVID-19 pandemic especially in its domestic environment is once again made to feel vulnerable. At least for the first time since the 9/11 terrorist attack the US appears to be a dwindling hegemonic power in the sense that it is already at trade war with China and the same China is the source of the COVID-19 pandemic which the US could not do anything tangibly to prevent or quench not to talk about finding a vaccine for the cure domestically and then globally within the shortest possible time. In the face of these challenges, and to add salt to injury, Russia, another nation in power contestation with the US announced that it is the first country to register approved vaccine for the prevention and cure of COVID-19 in the world, of which CGTN says more than 20 countries have placed orders (CGTN, 11/8/2020). Although Russian announcement is facing controversy and challenge as the feat is being heavily criticised and so not accepted mainly by the West and its apologists the fact remains that none of them has achieved it notwithstanding the urgent need for human lives to be secure. That 130 countries are in the race of producing vaccines for COVID-19 (TVC NEWS,
2020) seems to be an indication that multilateral rather than unilateral approach to critical global issues is becoming a new normal unlike in 2003 when the global hegemon, the US unilaterally went to war against Iraq or when the global north would make the whole world wait for solutions to come from its quarters.

Ironically, the politics of new normal in the COVID-19 pandemic era as this paper argues is not largely different from those played in the past crises period especially what happened as a result of the 2008 global financial crisis and global economic recession that followed it, which although did not originate from Africa but created a lot of distortions and untold human insecurity in the nations of the continent. Following this trend, the concept of new normal as El-Erian (2010) opines, is not an attempt to capture what should happen but what is likely to happen giving the prevailing configuration of national and global factors of which some of them are inherited and others, consequences of the choices that are made. To justify this conception El-Erian (2010, p.12) then refers to the 2008 global financial crisis when “the new normal postulated the world that would evolve absent a significant change in policy and business approaches” The point here is that when the focus on policies, structures and institutions is put above that of the people it provides barriers to the handicapped. For the fact that the globalisation policies and choices after the global recession that quickly emerged from the ruins of the 2008 global financial crisis still maintain and favour the polarisation of the world into the center and periphery they are distortions to the global system as they are usually against the poor and vulnerable peoples and nations of the world especially those in Africa. Today, the COVID-19 pandemic politics is following the prevailing configuration of national and global factors as inherited and as a consequence of choice that are made. As inherited, globalisation has continued to create circumstances that continue to make global relations unequal politically, socially, economically, and technologically. Africa with a myriad of internal and external contradictions and challenges was indeed in a state of dilemma before the time of COVID-19 pandemic outbreak due historically to the vertical relations that makes almost every global crisis as demonstrated earlier to be more negatively consequential to most of the countries in the continent. In the COVID-19 pandemic era, the state of dilemma is worsening as many countries especially those in Africa seem to be incapable of withstanding the impact of the lockdown on their citizens and economies than to go borrowing abroad and or over taxing citizens. These are countries that are already in heavy debt to one or more of the following; the World Bank, International Monetary Fund, The European Union, China and so on. South Africa, arguably the biggest economy in Africa for example is facing economic contraction and surge in COVID-19 cases (close to half a million) as the IMF discloses and as a way to tackle the challenges received a loan of $4.5 billion from the same IMF (TVC NEWS, 2020) whereas the US, the biggest economy in the world also facing economic contraction (ALJAZEERA, 2020) has not gone to borrow from any of such sources. The US rather, is paying the out-of-job persons in the country $600, an amount the opposition party, the Democratic party says is too small and should be increased (ALJAZEERA, 31/07/2020). Nigeria, one of the biggest economies in Africa is also in a state of economic recession due to COVID-19 pandemic challenges as well as other reasons such as corruption and war against book haram terrorists and is receiving external loans and over-taxing
its citizens.

In the case of Nigeria during the lockdown and restriction of movement, food prices soared, transportation fares are hiked just as the pump price of fuel and electricity bills thereby making life more miserable for most of the citizens including some of those who are recently released from isolated centres as a result of COVID-19-related cases. In defending the hike in transportation using the railway sector as an instance, the Nigerian minister of transport, Mr. Rotimi Amaechi on TUESDAYLIVE programme (NTA, 28/07/2020) said that the reason for this is to recover the cost of the new trains they bought since the numbers of passengers to be carried on a trip have been reduced because of social distancing policy, a point the Director-General of Nigerian Railway Corporation, Fidet Okhira shares with him. In a similar vein, the Nigerian President, Muhammadu Buhari has defended the hike of fuel prices and electricity bills pointing at subsidy removal as a major reason. The question at this point in time is, is it proper to do all this in an era of COVID-19 pandemic catastrophe when movements of people, goods, and services as well as jobs are largely reduced? To state the obvious, as in the eras of slave trade, colonialism and the Cold War, the poorest and vulnerable in Africa in the 21st century led by the capitalists is still not free of exploitation, oppression and suppression. They are yet to be free from the historical foundation that made it so. This is so because globalisation has sustained the differentials between the developed, rich, industrialised societies and the developing, less industrialised, poor societies (especially those in Africa). In the midst of all this, it appears like Africa does not have any option than to remain dependent on the rich, industrialised nations as well as the capitalist headquarters for most of its challenges namely; politically, socially, technologically and economically (COVID-19 pandemic inclusive).

Corroborating this consequence of vertical relationship between the developing (Africa inclusive) and developed worlds (USA is the chief actor), many opine that behind this kind of politics is the grand scheme by the capitalists to perpetrate the Third World's (Africa also) dependency and serfdom. This is why globalisation which arguably had existed over many centuries before the Cold War has been brought into the forefront of international politics at the end of the war and this has generated a lot of crises since the 21st century, the cases mentioned earlier and the now COVID-19 pandemic suffice.

Prospect of Human Security in Africa in the Post Covid-19 Pandemic Era
The result of the above however, is that while the role of the government (anywhere) is to manage the resources of a country to the best advantage of its citizens, this simple relationship is distorted by unequal relationships between sectors of society and increasingly close and dependent relationship with outside forces. For example, most developing countries especially those in Africa rely on external loans for a large proportion of their revenue. These loans are made on the basis of conditions which reflect more the priorities and objectives of the donor governments or institutions than the actual budget makers, restricting the opportunities for appropriate policy in
the national budget. This has landed most African states into debts that they are finding difficult to pay. In spite of the adverse effect of the inequalities in the global structure on Africa, most leaders from the continent have made it a choice to transfer several billions of dollars of their nations’ economic resources to the rich, developed, industrialised nations in the form of trade losses, repatriated profits, debt servicing, safe haven for looted funds and so on. Through these ways, Africa has been rendered frustrated because the ugly situation makes it that the countries lack the capacity and capability of meeting the needs of their people at ordinary time but more especially during crisis moments. The cases of global war against terrorism, proliferation of small arms andammunitions, global financial crisis and economic recession that followed it, the world food price crisis and the now COVID-19 pandemic crisis stand as examples. No doubt, these crises are consequences of transnationalism propelled by the 21st century globalisation processes because even when Africa did not generate them, it has heavily carried their burden. The experiences of the 2008 global financial crisis and the economic recession that followed it, Zika virus which started in Latin America but spread across different sub-regions in Africa, Asia, Europe, the Americas and Oceania (Wogu et al, 2020), and now the COVID-19 pandemic which originated from China and traversed the globe are some of the examples cited in this work. Africa's integration into the emerging global order as a dependent, vulnerable, weak, dominated, and almost helpless periphery actor in the new division of labour and power is detrimental to the continent (Ihonvbere, 1996). The pathetic situation of Africa in the 21st Century post-Cold War globalising world based on the foregoing has made this paper to argue that if the present structure of the global system does not change based on the actions of the actors, the continent should know that it does not have any promising future. This is so due to the fact that the emergence of China as a global economic power which ought to raise Africa’s hope of having an escape route out of the US-led capitalist expansionist structure is in itself exploitative and domineering in nature. In spite of this, many African leaders still see China and the global North as messiahs for their countries’ problems notwithstanding the danger the heavy dependence on them portends for the nations and their economies just because of parochial interests. Deduction from the argument so far made however is that no matter the social, political and economic security challenges that the world may face, the leaders being a part of the international bourgeois class are bent on exploiting opportunities therein for their profit making.

Following the COVID-19 pandemic new normal politics and the race in producing preventive and curing vaccines for the disease (as many as 130 countries already in the race) in the face of multiple infected cases (22 million cases) and deaths, many people are afraid that the new normal in the post-COVID-19 pandemic era may not be different from the new normal of the old order or norm in which the poor and vulnerable peoples and nations of the world (especially those in Africa) were exploited in crisis and post-crisis situations. The gap between the rich and poor indeed widened globally during the COVID-19 pandemic lockdown. For instance, survey says gap between rich and poor pupils in primary schools widened during the lockdown (BBC World News, 01/09/2020). In Nigeria, the gap between the rich and poor extended beyond primary schools for
during the lockdown while some secondary school students who were privileged to have access to android phone or ipad and/or television sets and decoder received tutorials on air while the less privileged, poor ones whose access to these means of communication were minimal or non-existent were unfortunately left unattended to. At the tertiary education level, some institutions of higher learning used different e-learning instruments and mechanisms (such as Zoom, Webinar for example) to continue their lectures with their students who were at their homes whereas the poor, less privileged ones with particular reference to most federal institutions lacked access to the facilities and so missed the learning process. More so, during the period under discussion, some academic conferences and workshops went online through other means especially webinar and zooming. At the leadership level, some heads of states and governments had regional meetings online, one of which as confirmed by De (2020) was the ASEAN leaders meeting where they discussed about collaboration to tackle the pandemic.

In the entertainment industry, evidence has it that during the lockdown, that is when clubs, restaurants, cinemas, theatres and bars were shut down some comedians still performed by streaming live on air whereas many entertainers lacked the privilege to do the same. A club owner/stand-up comedian, Storm Xu, and Nora Yang, a young Chinese entertainer confirms this while streaming live during a CGTN programme, ICON (CGTN, 22/08/2020). However, while Storm Xu says that he performed on part-time basis through streaming, he regrets the absence of face to face interaction in the relationship between the entertainer and entertained stressing that human touch remains the best in human relations. Against the foregoing, the main point running through this paper is that the inequality gap as obtained in the previous crises and post-crisis situations instead of being bridged is being widened in the presence of a globalised economic crisis like the one generated by COVID-19 pandemic through the instrumentality of lockdown and social distancing. To this end, this is an old normal in the form of a new normal. This new normal as it is presently, is a challenge to the ailing economies and less privileged peoples and nations of the world especially those in Africa where technology and economy are showing little or no signs of genuine development since the 21st Century due largely to internal and external factors of which the crisis of globalisation is at the root. Internally, the mass of the people suffer this inequality because of their selfish and corrupt leaders who usually take their human security for granted. In the case of COVID-19 pandemic, this has not changed and that is why Dr. Princess Halliday of Virginia State University, USA, while contributing to a discussion on challenges of leadership in the new normal advises that African leaders should put the people at the center of everything, people should be the focus of everything the government is doing, people should be listened to (AIT, 02/08/2020).

In the case of technology and economy Africa lacks the capacity to tackle global inequality that is weighing down its independence from external forces and factors hence the fear many nurse that the consequences of COVID-19 pandemic policies and politics are most likely to be more negative on poor economies and less privileged people of the globe especially those in the continent (this
was socially constructed but can be socially reconstructed). In Nigeria for instance where some stakeholders are urging the government to key into digital learning (TVCNEWS, 20/08/2020) following the examples cited above, the fear this paper nurses is that both the government and most people especially the poor and less privileged may not be able to cope due to many factors chiefly; corruption and poverty. E-learning as already known is very costly. Also nursing some fear about this widening inequality in the face of a global pandemic, Pope Francis for example warns rich countries against hoarding the coronavirus vaccines (TVCNEWS, 20/08/2020). In a similar vein, W.H.O warns against monopolising COVID-19 vaccine (TVC NEWS, 20/08/2020) just as the Democratic Party Vice President nominee, Harris Kamala stresses that there is no vaccine for racism in the United States of America (Aljazeera, 20/08/2020). In line with those people that nurse the fear of COVID-19 vaccines politics in the light of the new normal, the Nigerian Vice President, prof. Yemi Osinbajo has pleaded that when developed, the vaccines should be made to be affordable and equitably distributed (NTA News, 05/09/2020). Thus, as the saying that the talking has taken place what is left is whether those the talk is directed to will be willing to do as expected remains valid, what is left now is whether the international capitalists including their collaborators in Africa will be willing to turn a new leaf considering that in the past, no matter the talk and human insecurity level in crisis and post-crisis situations they have remained recalcitrant in exploiting the poor and less privileged especially Africans. It is in this light that Bissong (2004) criticises globalisation as a virus that derives maximum profit from minimal investment. In view of this historical reality, this paper is worried about the fate of Africa following the World Bank president, David Malpass’ revelation on Ian King Live (SkyNews, 01/09/2020) that there is the likelihood that debt relief may be given to some countries that are indebted as a result of the lockdown which will help a lot to bring down their economies (developing countries especially). The worry hinges on the fact that the new normal is another trap for African countries’ (especially their poor and vulnerable people) exploitation, dependency on and serfdom to the lenders and the capitalist headquarters including the bank itself.

**Conclusion**

In all, this paper has justified that there is a significant relationship between the crisis of globalisation, human security and the politics of new normal in the 21st Century. The theory of transnationalism applied to the study in a similar vein, nailed globalisation for its borderless nature, a condition that made it that most human security crises that originated from one locality no matter how far from some others since the century, swiftly become global. Some of the cases examined are the 9/11 terrorist attack on the US soil, the 2008 global financial meltdown from the US and economic recession that followed it, zika virus from Latin America and proliferation of small arms and ammunitions. Each of these crises came with its new normal. Following the facts obtained from the electronic and print media, the paper argued that although none of these human security crises originated from Africa unfortunately, it had to bear the brunt of the politics of their new normal due mainly to being a fringe member of the globalised world as well as its leaders serving more of their parochial interest while neglecting and damning the interest of their people. The paper on this note predicts that the politics of new normal in the post-COVID-19 era is not going
to be much different since nothing much has changed in the way the global structure has been vertically arranged way back to the time Africa became co-opted into the world capitalist system, a fact that contributed largely to most African countries especially Nigeria not being able to achieve the 2015 MDGs. Put differently, since the globalisation process in the 21st Century has condoned global vertical structure and even helped to widen the gap between the rich and poor nations and people of the continent in the COVID-19 pandemic era, coupled with African leaders’ governance style which is not people-oriented and centered, most countries of the continent such as Nigeria in the post-COVID-19 era are bound to face some challenges evolving from the new normal which are going to hinder them from making appreciable strides toward attaining the 2030 SDGs. To avoid this, it is recommended that African leaders must enthrone a new governance style that places the people at the centre of everything they do considering that COVID-19 era has thrown up a new regime between the government and the governed. People should be the focus. African leaders and actors must this time socially reconstruct this type of social relations where the choice they make favours international capital instead of their people and nations by placing the people at the centre of governance above collection of loans from donor agencies and institutions which shall keep the nations perpetually indebted and so in servitude and dependency in the guise of joining the bandwagon called the new normal politics.

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