

## NEO-LIBERALISM, HUMAN SECURITY, AND THE PAN-AFRICANIST IDEAL IN RETROSPECT: SYNERGIES AND CONTRADICTIONS

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Neo-liberalism and human security have gained prominence in discourses on Africa's political economy in contemporary times. As an ideology or creed, neo-liberalism has become synonymous with post-cold war management of economic relations in the international system. It has come to be seen as the best mode for assuring efficient management of state resources and ipso facto national productive capacities. By further implication, the neo-liberal ideology has not only become the centerpiece of modern economic management practices but is also conceptualized as the best mode for the delivery of elusive human security, especially in the developing world. On the other hand, as a concept, human security in Africa has lately assumed critical importance on the basis of the unmitigated slide of Africa into a state of anomie, hopelessness, and helplessness in developmental terms. Human security, conceptualized as the security people should have in their daily lives, not only from the threat of war but also from the threat of disease, hunger, unemployment, crime, social conflict, political repression and environmental hazards conforms to the Pan-Africanist ideal in its current usage. This is because the Pan-Africanist ideal is encapsulated in the fulfillment of the developmental aspirations of Africans, both on the continent and in the diaspora. However, the state of African economies is a far cry from the ideal envisaged by Pan-Africanists. This paper intends to interrogate the tenuous relations between the neo-liberal creed and human security in Africa and the Pan-Africanist ideal. It is argued that uncontrolled neo-liberalism has supplanted human security in both its classical and modern connotations as well as the Pan-Africanist ideal. The proponents of neo-liberalism tend to ignore the expansive welfare policies in the US and the constituent states of the EU. There is therefore the need to tailor neo-liberalism to suit prevailing African conditions in order to attain the Pan-African ideal construed in terms of rapid economic growth, dignified standard of living, sovereign equity in the comity of nations, etc. The paper, therefore, delineates the key features of neo-liberalism and its modus operandi in juxtaposition with the strands of human security and Pan-Africanism with a view to interrogate and tease out the synergies and contradictions inherent in the linkages. Our tentative conclusion is that the practice or implementation of neo-liberalism in its classical form is inimical to the ideals embedded in Pan-Africanism and the neo-conceptualization of human security. Neo-liberalism can only be a positive tool for the attainment of the Pan-African ideal which in reality encapsulates human security in the classical and modern senses only if it is tamed to conform to the socio political conditions in individual African countries.

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