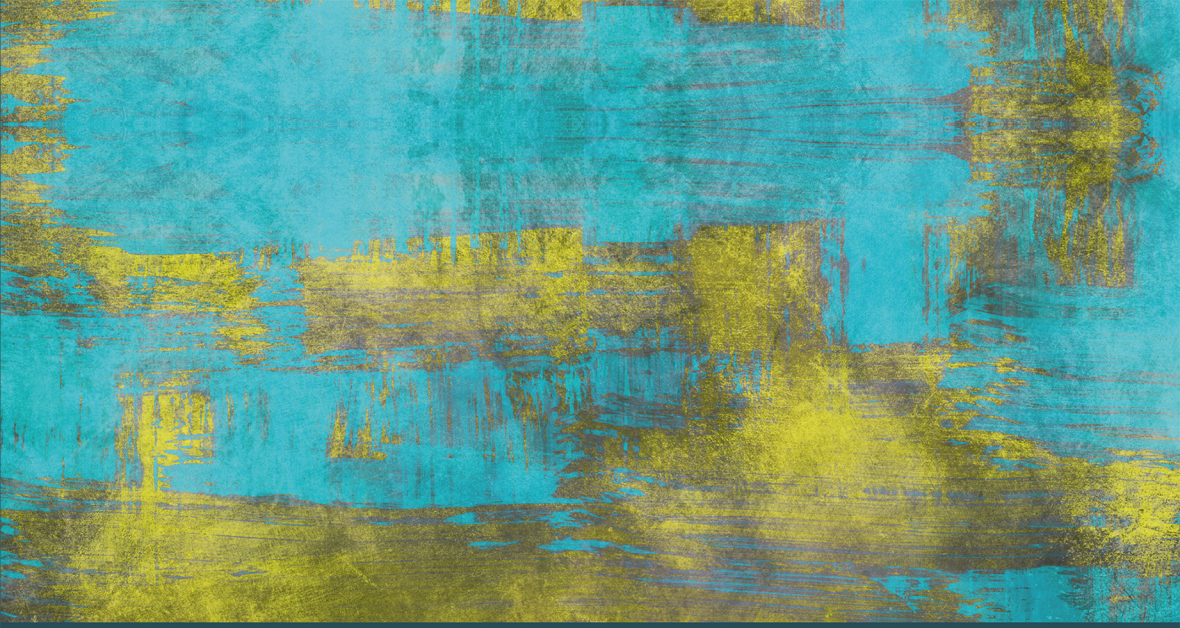

*Routledge New Security Studies*

# SECURITIZATION OUTSIDE THE WEST

## WEST AFRICAN SECURITY RECONCEPTUALISED

Christian Kaunert and Edwin Ezeokafor

# Securitization Outside the West

This book analyses securitization processes outside of the West, with a focus on Africa.

The aim of the volume is to develop an original analytical framework to explain the securitization-neo-patrimonialism dynamics in West Africa, drawing upon insights from securitization theory, sociology and psychology. Among critical voices, securitization has become the gold standard for analysing emerging challenges, such as migration, terrorism and human security. Yet, despite its broadening agenda, the framework has also been accused of bias, with a Western political context and democratic governance structure at its heart. This book aims to re-conceptualise the framework in a way that suits non-Western contexts better, notably by re-conceptualising the securitization-neopatrimonialism nexus in Africa, which gives us significant new insights into non-Western political contexts. It analyses the securitization processes among the political elites under neo-patrimonial statehood, and further stretches the conceptualisation of securitization into African statehood, which is characterised by a blurred line between the leader and the state. The volume explores the processes of securitizing threats in Liberia, Sierra Leone and wider West Africa, as well as the neo-patrimonial regimes of these states. In doing so, it explores the influence these states' neo-patrimonial regimes have on the processes of threat securitization.

This book will be of much interest to students of critical security studies, African politics and International Relations.

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# Securitization Outside the West

## West African Security Reconceptualised

**Christian Kaunert and Edwin Ezeokafor**

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**Edwin Ezeokafor**

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**Christian Kaunert**

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# Preface

This book is about Securitization in West Africa, both conceptually and empirically. It is based on many discussions that the authors of this book have shared through vivid intellectual exchanges. We are grateful to a great number of people – family members, friends and colleagues – who have helped through the various stages of the writing of this book. Without these very special people, the writing of this book would have been impossible. For Edwin, this includes especially Cyprain Okoli and Chinelo Igwilo, and his wife, Esther Ezeokafor. It also includes: Chidozie Nwankwo, Godwin Ifeako, Adenike Balogun, Pastor Luke Duru, Olakunbi Ademuliyi, Tolase Ilesami, Dr. Fatai Aborode, Gloria Emike Oyasor and Olayemi Abiola.

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Christian Kaunert and Edwin Ezeokafor
Barry/Dublin

# Introduction

The most popular concepts in the discipline of International Relations and the debates thereof are deeply rooted in western (especially Europe and North America) historical and political epistemology. The domain of the discipline does not greatly influence other social science disciplines. Rather it is constantly being influenced and it also lacks contextual dynamics. In other words, the IR discipline focuses more on European and North American political terrain without significantly accommodating socio-cultural variations of other societies. This has therefore wrongly (we argue that it is overstated) given the discipline of IR a serious bashing as a failed intellectual project (Buzan and Little, 2001). The authors of that statement made a provocative and interesting statement which some people may perceive as going a little bit too far. Another reason for this unfriendly tagging of IR also arose from what has been explained as its Westphalian straitjacket; 'the strong tendency to assume that the model established in seventeenth century Europe should define what the international system is for all times and places' (Buzan and Little, 2001; 25).

The sub-discipline of security studies is not an exception to this intellectual parochialism – the Westphalian and Eurocentric bias in understanding security. From the realists (Morgenthau, 1965), to neo-realists (Waltz, 1979) and the neo-liberals (Keohane and Nye, 1977), the focus of the security debate remained on the location of the state (a Westphalian contraption) in explaining international security dynamics. The discussions coming from these various corners were anchored on a certain historical or founding problematique created by the First World War, the Second World War and the Cold War which were mainly European and Northern American creations. The intellectual world was fed with a realist perspective of security along the state-military-power line. While the neo-liberals differed a little, they still leaned towards the primacy of the state as the major actor and referent object in the security debate. The problem with this lies with the Westphalian understanding of the state which does not appreciate other societies from other cultures at various stages of socio-political development. This narrow way of viewing global politics meant that even security studies was seen as strictly addressing issues of military power and national/

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state security and paying little or no attention to emerging challenges such as migration, ethnic minorities, intra-state and cross-border security issues, human security challenges, environmental challenges and terrorism.

Shifting the goal post of security studies from that traditional standpoint eventually became 'something of a cottage industry' as observed by David Baldwin (1997; 5). There are now critical security studies, emancipatory security and human security studies (Krause, and Williams 1997; Booth, 1991; Kaldor, 2007) creating a cacophony of voices on the same subject. It is apparent that one of the most popular and successful of these efforts has been the securitization theory of the Copenhagen School (Waever, 1995; Buzan et al, 1998; Buzan, and Waever, 2003), which has generated a lot of commentaries and footnotes (Booth, 1991; 37). However, while Buzan and Little accused the discipline of IR of being a Westphalian straitjacket, he and his other colleagues in the securitization project can be argued to have become guilty of the same bias (cf, Waever, 1995, Buzan et al, 1998 and Buzan and Waever, 2003). The idea of securitization was developed and applied consciously or unconsciously aimed at established political contexts and democracies of Europe. Even later works and commentaries on the subject of securitization were to a considerable extent not significantly different (Huysmans, 1998, 2000; Balzacq, 2008; Karyotis and Patrikios, 2010; Leonard, 2010). To this effect, Claire Wilkinson (2007) questioned whether securitization theory could be useful outside a European security and political environment.

Can the securitization framework rid itself of its Eurocentric parochialism in order to accommodate other security contexts and political structures? If we accept the general logic of securitization – that there is an existential threat, a securitizing actor and an emergency action based on a specific rhetorical process and acquiescence by a given audience – how do we unpack and demarcate their boundaries in non-western security environment and political culture? The Copenhagen School rule is that 'a discourse that takes the form of presenting something as an existential threat to a referent object does not by itself create securitization; that is the securitizing move, but the issue is securitized only if and when the audience accepts is as such' (Buzan et al, 1998; 25). This is about the only discussion on audience in the framework – an important element of the securitization process. To this effect, Leonard and Kaunert (2011) have made the argument that the idea of audience has been under-theorised. Vuori (2008) also argued that even in military regimes outside the usual established democracies, military leaders require and do have audiences to carry out the process of securitizing threats. The challenge therefore is on how to identify the formal and informal audiences especially in non-western political cultures.

Significantly, Wilkinson (2007) also advocated for some contextualisation of the security environment or the region in order to appreciate the region's security dynamics. In line with this, Balzacq (2005) goes further to point out the over-simplification, generalisation and universal application of the speech-act in securitization especially with regard to the idea of an audience

disregarding differences in security environments; 'including the context, the psycho-cultural disposition of the audience, and the power that both speaker and listener bring to the interaction' (Balzacq, 2005; 172). Applying the concept of securitization in non-western societies such as Africa will factor in the difference in political development before identifying the audiences. The issue of context is very important and in the context of Africa, the attention is focused on the neo-patrimonial statehood – patronage politics. Here neo-patrimonialism is explained as the hybrid system of leadership in which the formal legal bureaucratic model of authority mixes with the informal political ties in a power relations mainly characterised by patron-client favour for support exchange.

This book conceptualises an interface between the concept of securitization, the process of construction of security threats, and the interface with neo-patrimonialism. It analyses the securitization processes among the political elites in neo-patrimonial statehood. It further analyses the relationship of those neo-patrimonial elites with outside actors that become involved in securitization processes. It further stretches the conceptualisation of securitization beyond the original European security environment into other regions; for example, African statehood characterised by a blurred line between leader and state. The political elite for clarification stands for a group of individuals who wield much power and wealth at the corridors of political power. They can come from the military, media, religious, corporate or bureaucratic backgrounds. They are intricately connected and control the decision making of the state. The book develops an original analytical framework that draws upon insights from both securitization theory, sociology and psychology. In so doing, the book bridges the gap between the most commonly used approaches in the study of African security and synthesises this with ontological security.

This book builds on the classical literature on securitization and neo-patrimonialism, as well as subsequent works which focused on various elements of these concepts. It examines a few cases in West Africa in order to explain the securitization-neo-patrimonialism dynamics. The book seeks to make vital contributions to the literature by suggesting: (a) there is an absence of an institutionalised and non-personalised securitization framework in neo-patrimonial statehood; and (b) what is defined as a security threat is a function of the narrow threat perception of the neo-patrimonial states' leaders at national and sub-regional levels. Thus, theoretically, the book introduces a new securitization-neo-patrimonialism framework for security analysis outside Europe and the West, a framework based on a synthesis of the concepts of securitization and neo-patrimonialism.

## Securitization/Neo-patrimonialism Nexus

Securitization has been defined as a speech-act process 'through which an inter-subjective understanding is constructed within a political community

to treat something as an existential threat to a valued referent object and to enable a call for urgent and exceptional measures to deal with the threat' (Buzan et al, 1998; 30, Buzan and Waever, 2003; 491). But the threat only becomes securitized 'only if and when the audience accepts it as such' (Buzan et al, 1998; 25). Through the speech-act process, an issue is tagged as a security threat by a securitizing actor and through some rhetorical speech or persuasion an audience finds some resonance with the speech or argument and the issue is treated as a security threat requiring an emergency action to be contained. In other words, no issue is objectively a security issue but a securitizing actor places recognition on it according to security perceptions. According to Williams (2003; 513) 'in securitization theory, "security" is treated not as an objective condition but as the outcome of a specific social process: the social construction of security issues'. The identity of the securitizing actor(s) is made clear – 'political leaders, bureaucracies, governments, lobbyists, and pressure groups' (Buzan et al, 1998; 40). It is easier to locate the actor and the audience in an established democracy or political order. The identity and roles of the audience are clearly known. But it is more complicated in non-democratic settings. This is because of the blurred line in the power relations among the political elite; the actors and their client followers and audiences. It is therefore important to unpack the audience and context. But before doing that it is important to bring out few criticisms against the theory of securitization.

Since Barry Buzan and his colleagues introduced an innovation into security studies through the concept of 'securitization' (Buzan, 1991; Waever, 1995, Buzan et al, 1998), it has attracted both positive and negative comments. The project nurtured in Copenhagen, Denmark which McSweeny (1996) 'christened' the 'Copenhagen School' has become famous for its paradigm shift on security studies. It shifted security discourse from the traditional realist state-military-power perspective to other referent objects. The Copenhagen project has brought into focus several security threats and aided in security analysis of various regions of the world, especially Europe. Much as the contribution of the 'securitization concept' to security studies is appreciated, it is riddled with loopholes. The focus here will be more on those issues that this book seeks to address especially in the context of non-western security environment, particularly neo-patrimonial statehood in Africa.

In the first instance, there is a serious issue with the idea of audience in the securitization process. In the same manner, the idea of audience as articulated by the Copenhagen School has been criticised as being undertheorised (see Leonard and Kaunert, 2011; 57–70). The point is that for a security actor to declare any threat a serious issue meriting a measure outside normal politics – exceptional and emergency approaches – the actor should be able to convince (perlocutionary effect) the public or an audience who will permit the speaker or accede to his argument. Balzacq (2011, 9) proposed that 'to persuade the audience (e.g. the public) that is, to achieve a

perlocutionary effect, the speaker has to tune his/her language to the audience's experience'. On the surface this is very easy but when one considers the complexity of publics and differences in political orders, securitization in its simplistic form becomes harder to apply, especially in Africa. Williams (2003; 7) posited that 'this raises questions about who counts as a "significant audience" and how this idea should be applied to states or organisations that do not boast a functioning public sphere' or an established democratic decision making process (Vuori, 2008; 68).

Concerned about this ambiguity as to who constitutes an audience and how to assess its security threat argument, Leonard and Kaunert (2011) made a profound contribution in reconceptualising this aspect of securitization concept. Whilst significantly advancing the debate, it is simultaneously restricted to well-established liberal democracies. This book agrees with Vuori (2008), who applied securitization to non-democratic orders, but it shifts its focus to Africa which is inundated with neo-patrimonial, authoritarian statehood and regimes. This, according to Vuori (2008; 66), is very important in order to appreciate the idea of securitization; 'If Securitization Studies is to be an encompassing research programme, it should take into account security speech and politics in all types of political systems'.

The Copenhagen School of Security Studies ascribed a special position or role to the 'audience' in the securitization process. Buzan et al (1998; 30, 31) argued that 'securitization, like politicization, has to be understood as an essentially intersubjective process… securitization is intersubjective and socially constructed'. The emphasis is on the intersubjective character of the process of securitization. If it is intersubjective, it therefore requires a dialogue or a consensus for effectiveness. At one end of the spectrum is a securitizing actor and at the other end is an audience who accedes to the reasoning of the securitizing actor. Buzan et al (1998; 25) again argued that 'a discourse that takes the form of presenting something as an existential threat to referent object does not by itself create securitization – this is securitizing move but the issue is securitized only if and when the audience accepts it as such'. Other considerations of the audience can also be found in Buzan et al (1998; 34). Granted that securitization is accepted as speech-act process, they argued that 'the speech-act approach says only that it is the actor who by securitizing an issue – and the audience by accepting the claim – makes it a security issue'. In order to further strengthen the argument, Buzan et al (1998; 31) stated that 'successful securitization is not decided by the securitizer but by the audience of the security speech act'. It is not argued that the idea of an audience in the securitization process is not accepted, but as other analysts have argued (see for instance Balzacq, 2005; 173; McDonald, 2008; and Vuori, 2008) clarity is demanded in order to benefit security analysis of especially undemocratic regimes and uninformed public.

Buzan et al (1998; 40) submit that 'a securitizing actor is someone, or a group, who performs the security speech act. Common players in this role are political leaders, bureaucracies, governments, lobbyists, and pressure

groups' (at least in advanced democracies). One would expect that such attempt would apply to clarify who an audience is within the securitization framework. Leonard and Kaunert (2011) stepped in to clear the conceptual fog around the idea of audience in securitization analysis. According to Leonard and Kaunert:

> The role of the audience in securitization processes remains significantly under-theorised in the Copenhagen School's formulation of securitization theory. Although Buzan, Waever and de Wilde emphasise that securitization is an intersubjective process, in which the audience seemingly plays a crucial role, this concept remains rather vague and underspecified. How it could be operationalised in empirical studies is also far from clear.
>
> (Leonard and Kaunert, 2011; 50)

Leonard and Kaunert (2011) built their reconceptualization of the audience on a key suggestion by Balzacq (2005; 172–173) that securitization should not be interpreted wholly as a speech act but rather as a strategic practice amalgamating several 'circumstances including the context, the psycho-cultural disposition of the audience, and the power that both speaker and listener bring to the interaction'. The speech act model presents securitization as a sustained strategic action aimed at convincing a target audience to accept based on what it knows about the world. But Balzacq (2005; 172) proposes to recast this speech act model by elevating 'securitization above its normative setting and in so doing ensconces it in the social context, a field of power struggles in which securitizing actors align on a security issue to swing the audience's support toward a policy or course of action'. The idea here is that the actor has to find a platform or line of argument that will effectively resonate with or swing the audience in full support of the intended line of action. Segregating these issues will make the securitization approach empirically more operational especially in West Africa.

Other suggestion came in form of Vuori's (2008) proposition of possibility of multiple audiences depending on specific contexts and 'specific socio-historical situations' (Leonard and Kaunert, 2011; 61). This is very significant in the African context where there is the possibility of diverse allegiances, ethnic cleavages and interests. The audience during an inter-ethnic war in West Africa certainly will be different from the audience when issues of cross border crimes, illicit drugs and illegal weapons for instance are being securitized by national governments or a sub-regional body. Vuori (2008, 72) therefore submits that 'audiences depend on the function the securitization act is intended to serve'. It may also be difficult in societies where issues of religion and politics are intricately interwoven (Karyotis and Patrikios, 2010; 13).The audience may not necessarily be the public. It could also be members of government institutions and representatives whose political support is very important. Such support has been classified as

formal support whilst the one from the public is moral support, which frequently is not enough to move an issue to the realm of securityness (see Balzacq, 2005; 185; Leonard and Kaunert, 2011; 62; and Roe, 2008). Beyond the European security environment and far away from institutionalised democracies are clusters of security structures hugely influenced by political culture characterised by dynamics of favour-for-support, big man-small man power relations. This seriously affects the workings of securitization processes and makes the theory unworkable in its original format. The next section unpacks the concept of neo-patrimonialism and how it works.

### *Patrimonialism – Neo-patrimonialism continuum*

In an interwoven labyrinth of 'big man-small man' networks of favour for support, the political elite in Africa have monopolised both the tangible and intangible resources of the state to maintain their hold on power and define the security pattern of their individual countries. The preceding section dissected the body of the securitization framework especially as it relates to the securitizing actor and the audience. Borrowing from Leonard and Kaunert's (2011) contribution, the intention is to advance and stretch the frontier of the Eurocentric and under-theorised concept to benefit the discourse on African security in a setting of neo-patrimonial statehood: who frames the threats and to what extent the neo-patrimonial character of the state plays a role in securitization process in Africa, especially since the end of the Cold War? This section starts by discussing the idea of neo-patrimonialism and synthesises it with securitization before moving on to operationalise the synergy.

There has been a significant effort on the part of the Africanists from the African divide to deny the influence neo-patrimonialism can have on the whole workings of the state (Mkandawire, 2015; 106–136) and an overstatement or distortion of the dynamics of the patrimonial system (Bayart et al, 1999; 131). Nothing can better explain the trend or direction of a state's policy than its internal dynamics. Taylor (2010; 2) remarked that 'erroneous is the unwillingness to acknowledge that the state-society complex evident across many parts of sub-Saharan Africa has critical implications and a vital – possibly decisive – influence upon many aspects of the continent's international relations'. Falola and Heaton (2006; 18) argued that the 'nature of the patron-client system in a country is necessary to understand the behaviour and activities of members of the political class and warlords'. Part of the reason for this disagreement is probably because the issue of patrimonialism has been painted in a negative light. It should be understood as an integral part of the African society that has been bastardised and capitalised on for personal aggrandisement by the political class.

The aim here is to explore this system that has been variously dubbed the 'politics of the belly' (Bayart, 1993, 228–259), the 'politics of belonging' (Chabal, 2009; 43–64), the 'state-society complex' (Taylor, 2010; 1–8) and the 'politics of regime survival' (Clapham, 1996; 4). What is significant in

these works is their total recognition of the agency of African states in their international relations or their political development whilst the extent to which it affects the construction of security threats in Africa remains largely uncharted. Patrimonialism therefore is a system of 'personal leadership on the basis of loyalties that do not require any belief in the ruler's unique personal qualification, but are inextricably linked to material incentives and rewards' (Guenther, 1968; 194–206). This is an adaptation of Max Weber's types of authority based on legal authority; traditional authority and charismatic authority (see Weber, 1947; especially 304–350). Without going into much detail, it will just highlight the essential elements of Weber's (1947) thesis and show how the concepts of authority apply to African states.

According to Weber (1947), legal authority is where the person in authority exercises power not because of his person but based on a legal document and/or agreement – for instance the constitution establishing the authority. The traditional authority on the other hand respects not any given agreement but is more representative of ancient traditions and is the custodian of the established culture. Obedience is not to the person but the traditions, precepts and the spirit of the ancestors. The third variant in the Weberian model of authority is charismatic which hinges on the natural charisma for leadership that the person in authority (usually the chief) seems to possess. 'The chief, as the embodiment of the living community, the point of contact with its ancestral past, and the trustee of its generational future is usually surrounded by highly elaborate rituals that emphasise all or any combination of these sacral roles'(Le Vine, 1980; 659).

The patrimonial system of authority can accordingly be said to draw from a combination of the traditional and charismatic authority. The chief gains 'legitimacy' from being a custodian of traditional ways of the people and a certain heroism he might have displayed in wars against the people's enemies. Instead of a bureaucratic staff, his staff is drawn from his household members, slaves, personal retainers and also from his cronies who are beholden to him in a favour-for-support reciprocity. The pre-colonial patrimonial authority in Africa – whether headed by Shaka of Zulu kingdom, Osei Tutu of Ashanti confederation or other renowned rulers such as Othman dan Fodio and Samori – fits well into this 'big man-small man' arrangement. It must be recognised that the chief does not have the freedom to do as he pleases because he is bound under a certain unwritten constitutionalism that does not allow him to overstep his bound or else he would incur the wrath of the community and could be deposed. This description of authority under a patrimonial system is significant because it illustrates that it is a system that has survived over the years. It was not a negative system per se and should not be mistaken for authoritarianism, exclusiveness or totalitarianism but part of the everyday life of the people. It has also evolved into different things for different people and has been equally bastardised (see Price, 1974; 172–204; Lemarchand and Legg, 1972; 149–178; Theobald, 1982; 548–559; Kaufman, 1974; 254–308).

It is equally noteworthy that patrimonialism is not restricted to Africa whether in its traditional pre-colonial form or in the post-colonial fashion. For example, Weber (1947) identified the existence of such a system in Japan, the Middle East and even in feudal Europe. Guenther (1968; 198) also suggested that behind the fabled charismatic appeal of President John F. Kennedy of America was actually a Kennedy 'clan', a clique of kitchen cabinet members, and his personal staff who were beholden to him in an intricate web of reciprocity. The same could also be said of Post-Cold War Russia, the inheritor of much of the former Soviet politburo machinery which has survived to present day. In other words, every leadership of any government probably has a veneer of personal leadership arising from an old platform of patrimonialism whether in the advanced institutionalised bureaucracies or in the blurred potpourri system of developing democracies. The argument is that patrimonialism in Africa has been practiced in an extreme form, thereby undermining the benefits of the system. In summary, patrimonialism in its default form is not a negative system. Secondly, it is part and parcel of the workings of all traditional societies – Africa, America, Asia and Europe. In other words, it is not restricted to Africa. Finally, its bastardisation in Africa especially came as a result of ethnic and class consciousness originating from their colonial experiences.

The evolution of patrimonialism with a 'neo' prefix started in the 1980s with the works of Medrad (1982) and Clapham (1985). It came to be seen as the corrupt and bastardised form of patrimonialism which was regarded as a critical part of African society which the ruling elite latched on to for personal benefit once they were in power. Ever since then it has assumed a prominent place in the literature on African studies (Clapham, 1982; Bratton and Van de Walle, 1997; Chabal and Daloz, 1999; William, 2003; Erdman and Engel, 2007; DeGrassi, 2008; and Pitcher et al, 2009). While patrimonialism was seen in terms of social capital as a way of explaining political cohesion in Africa societies (Theobald, 1982; 555), neo-patrimonialism is 'regarded as a functional threat to the peaceful political development of African states and the development of societies in general' (Erdman and Engel, 2007; 97).

The salient feature of the neo-patrimonial system of authority is that the Weberian rational-legal bureaucracy is inconsequential. In other words, even though there are institutions and bureaucracies, they are personal tools in the hands of the ruler to wield his authority over the people. It is neo-patrimonial because it is a medley of tradition and modernity in which the Prince-leader controls the whole modern state apparatuses including the security sector in the same way the chief in the traditional authority in pre-colonial days would do. Any semblance of dichotomy between the public and private is a mere charade as 'these rulers bear the national synonym of sovereign statehood in the manner of "l'Etat, c'est moi"' (Boas, 2001; 699). Kamuzu Banda was Malawi personified as Nkrumah was the embodiment of Ghana. Zaire (DRC) was the personal property of General Mobutu as

Houphet Boigny was seen as 'father' of the people of Ivory Coast. The African variant of the Machiavellian Prince will not tolerate any opposition to the seat of state power as he uses the state's resources to securitize any semblance of opposition, control the military, the police, the judiciary and in some cases the media are seriously circumscribed and gagged while the constitution is severely manipulated, all in the bid to ensure the survival of the 'big man' in the state house (see Clapham, 1996; 3 and Cammack, 2007; 604–605).

What lubricates the tool of neo-patrimonialism and keeps it functioning is the oil of resources, in the form of wealth accruing from the abundant natural resources in many of the post-colonial states in Africa under the control of individual rulers. Where a state is lacking in natural resources or the price slumps, the 'hand-out' – aid, loans and grants from foreign donor patrons – become a 'pull factor' towards a competition to control the state power in order to be in control of such funds. In both cases, the contracts, the mining licenses, oil blocks and choice appointments are handed out to the patron's faithful 'servants' 'friends' (local and foreign), family members or people from his ethnic group (see McFerson, 2010; 342–344) and for Chabal and Daloz (1999; 81–87) that is the way Africa works. For Richards (1996; xviii), the Sierra Leone war as well as the wars in Liberia, Guinea Bissau, Congo DR, Cote d'Ivoire and the restiveness in the Niger Delta region of Nigeria, are all 'a product of this protracted, post-colonial crisis of patrimonialism'. Let it be quickly reiterated that like traditional patrimonialism, the 'neo' version is not in any way restricted to post-colonial states of Africa. Taylor (2010; 3) and McFerson, (2010; 343) have noted that it can also be identified in other places such as Ukraine, North Korea, Kazakhstan, Turkmenistan, Myanmar, Indonesia, Russia and various Latin American nations (see also, Lemarchand and Legg, 1972; Clapham, 1982; Fattom, 2002).

The impetus for the intricacies and dynamics of neo-patrimonialism in Africa lies in what Chabal (2009; 43–64) termed the 'politics of belonging', in which the kinship affiliation is very strong and the people always want to identify with where they come from. The abuse of this by the political elite becomes an extreme manifestation of neo-patrimonialism. This can be evidenced from the cases of 'indigene and stranger', 'insider and outsider' politics in Africa and of course the ethnic favouritism pervading the political landscape of Africa. It can be safe to suggest that neo-patrimonialism in Africa is as a result of a struggle by a continent stuck between a need to find its route back to its identity and a need to benefit from the modernisation and the wave of democratisation especially after the end of Cold War politics. Empirical cases will aid us in understanding the dynamics of neo-patrimonialism and securitization in Africa. The two interventions in West Africa (Liberia and Sierra Leone) by the ECOWAS community at the end of the Cold War in the 1990s are used here to bring out the relationship. It is demonstrated that unlike the way securitization works in European

security environment, the concept will have to be reconceptualised to fit neo-patrimonial statehood in Africa. The question of who the audience is in such context has to be defined. It will be seen that the character of the audience also differs according to the context.

## The aim of the book

The aim of this book is to analyse the securitization processes outside of the West – in Africa. Securitization is arguably the most successful theoretical framework to analyse security beyond the military confines with the nation state as the dominant actor within the international system. Amongst the critical voices, securitization has become the gold standard for analysing emerging challenges, such as migration, terrorism, human security, intra-state and cross-border issues, as well as environmental challenges. Yet, despite its broadening agenda, the framework has also been accused of a Western bias with a Western political context and democratic governance structure at its heart. This book aims to re-conceptualise the framework in a way that suits a non-Western context better, notably by re-conceptualising the securitization-neopatrimonialism nexus in Africa, which gives us significant new insights into non-Western political contexts. It analyses the securitization processes among the political elites in a neo-patrimonial statehood. It further stretches the conceptualisation of securitization into African statehood, characterised by a blurred line between the leader and the state. Furthermore, the securitization framework used in this book draws upon the Copenhagen School's work, but alters it in two significant ways. First, it also considers security practices, rather than just security discourses. Second, it conceptualises security as a continuum, rather than equating it with survival.

From a theoretical point of view, the book develops an original analytical framework that draws upon insights from both securitization theory, sociology and psychology. In so doing, the book bridges the gap between the most commonly used approaches in the study of African security and ontological security. The use of ontological security, developed over the last ten years in International Relations, has proved helpful to better understand the emotional reasons behind the apprehensions and fears of African citizens (Croft and Vaughan-Williams, 2017; Della Sala, 2017, 2018; Kinnvall, 2004; Laing, 2010; Mälksoo, 2018; Manners, 2002; Rumelili, 2014, 2015b, 2018). Ontological security cornerstone is the analysis of autobiographical narratives and routines and how they are used as vehicles to dispel one's anxiety. Stevens and Vaughan-Williams also applied the ontological security lens to analyse narratives and better conceptualise and understand how different perceptions and experiences of menaces to public security fluctuate according to identity, ethnicity, religion, class, gender, location and generation (Croft, 2012; Croft and Vaughan-Williams, 2017). Moreover, according to Catarina Kinnvall, an ontological security approach allows us to unveil how fears and anxieties influence groups and states, and to understand the

psycho-socio-political effects that shape political movements and policy debate at the African security level (Kinnvall et al., 2018). Based on the initial works of Laing and Giddens (Giddens, 1991; Laing, 2010), ontological security seeks, therefore, to dissect biographical narratives and repeated practices as a way to understand how these practices outline political choices and its consequences. From an empirical point of view, the book covers an application of securitization in the West African context. Specifically, it will be empirically anchored on the intervention of the Economic Community of West African States in the crises that engulfed the two states of Liberia and Sierra Leone at the end of the Cold War in the 1990s. Considering that the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) was not ab initio a security arrangement but rather an economic organisation, it is important to find out what led to the transformation, the creation of ECOWAS Monitoring Group (ECOMOG) and eventual intervention in the conflict areas; the power play among the leaders. From a methodological point of view, the research presented in this book has been conducted on the basis of methodological triangulation, between research interviews, documentary analysis and secondary sources.

The book explores the interface between the processes of securitizing threats in Liberia, Sierra Leone and wider West Africa and the neo-patrimonial regime of the states. By doing so, it explores the influence Liberia, Sierra Leone and West Africa's neo-patrimonial regimes have on the processes of threat securitization. Liberia and Sierra Leone are important because of their similarities and differences in historical and political terms and yet manifesting the neo-patrimonial political culture and its influence on the processes of securitization. Their role in understanding the security direction and processes of securitization in West Africa is appreciated too. This book builds upon the classical literature on the concepts of securitization and neo-patrimonialism and subsequent works focussing on various elements of these concepts. Securitization occurs when an issue is presented as an existential threat to a referent object by a securitizing actor, making emergency actions urgently required and justifying procedures or approaches outside the normal political processes (Buzan et al, 1998; 24). Neo-patrimonialism on the other hand, is a hybridization of informal systems of political leadership with the formal processes of state authority, such as institutionalised bureaucracies and constitutional procedures of government. According to Batton and Van de Walle (1997; 62), a neo-patrimonial system is found in 'those political systems in which the customs and patterns of patrimonialism co-exist with, and suffuse, rational-legal institutions'. Neo-patrimonialism is characterised by a blurred line between what is private and public in political leadership. It involves deployment of public resources by the neo-patrimonial leader for political favour for support in patron-client power relations.

Scholars of securitization (Waever, 1995; Buzan et al, 1998; Buzan and Waever, 2003) have argued that the issue of security is a speech-act process;

a linguistic and rhetorical tagging of an issue as a security threat meriting priority of action 'because if the problem is not handled now it will be too late, and we will not exist to remedy our failure' (Buzan et al, 1998; 26). In other words, this argument does not subscribe to any objective reality of a security threat; 'security is determined by actors and in this respect is subjective' (Buzan et al, 1998; 31). But it does not stop at that level because security is not framed by individuals alone. It is suggested that securitization is intersubjective and socially constructed because of the role of the audience in the processes. Securitization and the classical literature on it revolve around a particular security environment of Europe. Subsequent works on the idea of securitization have recognised the strengths and weakness of the concept. For example, Karyotis and Patrikios (2010; 43–57) have noted that the emphasis of empirical work on securitization is only on political discourse and neglects religious discourse. This fails to capture the complementary or competing discourses on issues such as migration. This is important particularly in countries where national and religious identities are interwoven (Karyotis and Patrikios, 2010; 43). McDonald (2008) has drawn attention to the narrowness of this in three areas. Form: it recognises dominant actors in the securitization processes without appreciating other representations, such as images or material practices. Another is context: which defines securitization just at the immediate moment of intervention without taking cognisance of incremental or developing processes. Finally there is nature, which designates security in a negative light. Balzacq (2005) goes further to point out the over-simplification, generalisation and universal application of the speech-act in securitization especially with regard to the idea of an audience disregarding differences in security environments; 'including the context, the psycho-cultural disposition of the audience, and the power that both speaker and listener brings to the interaction' (Balzacq, 2005; 172).

Along this line of over-simplification and generalisation, we will also appreciate Karyotis and Patrikios' (2010; 21) remark that applying the idea of securitization to issues such as migration especially in Europe 'is a fallacy that can be convincingly refuted'. The argument is that securitizing migration 'legitimizes repressive measures against migrants, particularly those that match a given ethnic, religious or political profile … mobilizes a "we" against a supposedly threatening "them"' (Karyotis and Patrikios, 2010; 16). It may be a political strategy by the European political elite 'who often see themselves as defenders of national purity and societal security … feel that their role demands that they deal with immigrants and asylum seekers as a threat to communal harmony and cultural homogeneity' (Karyotis and Patrikios, 2010; 20) in Europe. Leonard and Kaunert (2011; 57–76) took note of a lack of clarity on the idea of audience in the securitization process and suggested a recast of the concept for fuller understanding and application. This is because Buzan et al (1998; 31) suggested that 'successful securitization is not decided by the securitizer but by the audience of the security

speech act'. But they left it there without elucidation as to who the audience could be. This has been identified by Leonard and Kaunert (2011; 57) 'as a problematic and under-theorised aspect of the securitization framework… it is important for the framework to offer a clear conceptualization of who constitutes the audience and how its acceptance is assessed'.

With all its weaknesses, it is still appreciated that the idea of securitization has benefited security analysis and it has been applied to different security issues in Europe to emphasise the failure of politics of securitization (Huysmans, 1998, 2000; Balzacq, 2008; Karyotis and Patrikios, 2010; Leonard, 2010). These authors also gave much attention to the securitization of issues around the European security environment without applying it to some other security regions of the world. This has arguably made securitization exclusively European an application. Wilkinson (2007) even argued that securitization in its original Copenhagen School form cannot be applied outside Europe to other less democratic regimes of the world. It is acknowledged that Abrahamsen (2005); O'Manique (2005), Williams (2008) and Haacke and Williams (2008) have set the pace for stretching the boundaries of contexts for application of securitization to other areas, including Africa. However, prior to this book there remained a gap in the literature in terms of the application of the securitization concept to West Africa as a regional security complex and to the regimes in specific states, such as Liberia and Sierra Leone.

Disparate works have appeared which also focus on (a) different aspects of Africa's security discourse such as issues of conflicts, wars, security sector reform, emerging security issues in Africa or West Africa in the post-Cold War epoch and very recently, the USA-African security relation (Oyebade and Alao, 1998; Adekeye and Ismail, 2004; Bryden et al, 2008; Kalu and Kieh, 2014); (b) the character of neo-patrimonial statehood in Africa (Bayart, 1993; Clapham, 1993; Reno, 1995, 1996; Bratton and van de Walle, 1997; Chabal and Daloz, 1999; Chabal, 2009; Taylor and Williams, 2008). Also, there has not been a proper and specific analytical coordination in the literature between these aspects of neo-patrimonialism, security challenges and the processes of securitization which is a serious gap in understanding the security dynamics in Africa, West Africa and specifically, Liberia and Sierra Leone. This does not allow a good understanding of the security dynamics of the sub-region of West Africa.

## Liberia and Sierra Leone as case studies

There are 16 countries in the sub-region of West Africa and a good number of them are possibilities as case studies in examining the security direction of West Africa since the end of the Cold War. To select Liberia and Sierra Leone as the most useful and appropriate choices, certain considerations were made. In the first instance, these two cases were identified in order to test the proposition in the analytical framework – analysing neo-

patrimonialism-securitization nexus at three levels, national government, regional and transnational. This is significant in terms of allowing comparable analysis of two states that will help in the overall examination of the relationship between neo-patrimonial statehood and securitization processes in the sub-region of West Africa. It is also important to point out the issue of homogeneity or otherwise of the two cases. This arose from their historical antecedence. Liberia and Sierra Leone share commonalities when one considers that they both accommodated repatriated slaves, which seriously impacted upon the subsequent neo-patrimonial political character and direction of the two countries (Clapham, 1976). However, they also diverged along that same line; in Liberia for instance, the entrance of slaves eventually partitioned the state into native Liberians and Americo-Liberians. The political development of Liberia was immensely influenced by that factor. It introduced into the state ethnic consciousness which in turn gave rise to neo-patrimonialism at ethnic level. This has seriously influenced the manner in which threats are perceived and securitized. In Sierra Leone, ethnicity and religion were not such salient issues. The population is not divided along these lines like in Liberia. The society is more compact even though it has ethnic groups and more than one religion. However neo-patrimonialism was still entrenched in it and it equally influenced how threats are perceived and securitized. These variables make it appropriate to look at neo-patrimonial influence on the construction of security threats in these two states from separate backgrounds.

In terms of the research's requirements, several necessary factors were identified. Since the study is on the construction of security in West Africa, the two cases represent very well the ECOWAS involvement in threat assessment, securitization and intervention. This approach allows one to see how neo-patrimonial relationships in these activities influenced the securitization of issues especially at the sub-regional level. In short, the case studies are representative of complex diplomacy in the ECOWAS region and transnational manifestation of neo-patrimonial influence in the securitization of threats in West Africa. Moreover, realistically if one must depend on the activities of ECOWAS to make good observations and develop a satisfactory explanation, it will mean going to other places where it has intervened such as Mali, Guinea Bissau or Cote d'Ivoire. No other two states among the states in West Africa manifest similar kind of similarities and differences like Liberia and Sierra Leone especially in the assessment of the nexus between neo-patrimonialism and securitization processes. Liberia and Sierra Leone also provided a safe research environment in terms of language, familiarity with the terrain and having access to vital information (even though this was also to some extent hampered in Liberia and Sierra Leone; getting information in Africa for research is not always easy because of some unnecessary bureaucratic bottlenecks). Quite a substantial amount of information on the two countries is in the public domain for everybody to read. However, assessing the security situation and threat perception needed some

first-hand information and physical contact with the region which was easy because of the proximity of the states as one could easily (if willing) travel through their borders.

The case studies also represent a particular phase in the history of security in West Africa. The end of the Cold War was a defining moment in the history of West Africa's security discourse. For the first time, the sub-region took its fate in its own hands and not looking to the West for assistance on security issues. The sub-regional body ECOWAS transmuted from its economic remit to security and has not looked back since then. The case studies were therefore a testing ground for this venture with all manifestations of neo-patrimonial relationships and the influence on the process of securitization. These criteria are further explained and applied in the empirical chapters.

## Research methodology

The purpose of this section is to outline in detail the techniques employed in the process of this study. The broad approach to this study is based on qualitative methodology, a term that refers to a wide spectrum of methods ranging from participant observation, ethnography, intensive individual interviews, a focus on one or more number of cases and the in-depth analysis of historical and textual materials. For this study, the methods found appropriate included semi-structured interviews, ethnography and the use of documentary evidence.

Ethnography involves immersion by a researcher in a social context for a period of time to observe, interact, listen, interrogate and collect documents about a people. This is a research method often used to study a social phenomenon or a cultural setting more closely. Berg (2004; 148) describes ethnographic methods of research as a practice that 'places researchers in the midst of whatever it is they study. From this vantage, researchers can examine various phenomena as perceived by participants and represent these observations as accounts'. Ethnography sometimes is used synonymously with participant observation (Berg, 2004; Bryman, 2012). But the term ethnography is preferred to denote a wider range of methods of data collection and sources (Bryman, 2012; 432).

In the context of this study and with regard to West Africa's securitization processes and interaction with neo-patrimonial political culture, ethnography was employed. This involved an extensive journey through seven West African countries to observe the general security situation of the sub-region, interact with the indigenes, ask questions and develop an understanding of the security perception of ordinary West Africans. The main aim of this was to try to contrast the views of the leaders with those of the general population on security issues in Liberia, Sierra Leone and the West African sub-region. It also brings into view the research question that asks the ways and the extent to which the political culture of neo-patrimonialism

influences threat securitization processes in West Africa. The ethnographic approach also corresponds with the main argument of the thesis that the securitization processes in West Africa is a function of narrow threat perception of the neo-patrimonial leaders. In other words, threat perception of the political leaders is narrowly defined in terms of what threatens their political, security and economic interests and not much consideration is given to the wider security interests of the people.

Interviews were conducted with security personnel, political actors, locals and academics in West African states and particularly in Nigeria, Benin Republic, Togo, Ghana, Cote d'Ivoire, Liberia and Sierra Leone. To achieve this, extensive travel starting from Nigeria all the way to Sierra Leone was undertaken. The idea was to have first-hand information and a feeling of the security situation in West Africa – in terms of experiences of border posts, security issues and what the people in charge as well as the locals say. The reason for this was to contrast the views of the leaders with those of the general population whose lowly status and silence have made their issues not worthy of securitization by the neo-patrimonial leaders. In conjunction with these, books, journal articles and web-based materials were used in order to compare with the information gathered through fieldwork. As has been stated above, one of the major challenges of conducting research in Africa – especially on issues which may involve high profile persons – is gaining access to them for interviews. There is also the problem of accessing records which may not even be available in the first place.

Under this challenge, one of the most valuable sources of data for this study apart from the interviews was published works (books and journals) and internet-based sources such as news articles. These textual materials complemented the interviews carried out with willing interviewees – military, immigration, police personnel, personnel of international organisations personnel such as ECOWAS, Amnesty International and academics. The interviews were conducted during the six week field trip to Liberia and Sierra Leone between 16 September and 31 October 2011. Because of the nature of the subject being studied and the terrain, the trip was by road from Nigeria to Sierra Leone. The ethnographic journey also offered ample opportunity for meeting locals whose opinion of the security situation of the region was very important because their security needs are often silenced by the needs and interests of the neo-patrimonial leaders in the securitization processes. Those interviewed were selected based in the first place on their rich knowledge of West African politics and security challenges. From the lead interviewee who was contacted before setting out on the trip from the United Kingdom, other contacts were made. Some of the interviewees opted for anonymity. Semi-structured interviews were considered more appropriate than all-out structured interviews. They were semi-structured because some interviewees were asked the same set of questions, especially those in academia and those belonging to the regional organisations. It is acknowledged that the information from interviews, both semi-structured

and conversational should be treated with the utmost care as they may not necessarily be factual. According to Silverman (2010, 167) interviews 'do not appear to give us direct access to the "facts" or to "events"' nor do they 'tell us directly about people's "experiences"'. What they may do is to offer us indirect 'representation' of those experiences. Doing research in a war-torn and insecurity-prone region like West Africa is bound to conjure up emotions in people because of their experiences in war. Under such conditions, it is possible that the interviewees may provide false information thinking that it is what the researchers would want to hear. There are also situations where the investigators influence the answers that the informants give. A simple way of avoiding the issue according to Devine (in Marsh and Stoker, 1995; 143) is to (a) avoid asking leading, double-barrelled and hypothetical questions, (b) probe the informant further to elaborate on specific points of interest especially where there is doubt on the answers the informant may have provided. It is never claimed that the data from semi-structured interviews can be totally relied on for effective inferences and generalisations. There is therefore a need to compare and correlate findings from all the sources and methods. Each method has one insight to reveal about the same symbolic reality. Every method is a unique line of illumination directed towards comprehending the same issue – observing social and symbolic reality. 'By combining several lines of sight, researchers obtain a better, more substantive picture of reality; a richer, more complete array of symbols and theoretical concepts; and a means of verifying many of these elements' (Berg, 2004;5).

Finally, in addition to interviews, this study relied equally on documentary materials. These were readily available on the internet; primarily, the research drew on the websites of ECOWAS, the Special Court in Sierra Leone, and the International Military Assistance Training Team (IMATT) and news reports, especially from the BBC. Books and journal articles were also significant sources of information. They were also integrated into the interview data through the same process of triangulation for validity which is very critical for this study.

## The plan of the book

The aim of this book is to analyse the securitization processes outside of the West – in Africa. Securitization is arguably the most successful theoretical framework to analyse security beyond the military confines with the nation state as the dominant actor within the international system.

The first chapter provides an archaeology of knowledge on securitization and West Africa, notably in relation to recent charges being made at securitization theory of being racist. The charge against securitization of being Eurocentric, which has been uttered against international relations theory more generally, took on an extra dimension when Alison Howell and Melanie Richter-Montpetit took a swipe at the Copenhagen School, accusing it

of being not only Eurocentric but of harbouring racist modes of thought. 'Racist thought is fundamental and integral to classic securitization theory's conceptual and methodological project' (Howell and Richter-Montpelt, 2020, 4).

The second chapter provides the baseline for our analysis. The use of ontological security, developed over the past ten years in International Relations, has proved helpful to better understand the emotional reasons behind the apprehensions and fears of African citizens (Croft and Vaughan-Williams, 2017; Della Sala, 2017, 2018; Kinnvall, 2004; Laing, 2010; Mälksoo, 2018; Manners, 2002; Rumelili, 2014, 2015b, 2018). An ontological security approach allows us to unveil how fears and anxieties influence groups and states and to understand the psycho-socio-political effects that shape political movements and policy debate at the African security level (Kinnvall et al., 2018). This chapter traces the history and phases of security evolution in West Africa. The relevance of this current chapter lies in its engagement with the issue of context in the securitization process. It moves away from the universal application which the idea of securitization has been subjected to because of the adaption from the speech-act. It is rather situated as a context-specific innovation. This is very important in the context of the political culture of neo-patrimonialism.

The third chapter outlines our conceptual framework for the book. This chapter conceptualises an interface between the concept of securitization; the process of construction of security threats and the interface with neo-patrimonialism. It analyses the securitization processes among the political elites in neo-patrimonial statehood. It further analyses the relationship of those neo-patrimonial elites with outside actors that become involved in securitization processes. It stretches the conceptualisation of securitization beyond the original European security environment into other regions; for example, African statehood characterised by a blurred line between leader and state. The political elite, for clarification, stand for a group of individuals who wield much power and wealth at the corridors of political power. They can come from military, media, religious, corporate or bureaucratic backgrounds. They are intricately connected and control the decision making of the state.

The fourth chapter empirically assesses how and in which ways neo-patrimonialism influences securitization processes. While considering the wider West African sub-region, particular attention is focused on Liberia from which a generalisation is made of the sub-region. It demonstrates that in a neo-patrimonial political structure such as in West Africa and Liberia specifically, there is no established rule for securitization processes. Secondly, threats are defined by the neo-patrimonial leaders according to their perceptions and regime-defined interests. Thirdly, the emergency measures of securitization are articulated by the patron leader in the pyramidal structure of neo-patrimonial statehood. Finally, the audience which needs to be persuaded to complete the process of securitization often may not be the larger population but the cronies and close allies. This chapter offers a brief

descriptive overview of the historical and political background of the security environment in Liberia under which neo-patrimonial politics was suggested to loom large and dictated the securitization processes in the country. The intention is to provide a lucid picture of the context for the case study before the analytical discussion which follows.

The fifth chapter examines the more homogeneous state of Sierra Leone. It is once more demonstrated that even in a more homogeneous neo-patrimonial state, there is equally no established framework for security. Securitization of threats as suggested by the Copenhagen School of security analysis can be either ad hoc or institutionalized (Buzan et al, 1998; 27) and more often it is ad hoc in neo-patrimonial states such as Sierra Leone. What accounts for this is a lack of an institutionalized security architecture which, to a considerable extent, is a product of the blurred line between the personal security interests of a leader and the general security interests of the state. The processes of the securitization of threats are therefore defined by what the patron leaders perceive and construct as threats to their regime's security and business interests. The issues of security are narrowly and personally constructed; the circle of securitizing actors is also narrow – restricted to the patron leader.

The sixth chapter analyses how the emergence of the global health security norm of the COVID-19 pandemic has played out as a threat to African security – the appearance of the foreign virus. The chapter provides a framework for understanding the securitization of the COVID-19 epidemic as an international norm defined and promoted by the World Health Organisation, and cascaded down to the level of African member states. However, at an African level, it encounters resistance as a 'foreign virus'. This is completely in line with previous epidemics, such as Ebola (Kamradt-Scott et al, 2015). The predominant reported weakness in West African national responses was a pervasive lack of trust in government institutions and mistrust up to the highest level of government in Liberia and Sierra Leone. This chapter aims to assess the impact of the new global heath security norm on Africa's own identity, and, as a consequence, how this identity plays out in its security understanding vis-à-vis Europe and the international community. As was the case with Ebola, with COVID-19 several communities initially refused to believe that the virus outbreak was real, judging it to be part of a conspiracy by Europe and the international community. Such beliefs can be explained through two factors: (1) Africa's relationship with Europe developed from colonialism, and following a pattern of ex-colonies and masters strings of attachment; and (2) Africa's neo-patrimonial governance structures, derived from the aforementioned factor. The global health crisis brought about by the Corona virus has seriously impacted on these strands of relationship and Africa's security understanding.

The concluding chapter comprehensively examines the securitization process outside the West, notably in Africa. It reflects on the development of African security and looks ahead in order to consider what the future may hold.

# 1 An archaeology of knowledge on securitization in Africa

## From Eurocentrism to racism

African security and that of West Africa in particular displays certain trends. One is that the major literature on African security appeared after the Cold War, arguably with the exception of Deng's (1982) 'Security problems, an African predicament' and Aforka Nweke's (1985) 'African Security in the Nuclear Age'. This could be explained by the fact that African countries in general and their security environment were issues of Cold War politics. Their security was dependent on, and a reflection of, the Cold War ideological rivalry between the great powers. The second trend in the literature on West African security is dominated by issues of wars and conflicts in the Mano River Union states and in Liberia and Sierra Leone specifically. Issues such as the origins and causes of the wars in these two countries, the political dynamics and complex diplomacy that characterised the military interventions by both the United Nations (UN) and sub-regional body ECOWAS featured prominently in the literature (Adeleke, 1995; Sesay 1995, 1999; Howe, 1998; Kandeh, 1992; Adibe, 1997; Boas, 1997; Bundu, 2001; Adebajo, 2002; Ellis, 1999, 1999; Kieh, 1992, 2008; Olonisakin, 2008; Obi, 2009). The third trend in the literature is a focus on post-conflict resolution, resettlement and peace building in West Africa (Kabia, 2009; Agbu, 2011; Sessay, 1995). Noticeable deviations are the works by Oyebade and Alao (1998) and Adekeye and Ismail (2004) which focused on the new idea of security in Africa and West Africa. In other words, they looked at what may be considered emerging security issues in West Africa specifically. Relating to that is the work on security sector reforms in West Africa (Bryden et al, 2008) which involves a case study of all the West African states and the challenges they confront in the security sector. There is also a work by Kalu and Kieh (2014) which again focusses on some emerging security issues in Africa such as terrorism, regional security and national interests. But this is limited by its narrow focus on African security in relation to the United States.

What is still missing in these works in the light of the securitization innovation vis-à-vis post-Cold War West African security studies is the lack of application of such a valuable idea to the study of West Africa's security. It can be argued that this neglect is twofold: first, the idea of securitization is

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Eurocentric in both origin and application. Second, as a result Africa's security challenges are not addressed along that line of speech-act approach. It is therefore argued here that analysis of West Africa's security will benefit by addressing that significant gap in the literature.

What made African security almost a non-issue especially during the Cold War was that it was dictated by the geo-political interests, manipulations and manoeuvres of the great powers. The countries in the continent of Africa, just like other Third World countries, were mere pawns in the political chess board of the great powers. Regimes were protected no matter how bad they were as long as they supported either of the great powers. Every other source of insecurity such as internal or intrastate conflict was unconstitutionally and draconically quelled and subdued. There was no policy to articulate a regional or national security architecture that would be in the national or regional security interest of the people. Because of this external involvement in the internal politics of African states, they became the battleground for proxy wars as conflicts and armed opposition to the incumbent regimes escalated. They were managed with military assistance from the patron foreign states – the United States of America or the Soviet Union.

African security thus became a victim of Cold War politics in two ways. One is that even after independence there was a lack of home-grown security direction or mechanisms that should naturally flow from regional or national security issues. Two, arising from the first, is the ad hoc approach in securitization of these issues. In other words, the neo-patrimonial securitizing actors according to their security interests embarked on framing issues as security threats in line with a securitization concept, especially during the Cold War. Scholarly works on Africa paid attention to this Cold War impact on African security. For instance, Obi (2008; 183) argued that African countries only became aware of their 'complex trans-border and transnational threats' after the Cold War. This Obi (2008) posited could be 'gleaned at the national and regional levels following the initial decline in the strategic importance of erstwhile Africa's Cold War proxy-states and the retreat or scaling down of superpower support, and the deepening of socio-economic and political crisis across the continent'. In other words, Obi (2008) is of the opinion that because the great powers protected the continent, the countries were not conscious of the immediate threats that confronted them or those threats and challenges were not accorded any relevance that could have engendered a securitization approach. Corroborating Obi's (2008; 183) argument, Bryden et al (2009; 21) remarked thus:

> No longer able to rely on the great power allies that provided support on the basis of ideological leanings without reference to the internal conduct of the regimes in power, the shift in global power relations resulting from the end of the Cold War created a corresponding shift in the internal order of many African states.

The support African countries received during this period were dependent on which side of the fence they stood – but this hobnobbing could not last forever. The end of the Cold War revealed those fault lines that were ignored and not securitized. It is interesting and revealing that major socio-political, economic and cultural catastrophes that occurred on the African continent took place during this period and that was when the search for stability and security direction ensued. Williams (2011; 4) identified two trends in the African crises: 'during the 1990s it suffered from a rise in the number of armed conflicts' and the number was twice the previous decade. And Williams (2009) asked, why? The answer is the disengaging of the erst-while patrons and their insensitivity to some of these issues while they were brewing.

There is no shortage of literature on the relations between Africa and the Cold War protagonists. Where the literature is again silent is in relation to the security challenges that bedevilled Africans during this period. Africa and its interests were interpreted, subsumed and aligned along the Cold War interests and strategic pursuits of the great powers. Adekeye and Whiteman (2012; 1) drew attention to the idea of Euroafrique – 'a formula for putting Africa's resources at the disposal of Europe's industries'. In a compendium that traced the relations between Africa and Europe from the Berlin Conference of 1884–85 to the present date, what is abundantly present is the examination of 'the current strategic dimensions of the relationship, especially the place of Africa in Europe's own need for global partnerships' before scantly discussing the 'growing priorities of security and governance' (Adebajo and Whiteman 2012; 1). The point here again is that Africa's security issues – especially during the Cold War epoch – suffered serious lack of attention and hence little or no scholarly work addressing them emerged; instead, it was the relationship that benefited the superpowers that received academic attention. Adekeye and Whiteman (2012; 257) noted:

> In 2005 the British prime minister at the time, Tony Blair, declared that it would be the 'Year of Africa'. This was perhaps emblematic of the continent's rise to an important place on the international agenda after years of relative neglect as a consequence of risk-aversion and general apathy by a West at first heady with a post-Cold War triumphalism, and then shell-shocked by the terrorist attacks of 11 September 2001.

There would not be a mention of what was not considered an issue. That is why it can be argued that the literature is mute on anything resembling African security during the Cold War. Africa did not matter, or it was only as important as it shored up the strategic advantage of the superpowers. As a result, Africa's security became a victim of this particular era. The major serious analysis in the literature that has been acknowledged with regard to security in Africa during this period was Julius Emeka Okolo's (1983)

analysis of the ECOWAS defence pact of 1981, which was jointly put in place by the sub-regional body as a bulwark against external interference into the internal affairs of sub-regional members. According to Okolo (1983; 1):

> The perennial concern of African leaders and African public opinion for continental, sub -regional and national security as a paramount imperative for progress and development has been verbalized at various levels, but ECOWAS is the first major grouping of African states to take a concrete step towards the creation of a defence organization.

Considering the above scenario, the silence in the literature on African security was broken following the withdrawal of the great powers from the continent, the shifting of attention to other places such as East Europe, the implosions in the wake of the end of the Cold War and the attendant security upheavals. For instance starting from Liberia and Sierra Leone, West Africa, which is the focus of this book, witnessed serious crises. The scholarly attempts at discussing the security of the continent started gaining ground from this period onwards.

## The changing face of security in West Africa

The founding treaty of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) had as its aim 'to promote cooperation and development in all fields of economic activity' (see 1975 ECOWAS Treaty; article ii (1)). There was no mention of 'security' anywhere in the treaty. West African leaders at that point focused on issues they deemed to be more important, which were making sure that there was unity, trust and removing every feeling of suspicion among the states in the region. This could be explained as arising from the three-year war that had just ended in Nigeria in which Cote d'Ivoire was strongly on the side of the break-away nation of Biafra. The leaders felt a need for good neighbourliness and also to avoid the countries being pushed into the hands of former colonial masters. To further cement this good relationship and eschew any attempt of aggression, the regional body again in 1978 articulated its protocol on non-aggression which called on member states to 'refrain, from committing, encouraging or condoning acts of subversion, hostility or aggression against the territorial integrity or political independence of the other Member States' (see ECOWAS Protocol on Non-Aggression, 1978; articles i–vi). In 1981 the Community inched a step closer to what could be considered a common security interest by articulating another protocol on mutual defence assistance to members. It was declared that any aggression against any member would be seen as a 'threat or aggression against the entire Community' (see ECOWAS Protocol of Mutual Defence, 1981; ii, (ii)). As such, members shall rally round and offer aid and mutual assistance of defence against the aggressor. The resources will be pooled from the 'earmarked units from the existing National Armed Forces in case of any armed

intervention. These Units shall be referred to as the Allied Armed Forces of the Community (AAFC)' (see ECOWAS Protocol Relating to Mutual Assistance of Defence, 1981; 2, 3 and 13).

At this point in the life of the Community – whose members were just emerging from years of colonialism and being spectators in the Cold War politics – the major security concern to them was their hard-won independence and regime survival. They did not see any need to securitize a range of other threats in the region. The silence in the literature on this non-securitization of issues could probably be argued to arise from the initial neglect of these issues by the Community itself. Okolo (1983) dissected the security in West Africa from the perspective of this context under which the protocols on non-aggression and mutual assistance of defence were crafted. The issues of uppermost importance were aggression from a non-member state, conflict between member states and internal conflict in a member state (Okolo, 1983; 181). Of course there were some empirical concerns that justified such fears – the border conflict between Mali and Upper Volta (present day Burkina Faso), Ghana's accusation that Togo was sponsoring a secessionist bid in Ghana's Volta region. There was also Senegal's disagreement with Guinea Bissau over their maritime border which was suspected to be rich in oil and gas. Okolo (1985) was limited in his coverage of issues in West Africa because those were the concerns of the leaders of the Community. Other issues were simply neglected or not securitized.

The Cold War ended and caused a rethinking of security in West Africa and a new perspective on the construction of security threats. Interestingly, Adekeye and Ismail (2004), Oyebade and Alao (1998) and Bryden et al (2008) emerged as the first few volumes that engaged with the issues of security concern in West Africa in the light of the changing regional security environment. However they were not as encompassing as to claim to have sufficiently focused on processes of securitization of threats in the sub-region. For instance Adebajo and Rashid (2004; 1) claimed to be the 'first comprehensive attempt to assess West Africa's security challenges after the end of the Cold War'. However much as it claims comprehensiveness, it is not too advanced from the founding concerns of ECOWAS. For instance the volume is still concerned about the issues of regional integration, regionalism, pan Africanism and the link between economic development, democracy and security. In one section it addressed issues bordering on conflicts, child soldiers and small arms and light weapons. It has left a huge gap on the evolving issues that have changed the face of security in the world, in Africa and West Africa in particular. Where are the issues of illegal drugs business, gender, trans-border crimes, human trafficking and maritime issues to name just a few? Most importantly, how have these issues been perceived and securitized by the neo-patrimonial leaders? The work therefore is as incomprehensive as it is limited in reach. It has been overtaken by events and new issues in West Africa's security discourse which have not been dealt with because of the selectiveness and failure of securitization processes.

Oyebade and Alao (1998; 11) claimed that the 'scanty literature available on African security problems has failed to underscore the totality of issues that make up security problems'. Again they also corroborated Okolo's (1985) view that the thinking of security in the post-independence Africa and West Africa was about the protection of territorial integrity but which was 'confused with the desperate bid to preserve the incumbent leaders in power' (Oyabade and Alao, 1998; 8). One would expect that Oyabade and Alao's book would go a long way to capture the reality of emerging issues confronting states in Africa as it claimed to be a new perspective on security. Again, it was rather limited to a few prominent issues such as the environment, democracy and security, ethnic conflicts and security and the important issue of nuclear weapons. Much as one would concede that there was an attempt to expand upon Africa's security challenges, some of the issues such as nuclear weapons were not perceived as serious threat to Africans and West Africans specifically. Again that work is limited and lacked a comprehensive approach to security in West Africa especially from the perspective of securitization processes. One would have expected that as an earlier work written in the same decade that the Cold War ended, that subsequent works would follow applying the securitization approach in West African security analyses. But that was not to be.

In a bid to follow the global trend in post-Cold War international politics – to shift the thinking of security away from the state to 'people' – scholars and analysts on African security have attempted to do so but neglected a good chunk of underlying issues, therefore creating a wider gap in the literature. Bryden et al (2009) applied the idea of Security Sector Governance (SSR) in trying to capture the security situation in West Africa. According to them, 'at the heart of the African insecurity story is a breakdown in governance systems due in large part to rule by patronage and the associated misuse of governmental instruments of coercion to entrench political and social exclusion' (Bryden et al, 2009; 4). The core of their argument is that good democratic governance is the key to security and development. They have chosen to follow the same line of argument of the neo-liberal focus on governance, democratic principles, development, liberalization, globalisation and poverty. The second theme is subordinating the security sector to civilian and civil society oversight. Security Sector Reform is therefore 'driven by the understanding that an unreformed security sector represents a decisive obstacle to the promotion of sustainable development, democracy and peace' (Bryden et al, 2009; 7).

Briefly, Security Sector Governance (SSR) is a post-Cold War innovation and stands on two major poles – governance and security – a direction to free security from Cold War state-centric thinking to include the people. According to the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), in the face of rising crimes, human rights violations and ethnic conflicts, 'personal security and democratic governance are at risk because the means for the legitimate use of force are not subject to democratic control' (UNDP

Report, 2002; 87). SSR is therefore an effort to manage security in such a way that all departments will be under the control and direction of a democratic government and free from being instruments in the hands of authoritarian regimes (see also Ball and Fayemi, 2004). What Bryden et al (2009) did was to carry out an assessment of SSR in all 16 countries in West Africa. It is argued that what they have ended up doing was only suggesting securitization issues such as governance, leaving a large portion of the security challenges uncovered. They did not pay attention to the influence that regimes, system of governance and political culture can have on whole gamut of the security spectrum. Political culture according to John Duffield is defined as the 'subjective orientations toward and assumptions about the political world that characterize the members of a particular society and that guide and inform their political behaviour' (Duffield, 1998). This can have three components: the cognitive, which includes empirical and causal beliefs; the evaluative, which consists of values, norms, and moral judgments; and the expressive or affective, 'which encompasses emotional attachments, patterns of identity and loyalty, and feelings of affinity, aversion, or indifference' (Duffield, 1999; 25; also referenced in Taylor and Williams, 2008;138).

It has been stated throughout this chapter that the literature on African security follows some particular trends. Particularly in West Africa, one of the trends is a considerable focus on the security crises of the immediate post-Cold War era. The literature is therefore characterised by accounts of the wars in Liberia and Sierra Leone or the wider Mano River Basin, their different interpretations and the complex diplomacy that underlined the interventions by the sub-regional body ECOWAS (see for instance, Huband, 1998; Abdullah, 2004; Gberie, 2005; Keen, 2005). The literature also discusses the peace-keeping efforts of the United Nations Organization in Sierra Leone through the United Nations Mission in Sierra Leone (UNAMSIL) (Olonisakin, 2008). It could be argued that this trend is a reflection of the security environment of that period. West Africa did not have a specific security direction prior to the crises of the 1990s. It was the implosion of conflicts in the Mano River Basin that motivated the leaders to begin to think of those issues that were thrown up by the crises. Since there was no literature specifically on the security direction of the sub-region during this period, one has to consider what was available – various explanations on the crises. Richards (1996), Williams (1999), Abdullah (1998, 2004) and Gberie (2005) have postulated perspectives about the security crises of the sub-region of West Africa that started from Liberia and Sierra Leone. For instance, for Paul Richards (1996), the conflicts arose from a quest to control the resource-rich rain forests of West Africa by armed groups and disgruntled youths. Consider that Kaplan (1994) had made the prediction that the issues of unemployed and unskilled population boom would be the 'coming anarchy' especially in West Africa. Kaplan described them as 'loose molecules in a very unstable social fluid waiting to ignite'

(Kaplan, 2000; 5). These works are concerned with socio-economic underpinnings of crises in the sub-region (compare Reno, 1995, 1998, 2003, 2005). Williams (1999; 143) and Abdullah (1998; 2) would however disagree, pointing out that such is the preoccupation of people who want to tell African stories to Africans themselves without factoring in the historical issues that seriously determined the direction of the crises in Sierra Leone, for example. Gberie (2005, 13–14) put it this way:

> It is important to state here at the outset that diamonds did not cause the war in Sierra Leone. What diamonds did was to underwrite the RUF's war effort and they were clearly a big motivation for the RUF's leaders as well as for their outside supporters.

Boaz (2001, 697) located the crises at the doorstep of crisis of governance and argued 'that the most basic reasons for these two wars are to be found in the extreme version of neo-patrimonial politics that was developed in Liberia and Sierra Leone'. The idea here is not to discuss the causes of the conflicts in Sierra Leone and Liberia or other West African countries. It is to demonstrate the preoccupation of the literature with such issues. They were the issues that attracted and occupied the attention of scholars in the aftermath of the Cold War in West Africa. Security direction was not an issue at all. When we begin to unpack these works, there is no specific attempt at sorting out the processes of securitizing those issues that caused the implosions in the region. Restoring peace in Liberia and Sierra Leone by the process of military intervention has also occupied prominent place in the literature. Setting the tone of the discussion, Sesay (1999; 27) remarked that Economic Community of West African States Monitoring Group (ECOMOG):

> is the product of a complex mix of circumstances, among others the domestic politics of member states, regional politics and leadership idiosyncrasies, rather than the establishment of an institutionalised conflict resolution blueprint.

In what Sesay (1995; 205) called the 'internationalisation of the conflict', the interventions became polarised about who supported who. According to Sesay (1995; 207):

> it is widely known that Cote d'Ivoire, Libya and Burkina Faso provided the training, money and weapons for Charles Taylor and his rebels…on Doe's side was the covert support given by Israel, Nigeria and United States.

In the light of this, analysts have provided in the literature diverse explanations of the complex diplomacy in the interventions (compare Ademola,

1995; Howe, 1996 and Obi, 2009). Who is interested in what in the whole intervention process is what attracted much intellectual attention. What however was in short supply was an application of comprehensive securitization concept to many security challenges that emerged in the West Africa's security environment. Equally important to mention is the attention given to the operations of the United Nations Mission in Sierra Leone (UNAMSIL) by Olonisakin (2008) who chronicled the strengths, weaknesses and challenges of UNAMSIL. However, it is not convincing that this is what good literature on West Africa's security is all about. In the milieu of diverse security challenges, in the wake of the Cold War, there was nothing else to talk about except these critical issues.

Apart from Oyebade and Alao (1998), Adebajo and Rashid (2004) and probably Sesay (1995) who made some attempts to address the changing perspective of security in West Africa at the end of the Cold War by devoting attention to some of the new issues that should occupy security thinkers, West Africa's security lacks a comprehensive approach that benefits from major paradigms in international security analysis, such as securitization. It is not an overstatement to posit that authors see West Africa and Africa as full of areas to be researched on to make a name and join the academic brotherhood. Every analyst, experienced, emerging or budding wants a piece of the pie. There is no adequate systematic and careful analysis of securitization processes of the sub-region in the literature. This would have revealed the perceived threats that take priority in the security calculations of the neo-patrimonial leaders. Thus this book argues that the securitization of threats is according to the interests of neo-patrimonial leaders. And what has been seen to enjoy some level of the securitization approach so far is the issue of governance and violent change of governments. That again says much about what takes priority among the political actors in the region. For instance, O'Manique (2005; 38–39) argued that the issue of HIV/AIDS is securitized by the US government not because of its concern for the people but because it is seen to 'undermine peace, order and good governance and to dampen economic growth in regions of strategic importance; viral spread conjoins with military threats, representing a threat to US national interests'. In the same way issues such as underdevelopment and poverty are securitized because they engender migration into developed and advanced economies with all the attendant implications and also leave youths vulnerable to terrorist recruitment (Rice, 2007). Yet it will take more than these attempts to demonstrate analytical utilization of the securitization concept in West Africa's security; there is an academic deficiency that this work addresses by also looking at works on securitizations which have been silent on applying the idea to Africa's security.

The preceding section demonstrated how the literature on African security studies significantly failed to apply the concept of securitization in analysing how a range of threats in Africa and West Africa in particular were constructed. The attention was dominated by the wars, conflicts and post-

conflict reconstructions in West Africa. As will be shown below, securitization as a concept is Eurocentric both in origin and application. It is so because the concept emerged from European security environment and major security analysis adopting the concept focused largely on European security issues. According to Huysmans (1998; 480) the Copenhagen project, the originator of the securitization concept:

> has emerged within a typically European security landscape which has given its work an explicitly European flavour.

This could probably explain it's near neglect in reference to Africa's security analysis.

### *Securitization theory*

Surrounding the concept of security are imprecisions and controversies. The imprecisions arise from what exactly the concept is and the controversies are because of the uncertainty as to what the issues or referent objects to accord security are. Contrary to Collins' (2007; 2) 'good news that a consensus has emerged on what security studies entails – it is to do with threats to survival'; the unsettling truth is that there is now a wider schism as to what security issues are. How can there be a consensus when there is intense debate among scholars as to who secures, and what is to be secured; who threatens whose security and what are the issues at stake? Above all, how can we say that there is consensus when methodologically there is serious divergence? To think of security therefore in terms of mere survival is narrow and weak. The imprecisions and controversies could also be argued to arise from the evolution of security studies. The power politics of the Cold War period narrowed the concept of security around the state and national security as the major referent objects needing security. However international politics witnessed a tectonic shift with the receding of the Cold War, bringing about a redefinition of the concept of security and widening of referent objects.

Arnold Wolfers (1952; 485) thought that 'security, in an objective sense, measures the absence of threats to acquired values in a subjective sense, the absence of fear that such values will be attacked'. The vital question will be what those values are and to whom they belong. It could be the state, individual, particular identities or societies. For Waever (1995; 49), 'the concept of security refers to the state' … "security" in other words has to be read through the lens of national security'. But the evolution of global politics has also meant that 'redefining security' is consequently abundant with "not only", "also" and "more than" arguments' (Waever, 1995; 49). The result is that in subsequent works from Waever's colleagues (e.g. Buzan, 1998) the idea of widening and deepening the discourse on security was introduced with the incorporation of wider referent objects of security. The 'not only' argument has also brought about almost a disregard for the state but also on

the individual as a major security object. Booth (1991; 319) had therefore postulated:

> Security means the absence of threats. Emancipation is the freeing of people (as individuals and groups) from those physical and human constraints which stop them carrying out what they would freely choose to do. War and threat of war is one of those constraints, together with poverty, poor education, and political oppression and so on. Security and emancipation are two sides of the same coin. Emancipation not power or order produces true security. Emancipation theoretically is security.

A while after Ken Booth's (1991) argument, the UNDP was worried by the horrendous developments of conflicts, wars, hunger, famine and abuses going on around the world and came up with yet a wider reach on referent objects and issues of security. The UNDP therefore noted that:

> With dark shadows of the Cold War receding, one can now see that many conflicts are within nations rather that between nations. For most people, a feeling of insecurity arises more from worries about daily life than from the dread of a cataclysmic world events. Will they and their families have enough to eat? Will they lose their jobs? Will their streets and neighbourhood be safe from crime? Will their religion or ethnic origin target them for persecution? In the final analysis human security is a child who did not die, a disease that did not spread, a job that was not cut, an ethnic tension that did not explode in violence; a dissident who was not silenced. Human security is not a concern with weapons – it is a concern with human life and dignity.
>
> (United Nations Development Programme, 1994/95; 22)

The foregoing has briefly demonstrated the imprecisions and controversies surrounding the concept and definition of security. The plan is not to privilege any particular definition or offer an alternative. It prepares the ground for the argument over objectivity and subjectivity in the application of the concept of security. For instance Buzan et al (1998; 31)) argued that there is no objective security; instead it is socially and inter-subjectively constructed according to the predilection of political leaders, actors or institutions and their audiences. Balzacq (2011; 12–13) argued however on the side of objectivity that 'some security problems are the attributes of the development itself. In short, threats are not only institutional; some of them can actually wreck entire political communities regardless of the use of language'. In other words there are threats according to this line of thought, which are out there, external and independent of the actors labelling them so and this book disagrees with that opinion. It argues that security is a constructivist agenda. There may be many threats but they only become framed as security

issues by someone whose 'values' are threatened. For example the issues of illegal drugs, availability of illegal arms and weapons, armed non-state actors, a range of other issues raised by the UNDP above are serious issues in the region of West Africa but they are only designated so by the neo-patrimonial securitizing actors. These threats to a large extent are designated as security issues by leaders through the processes of securitization. This concept has become central in security discourse especially since the end of the Cold War with newly emergent security issues. But it has remained predominantly Eurocentric in application. The following section looks at the idea of securitization.

## Securitization: the concept

Since Barry Buzan and his colleagues introduced an innovation into the security studies through the concept of 'securitization' (Buzan, 1993; Waever, 1995; Buzan et al, 1998), it has attracted both positive and negative comments. The project nurtured in Copenhagen, Denmark which McSweeny (1996) 'christened' the 'Copenhagen School' has become famous for its paradigm shift on security studies. It shifted security discourse from the traditional realist state-military-power perspective to other referent objects. Despite its criticisms, the Copenhagen project has brought into focus several security threats and aided in security analysis of different regions of the world, especially Europe.

In a nutshell (as a significant portion is reserved in the next chapter for detailed discussion on the subject):

> In securitization theory, 'security' is treated not as an objective condition but as the outcome of a specific social process: the social construction of security issues (who or what is being secured, and from what) is analysed by examining the 'securitizing speech-acts' through which threats become represented and recognized.
>
> (Williams, 2003; 513)

In the words of Waever (1995:55):

> What then is security? With the help of language theory, we can regard 'security' as a speech act. In this usage, security is not of interest as a sign that refers to something more real; the utterance itself is the act. By saying it, something is done (as in betting, giving a promise, naming a ship). By uttering 'security' a state-representative moves a particular development into a specific area, and thereby claims a special right to use whatever means are necessary to block it.

Much as the contribution of the 'securitization concept' to security studies is appreciated, it is riddled with loopholes. One is that it is beset with

internal contradictions. In *People, State and Fear* (Buzan, 1991) the attention is on the state as the referent object of security. In Waever (1995; 49), 'the concept of security refers to the state'. But in Buzan et al (1998), while arguing for deepening and widening the ground of security studies to accommodate diverse referent objects of security they still gave primacy to state. Consider also that in *Regions and Power*, Buzan and Waever (2003; 6–75) articulated the theories about the structure of contemporary international security. They postulated that there are neorealist, globalist and regionalist perspectives. According to them they are convinced thus; 'that in the post-Cold War world, the regional level stands more on its own as the locus of conflict cooperation for states and as the level of analysis for scholars seeking to explore contemporary security affairs.' Here, the Copenhagen School scholars through the regional security complex theory (RSCT) privileged the state as the focus of security analysis even while advocating for expanding the ground for security discourse. And Waever et al (1993) left no one in doubt about what should be secured. Society and identity are seen as objective realities out there needing security. If this is accepted as the focus of their argument, one will begin to question the place of other values of that same society. Are they now treated as irrelevant? (McSweeney, 1996; 83).

This 'wonderful' innovation on security studies (starting with *People, State and Fear* first published in 1983) to which according to Booth (1991; 317) many authors 'have been writing footnotes' has also in more recent publications attracted negative comments. Leonard and Kaunert (2011) have revealed its lack of clarity on who constitutes the audience in the speech-act process. According to Buzan et al (1998; 25), an 'issue is securitized only if and when the audience accepts it as such'. In other words a securitizing actor will have to make an argument about an issue in such a way that it will find resonance with an audience. But the character and composition of this audience were not clarified. In the context of this book, there is recognition over the neglect in the literature to apply securitization process to a range of threats in Africa and West Africa in particular; a gap needing to be bridged in the book. It has been said that the idea of securitization is both in origin and application Eurocentric with little mention of Africa.

## Securitization and 'Africa'

The states in West Africa and wider Africa are, according to Buzan and Waever (2003; 226), 'post-traditional' states. In other words, these states have not exhibited the 'Westphalian' attributes of modern statehood – socio-political cohesion for instance. Allegiances are still toward the pre-colonial groupings and ethnic cleavages. Because of this, even after independence, instead of 'consolidating the empirical reality of a modern bureaucratic state, the trend since decolonisation has been in the opposite direction, towards highly personalised, kleptocratic, neo-patrimonial regimes with no interest in developing the state'(Buzan and Waever, 2003; 219–220). These states are 'quasi', with their existence hanging on juridical sovereignty

(Jackson and Roseberg, 1982; Jackson, 1993). Arising from the above picture of African states, the best starting point for discussing the security of the continent and the lack of sufficient attention to the securitization process in the literature will be looking at Buzan and Waever (2003; 220) who posited that 'most of the security problems of Africa largely hang on the failure of the postcolonial state. The analysis thus privileges the military-political sector as a way of telling what is otherwise an almost impossibly complicated story'. Buzan and Waever (2003) saw the insecurity, economic decline and collapse in the continent arising from the failure of the statehood. These were constructed as threats leaving aside a range of other issues. In other words, the state receives attention as the major referent or threatened object. Apart from that, in securitizing these issues, there is no clarity as to who the securitizing actor and the audience are – the two major components of securitization. Regardless of this deficiency, the Copenhagen School at least made mention of Africa and its security within their ideas on the conceptualisation of securitization, whereas the rest of the literature has notably remained mute on Africa's security.

Few works have endeavoured to apply the idea of securitization to African security analysis – and/or critically analyse the securitization of some threats to African continent (Williams, 2003; Abrahamsen, 2005; O' Manique, 2005; Williams, 2008; Haacke and Williams, 2008). However such attempts still exhibit some shortcomings in offering a significant application of securitization approach to Africa's security issues. Rita Abrahamsen's (2005) analysis of Tony Blair's description of Africa as a 'scare on the conscience of the world' provides us with a valid example. According to Abrahamsen (2005; 55):

> In his characteristic, almost messianic style, Blair assured his audience that the scar could be healed 'if the world as a community focused on it.' This would entail a much more interventionist role for Britain and what he called the 'international community,' and Blair portrayed the new world order as one where the United Kingdom was always ready to defend human rights and democracy in Africa.

But it still leaves much out with regard to the application of the idea of securitization to West Africa's security. For instance, the issue of what is being securitized; the audience and emergency measures were not made clear. These are important questions because Buzan et al (1998; 26), posited that:

> In security discourse, an issue is dramatized and presented as an issue of supreme priority; thus, by labelling it as a security, an agent claims a need for and a right to treat it by extraordinary means. For the analyst to grasp this act, the task is not to assess some objective threats that 'really' endanger some object to be defended or secured; rather, it is to

> understand the process of constructing a shared understanding of what is to be considered and collectively responded to as a threat.

Abrahamsen (2005; 59) also argued that Tony Blair's 'scare' comment is:

> increasingly presenting African issues within a narrative of security… the prevalence of conflict on the African continent, and the attacks of September 11 provide the key empirical context for these claims, yet it is the speech act, not the objective condition, that makes Africa and its underdevelopment a security issue.

When we put together all three comments above, one draws the conclusion that African issues are not properly analysed from the prism of the securitization concept. Secondly they are not approached as meriting emergency action typical of the Copenhagen School's securitization principle – beyond normal everyday politics. Abrahamsen (2005) also argued that New Labour's (represented by Tony Blair) way of framing Africa is from the perspective of 'us' and 'them'. Africa is presented as 'them' posing a danger to 'us' with all its numerous challenges. Against this backdrop, it is not the interest of the African continent that was the concern but the interest of the 'international community' – being the developed industrialised world (Abrahamsen, 2005; 69–74). This line of thought follows the same line as Colleen O'Manique's (2005) interesting critical analysis of securitization of HIV/AIDS in Sub-Saharan Africa. The consideration of viruses such as HIV pandemics as a security threat is yet another major dimension in the ever-broadening security discourse beyond the traditional realist state-military-power paradigm.

The prevalence of the HIV/AIDS pandemic in Sub-Saharan Africa:

> has been variously described as a security threat in pockets of the continent where "famine and AIDS" are seen as vicious circles; where social and economic insecurities are fuelled by AIDS related losses of labour productivity; where peace- keeping and military operations are compromised, given high levels of HIV infection in some African militaries. (O'Manique, 2005; 25–26)

A very critical question will be: whose security is being taken into consideration here? Like Abrahamsen (2005) who argued that Tony Blair's securitization of underdevelopment in Africa in the wake of the attacks on of the Twin Towers in the USA in 2001 was essentially in the interest of the western powers, O'Manique (2005) also posited that the securitization of HIV pandemics in Africa are in the interests of the global north. She argued:

> Despite the discourse of compassionate conservatism within which public pronouncements are packaged, analyses of the "AIDS and

> security" threat from the US State Department and aligned think tanks see it more as a direct security threat to US national and geopolitical interests than a threat to human beings in fragile communities directly experiencing epidemics. Viral spread now has the capacity to cause significant disruption to the imperatives of democracy, development, free markets and free trade… The National Intelligence Council stated in 2000 that new and re-emerging infectious diseases will complicate US and global security over the next twenty years by endangering US citizens at home and abroad, threatening US armed forces deployed overseas, and exacerbating social and political instability in key countries and regions in which the United States has significant interests.
>
> (O'Manique, 2005; 38)

One is left in no doubt that the security we are talking about here is the security interests of the western powers to which Africa's security needs are subordinated. Much as Abrahamsen (2005) and O'Manique (2005) have helped in bringing this bias to light, have they successfully applied the concept of securitization to Africa's security threats? The answer is in the negative. They have only succeeded in analysing particular policies towards Africa emanating from London and Washington without properly focusing on the actual application of securitization theory to Africa's own security analysis. Compare this to Leonard's (2010) work on the securitization of asylum and migration in the EU. It was issue-specific, looking at the activities of European Agency for the Management of Operational Cooperation at the External Borders of the Member States of the EU (FRONTEX). Leonard (2010) argued that asylum and migration have been securitized in the EU and that through the activities of FRONTEX at the EU borders, the fundamental human rights of migrants and asylum seekers have been negatively impacted. Karyotis (2007; 271–293) applied the concept of securitization to the 'Revolutionary Organization November 17', a left-wing terrorist organization in Greece that took Athens many years to see as a direct threat to Greek security. Waever (1993) also postulated and identified society and identity as specific twin issues that needed to be securitized in Europe in relation to migration. The point is that whereas Leonard (2010), Karyotis (2007) and Waever (1993) (for instance) specifically treated certain issues (immigration) in the light of the securitization concept especially in Europe, in relation to African continent and West Africa in particular, the literature is almost mute or non-existent with such specificity. What is noticed is the lumping together of so many issues without a careful analytical approach. There is insufficient effort exerted to find out how these threats are accorded measure of urgency, if at all, from securitizing actors. It is yet to be seen for instance what influences the mind-set of the political actors in placing a tag of security on any issue. For instance, consider the African Union's 'Solemn Declaration on Common African Defence and Security' (African Union, 2004; 4–5). This is supposed to be an application of the securitization

approach to issues bedevilling the continent. But under this declaration, we are presented with about 30 issues that will be very difficult to manage for easy analysis. The only distinction according to Haacke and Williams (2008) is between those threats that are internal to Africa and those that are external to Africa. It is not clear how these issues were framed in the light of securitization. What are the extra political or emergency measures adopted in the securitization sense in managing these issues? The same thing applies to the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS). It has churned out so many declarations and protocols on some of the threats in the sub-region of West Africa: take for instance the ECOWAS Protocol on Human Trafficking, ECOWAS Moratorium on Small Arms and Light Weapons and ECOWAS Declaration on illegal use of drugs and organised crimes.

But there remains an unfortunate oversight or neglect in relation to how the securitization process has been adopted in dealing with these issues. In other words how have the issues been 'presented as existential threats requiring emergency measures and justifying actions outside the normal bounds of political procedures' (Buzan et al 1998; 24)? Who are the securitizers in the speech act process (Waever, 1995; 55)? Is it the state representative or the ECOWAS as a body? Who is the audience that will accept the issue being securitized for the securitization move to be complete (Buzan et al, 1998; 25, see also Leonard and Kaunert, 2011; 57–70)? It is not claimed that there is a shortage of literature on Africa's or West Africa's security challenges. There is plethora of works on crises of statehood, war and conflict, illegal weapons and illegal drugs, human trafficking, trans-border crime and organised crime. But the argument here is that the idea of securitization as a post-Cold War academic innovation in the security discourse has not been applied in the way it has been adopted in discussing security in Europe to approach Africa's issues. Aning (2007; 1) identified what he thought are the core security challenges to Africa:

> (a) the legacy of historic notions of state sovereignty; (b) the rise of regionalism in the absence of common regional values; (c) the difficulty of managing hegemonic regionalism; (d) elitism in the form of regional integration occurring only at the level of leaders without permeating the consciousness of the people; (e) the creation of institutions with little or no capacity to manage them, resulting in a merely formal regionalism; and finally (f) the perception of regionalism as an externally driven project.

Bah (2004, 1–17 and Bakke, 2005) discussed the implementation of ECOWAS Moratorium on small arms and illegal weapons in the post-war Sierra Leone and a new regionalism approach respectively. Bah (2004; 11) correctly pointed out 'that SALW (Small Arms and Light Weapons) constitute one of the greatest challenges to human security in West Africa –

increasing insecurity, exacerbating conflict, and undermining development'. The deficiency with these analyses in relation to the securitization approach to West Africa's security challenges is a lack of clarity as to who securitizes the issues and who has the resources to deploy emergency measures beyond the normal bounds of political process. Moreover, the very important issue of who constitutes the audience, needed to complete the securitization process, remains insufficiently addressed. The literature therefore has not presented a serious attempt to analyse the security in the region of West Africa either within the regional body ECOWAS or national governments of states in the region from the securitization paradigm. The closest to that is Buzan and Waever (2003; 43–45, 219–247) in which he advocated 'the regional level as the appropriate one for a large swath of practical security analyses' (Buzan, 2003; 43). This is 'because security dynamics are inherently relational, no nation's security is self-contained' (Buzan, 2003; 43). What emerged from this line of thinking is the idea of Regional Security Complex Theory (RSCT) defined as 'a set of units whose major processes of securitization, de-securitization, or both are so interlinked that their security problems cannot reasonably be analysed or resolved apart from one another'(Buzan et al, 1998; 201; Buzan, 2003; 44). It is agreed that the post-Cold War structure of international system revolves around regions and therefore security discourse lays much emphasis on regional security arrangements and architecture such as ECOWAS-ECOMOG or other such regional creations. However it is not still convincing that this passes as an application of securitization approach to security analysis in West Africa.

Securitization theory, which considers the ways in which phenomena are construed as 'security issues', was developed through the work of the Copenhagen School in the 1990s as part of critical security studies. The latter emerged in response to mainstream views of security held in international relations in the Cold War era, which were primarily oriented towards state security (Buzan et al., 1998). Developed to make sense of new conceptualizations of 'security', as well as new applications of the term in (policy) discourses in 'western democracies', securitization theory has been primarily employed in relation to 'northern' contexts (Barkawi, 2011). Nevertheless, in recent years, its application to non- 'western' settings has been on the rise (Bilgin, 2011), although the theory continues to rarely figure in scholarship on 'Africa'. Moreover, its application to 'African' settings has mostly been selective, focusing primarily on the securitization of 'western' policy interventions, such as development aid and military assistance. The often critical scholarship on the securitization of 'western' actors' 'Africa' policy has exposed the growing emphasis on notions of risk and threat in discourses on and interactions with 'Africa' from the 1990s onwards, as reflected in its supposed 'dysfunctionalities' (often framed in the terminology of 'fragile', 'failed' or 'collapsed' states) being increasingly portrayed as a source of threats to 'western' (often framed as 'global') security (see Carmody, 2005; Duffield, 2001, 2007). These discursive and policy shifts occurred

first under the influence of the rise of the 'new wars' and security–development nexus paradigms (Duffield, 2001), and were then accelerated by the so-called War on Terror (Abrahamsen, 2005). A range of studies has demonstrated how these developments have contributed to the securitization of, inter alia, US 'Africa' policy, as reflected in the US Africa Command (AFRICOM) (e.g. Ndlovu-Gatsheni and Ojakorotu, 2010); policies to promote 'good governance', including via security sector reform (e.g. Bachmann and Hönke, 2009); and 'western' migration policy, framing 'African' migration as a source of transnational threats to 'the global North' (Dover, 2008; Obi, 2010).

Securitization primarily appears as something that characterizes social and discursive practices enacted 'upon' 'Africa' by actors from 'the West'/'global North' (although drawing such distinctions between the 'inside' and 'outside' of 'Africa' is both impossible and dangerous; see Abrahamsen, 2017). Hence, little attention is paid to the various 'African' actors who are (partly) governed by these 'western' interventions, and the ways in which they attach meanings to and co-produce such efforts (Hönke and Müller, 2012). For instance, in literature on security sector reform, the voices of the primary 'objects of reform' – 'African' military and police personnel – are particularly absent (Eriksson Baz and Stern, 2017). When discussing 'African' actors at all, this literature rather focuses on civil society organizations (e.g. Bachmann, 2012), national government policies and practices (e.g. Krogstad, 2014), or regional institutions such as the African Union (e.g. Haacke and Williams, 2008). There are a few exceptions to this general pattern, which study securitization as a process primarily driven by 'African' actors through everyday practices at the micro level (e.g. Buur et al., 2007; Schomerus and De Vries, 2014). Accordingly, the scarce literature on securitization in relation to 'Africa' displays a bias towards macro-level processes and formal institutions.

### *Securitization: the charges of Eurocentricism and racism*

Along this same line of criticism of Eurocentricism levelled against Securitization theory, the general International Relations theory has come under serious attack in recent years. It has been argued that the International Relations theory is deeply rooted in western thoughts (Europe and North America) and history. For example, the ideas of statehood and sovereignty emerged from the Treaty of Westphalia after the 30-year war of 1618–1648. Some of the characteristics of the Westphalian statehood include population, defined territory, government and sovereignty. Most of these can easily be obtained from the European standard. Hence any other non-Western formations are considered quasi-states and their sovereignty a negative one (Jackson, 1990) who cannot stand on their own. Jackson (1990; 1) questions 'the framework that upholds the sovereign statehood in the Third World'. He called it 'negative sovereignty' and contrasts it with the older structure of

'positive sovereignty' that emerged in Europe along with modern states … and refers to the sovereign units supported by this framework as 'quasi states' to call attention to the fact that they lack many of the marks and merits of empirical statehood postulated by 'positive sovereignty' (European standard). This found resonance in the 'civilising mission' that preceded colonisation of much of the world spaces. It has equally given an acceptable alibi for western military and 'humanitarian' interventions in states in Africa. These states are considered the source of threats to international security. The same applies to diplomacy, realism (popularised) during the Cold War (which was majorly a western affair) and liberal thoughts (starting from Kantian perpetual peace to Woodrow idealist thinking and the democratic peace theory). Amitav Archaya and Barry Buzan have therefore posed a rhetorical question: why is there no non-western International Relations theory? (Shani, 2008; 722). Archaya and Buzan (2007: 289) have therefore argued that almost all International Relations theory 'is produced by and for the West, and rests on an assumption that western history is world history.' They conclude that 'if we are to improve IRT as a whole, then the Western IRT needs to be challenged not just from within, but also from outside the West'.

The problem however is how to challenge the existing status quo and articulate a non-Western International Relations theory that will take care of cultures, societies and peoples from other spaces of the earth. This is particularly crucial when one considers the deep rooted and long existing beliefs even among academics. Shani (2008; 723) remarks that; 'after centuries of European imperialism, Western thought is now' an acceptable norm and standard. Chakrabarty considers western thought pattern, 'a gift to us all' (Chakrabarty 2000; 255); its values have long since become the gold standard of 'international society.' For, Bull and Watson (1984; 433), 'the most striking feature of…global international society…is the extent to which the states of Asia and Africa have embraced such basic elements of European international society as the sovereign state, the rules of international law, the procedures and conventions of diplomacy and IR.' Hugh Trevor-Roper (1967; 11) postulated that 'the history of the world, for the last five centuries, in so far as it has significance, has been European history'. A balanced reconceptualisation of the International Relations theory must 'interrogate not only the positivist methodology of International Relations but also the concomitant assumptions of western distinctiveness and superiority which are constitutive of the discipline of International Relations' (Shani, 2008; 723).

It is normal for scholars to disagree on methodological, theoretical and empirical grounds. Such scholarly back and forth arguments existed and still exist between and among advocates of for instance neo-realism and neo-liberalism. The charge against securitization of being Eurocentric however took a different dimension when Alison Howell and Melanie Richter-Montpetit took a swipe at the Copenhagen School on the classical theory of

securitization and accused it of being not only Eurocentric but harbouring racist modes of thought. The authors acknowledged that securitization theory displays 'methodological rigor … provides a clear set of steps and standards for identifying how referent objects (e.g. migration, health, cyberspace) become security problems and deciding whether they should indeed be "securitized"' (Howell and Richter-Montpelt, 2020; 4). However they have strongly argued 'that racist thought is fundamental and integral to classic securitization theory's conceptual and methodological project' (Howell and Richter-Montpelt, 2020; 4). While acknowledging scholarship which has endeavoured to include race analysis into securitization theory (Tariq, 2012; Ibrahim, 200; Mofette and Vadasaria, 2016) or to trounce securitization theory's Eurocentrism (Ezeokafor and Kaunert, 2019; Bilgin, 2010, 2011; Wilkinson, 2007), they claim to provide a different perspective, being 'the first to excavate the foundations of securitization theory in racist thought. We demonstrate that classic securitization theory is fundamentally and inextricably structured not only by Eurocentrism but also by civilizationism, methodological whiteness, and anti-black racism'.

On civilisationism, it is argued that civilization is racist perspective with three assumptions: (1) 'Civilizations can, and ought to, advance, and some (Western) civilizations are more "advanced"; (2) civilizational progress is not only technological and material, but political and moral; and (3) the 'underdevelopment' of certain civilizations represents a problem for, or threat to, developed ones' (Howell and Richter-Montpelt, 2020; 7). These have hugely found expression in securitization project and beyond; Buzan and Waever's (2003) Regional Security complexes; Samuel Huntington's (1997) *Clash of Civilization*; Robert Kaplan's (2001) *Coming Anarchy*. Howell and Richter-Montpelt (2020; 10) would therefor argue that 'classic securitization theory is civilizationist in that it believes that there are more or less politically and morally developed civilizations. It identifies 'normal politics' with (European) civilisation and 'securitization' with a return to (racialised) primal anarchy. As a result, it depicts 'underdeveloped' civilisations as threats to supposedly more advanced ones. This becomes especially clear when examining securitization theory's ideas about 'state failure'. Methodological whiteness and anti-black thoughts are embedded in classical securitization theory. Methodologically white because it has privileged predominantly white perspective and histories. Using the JL Austin's speech act approach it is claimed that securitization has given the white the position as a superior to speak for the subalterns. It is also anti-black because it upholds the Victorian notion of Africa as 'a fetish-land, inhabited by cannibals, dervishes and witch doctors, abandoned in prehistory' (McClintock, 1995: 41). Occupying the Joseph Conrad 'dark continent', African people inhabit 'not simply a different geographical space but a different temporal zone' (McClintock, 1995: 40). Howell and Richter-Montpelt (2020; 14) would suggest that such a negative mind set still exists in much International Relations theory. It is further thought that classical securitization theory has not

done much to deviate from such anti-black notions. Buzan and Waever (2003; 19) submits thus:

> a snapshot of Africa during almost any of the previous forty years would show a catalogue of wars, famines, plagues, mass population displacements, ruinous and barbaric political practices, and environmental despoliations. Africa is a pessimist's paradise, a place where the Hobbesian hypothesis that in the absence of a political Leviathan life for individuals will be nasty, brutish and short seems to be widely manifest in everyday life.

Howell and Richter-Montpelt (2020; 4) seeking to avoid a backlash were quick to add that the argument they offered in their work 'is not a personal indictment of any particular author'. Contrary to common-sense notions that reduce racism to interpersonal prejudices of openly bigoted individuals, racism and white supremacy are systems of power (Bonilla-Silva, 2006). Epistemic racism is intrinsic to Western knowledge structures and not merely a failure of individual scholarship' (Bhambra, 2013; Grosfoguel, 2003). Ole Waever and Barry Buzan as the major architects of securitization projects would however react to the charge of racism against their work.

It has been pointed out already that securitization as a concept in security analysis is heavily Eurocentric in origin and application. According to Huysmans (1998; 480) the Copenhagen project, the originator of the securitization concept, 'has emerged within a typically European security landscape which has given its work an explicitly European flavour'. For instance, consider their few works: Waever et al (1987), European Polyphony: Perspectives beyond East-West Confrontation; Buzan et al (1989), The European Security Order Recast: Scenarios for the Post-Cold War Era;, and Waever et al (1993), *Identity, Migration and the New Security Agenda in Europe*. Another way of putting it is to say that these works that are part of Copenhagen project benefited from the security dynamics in Europe that gave it this European tinge. Securitization, a product of such a line of thinking, therefore did not go a different way. Apart from works that criticised or appraised the idea of securitization, other works that appropriately and significantly applied the concept did so within the context of European security environment. Of course Waever et al (1993) applied the concept of securitization to the issues of identity and migration. Leonard (2010) equally applied the approach to the issues of asylum and migration vis-à-vis the activities of FRONTEX on European borders. Before Leonard, Huysmans (2000) had analysed how the issue of migration had been securitized in the European Union. Huysmans (2000) argued that in the face of economic and financial globalisation along with the rise of poverty and multiculturalism, migration in the European Union has been securitized. It 'has been increasingly presented as a danger to public order, cultural identity, and domestic and labour market stability' (Huysmans, 2000; 752).

Wilkinson (2007) asked whether 'securitization theory [is] useable outside Europe'? In particular reference to Kyrgystan, Wilkinson argued that applying the securitization concept in its original Copenhagen sense to security discourse outside Europe is not feasible because of the Westphalian understanding of the state and society that pertains in Europe which is diametrically opposite to what is present in other regions, including Africa. The best that could be derived from such places is states which have evolved from pre-complexes to proto-complexes.

> We talk of pre-complexes when a set of bilateral security relations seems to have the potential to bind together into a Regional Security Complex. Proto-complex refers to sufficient manifestation of security interdependence to delineate a region and differentiate it from its neighbours, but when the regional dynamics are still too thin and weak to think of the region as a fully-fledged Regional Security Complex.
>
> (Buzan and Waever, 2003; 64)

Or states that have been categorised as 'premodern', weak and collapsed, they 'no longer fulfil Max Weber's criterion of having the legitimate monopoly on the use of force'(Cooper, 2004; 16–18). Arising from the foregoing review, this book sets itself the task of bridging this gap in the literature in relation to Africa's security issues and the securitization approach. By applying the concept of securitization to Africa's security discourse, the aim is to stretch the boundaries of a very important but underutilized idea. Such an effort will certainly enrich the discourse on Africa's security. It agrees with Wilkinson's (2007) argument that applying the concept of securitization outside European security landscape requires a major recasting that factor in the peculiarities of different security environments such as Africa – the nature of statehood, the public and politics on the continent – and its political culture.

Having acknowledged the fair argument made by scholars against the Eurocentric nature of securitization theory however, Howell and Richter-Montpelt (2020; 6) are quick to reject them because 'seeing the issue solely as the analytical exclusion of the 'non-West', they decry 'Eurocentrism' while retaining racist political thought. According to them, Eurocentrism involves the ideas that: (1) 'Europe' or 'the West' is ontologically distinctive; (2) European development was endogenous; and (3) European cultural and political achievements were subsequently diffused across the world (Howell and Richter-Montpelt, 2020; 6). Consider for instance one of Neil Ferguson's (2003) outrageous statements: that there could not have been a modern world without the British Empire and the prototype institutions it bequeathed to the world. The charge of racism is a serious issue and as acknowledged by Howell and Richter-Montpelt, 2020; 4) engaging with "'r-word' and white supremacy as categories of analysis is sure to raise eyebrows". We are taking a stand that an author is not a racist merely by his

intellectual thoughts. It is a general problem in wider International Relations discipline. Again Howell and Richter would argue in support of this, that; 'black studies and decolonial scholarship demonstrate that much orthodox and critical Western political thought is predicated upon epistemological and ontological premises that are not simply Eurocentric but racist, specifically white supremacist'.

Writing in Foreign Policy, Kelebogile Zvobgo and Meredith Loken (2020) argue that 'race is not a perspective on international relations; it is a central organizing feature of world politics'. For instance, they point out:

> Take the 'big three' IR paradigms: realism, liberalism, and constructivism. These dominant frames for understanding global politics are built on raced and racist intellectual foundations that limit the field's ability to answer important questions about international security and organization. Core concepts, like anarchy and hierarchy, are raced: They are rooted in discourses that centre and favour Europe and the West. These concepts implicitly and explicitly pit 'developed' against 'undeveloped,' 'modern' against 'primitive,' 'civilized' against 'uncivilized.' And their use is racist: These invented binaries are used to explain subjugation and exploitation around the globe.

We have acknowledged this loophole in the general discipline of International Relations as charged against the theory of securitization. Not wanting to be in the same mould of eurocentrism nor arguing against it, and at the same time retaining elements of racist political thought, we are engaging differently. For instance, to avoid being accused of methodological whiteness (already discussed above), part of the research for the book was done by having a physical presence in some of the countries of West Africa. There was interaction with the locals and the security situation of the region. This can be verified from the case studies (Liberia and Sierra Leone).

## Conclusion

Can Africa's security discourse benefit from the application of securitization as an analytical framework? The answer to this question is in the affirmative. In answering this and later implementing the concept, let us look at some of the prominent themes or assumptions underpinning the concept of securitization once more. One, there is a perceived threat. Two, someone or something is being threatened. Three, someone says the issue is threatening. Four, an audience is to be convinced that the situation is bad enough to require an urgent approach beyond the normal bounds of political process to address the situation. Balzacq's (2011; 8–16). Three core assumptions of securitization find resonance with the above elements, namely: the centrality of audience, the co-dependency between the agency and the context and the institutional, policy mechanisms, tools and practices through which securitization can be enacted.

Importantly, McDonald (2008; 564) has also submitted that the securitization approach is narrow and underutilised in three senses. One is form, meaning the act of constructing security, which is narrowly presented as a function of the dominant actor and political leaders whilst neglecting other forms of representation. Through these actors, security becomes discursive reliant on their voices. This fails to acknowledge the role other representations such as images can play in influencing security construction. The second is context of act which McDonald (2008; 564) pointed out is narrowly seen at the moment of intervention without making space for future and incremental processes and representation in the construction of security. This means that there is a lack of an institutionalised framework for continuity. Finally, there is a cloak of negativity over security in the sense that the Copenhagen School constructs the nature of the security act. Here, the concept of security is portrayed as designation of danger or threat to security. 'This focus ignores the central importance of the way in which security (as a normative goal or expression of core values) is understood in particular contexts' (McDonald, 2008; 564). It therefore appears as though the politics of security is inherently negative and reactionary. This does not however detract from the usefulness of securitization as an analytical tool to focus on the failure of politics in addressing security.

Having said that and borrowing this overtly Eurocentric concept, it is necessary to introduce it to Africa's security in a much more specific and comprehensive manner than previously attempted (Abrahamsen, 2005; Williams, 2008; Haacke and Williams, 2008). It is also an invitation for future works along this line. The African continent and West Africa in particular have confronted numerous issues especially since the end of the Cold War; threats that range from weak state institutions, threats against the state, against human security to other range of daily challenges to people in the subregion. For instance the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), 2009) has hinted at the seriousness of illegal drugs in West Africa. The danger posed by other transnational trafficking such as: oil bunkering from Nigeria; cigarettes from Europe and Asia to West Africa and North Africa; counterfeit medicines; human trafficking; small arms and weapons; toxic waste from Europe; and illegal migrants is also noted. Cockayne and Williams (2009), Ellis (2009), Allen (1999), and Akyeampong (2005) have corroborated the UNODC reports. Aning (2008; 194) highlighted the nexus between and among different crime networks in West Africa and, importantly, pointed out 'that the nature of state and statehood in Africa and its inability to establish effective regulatory mechanisms contributes to the rise of these particular types of criminal groups'. The list of these issues is endless as pointed out and it is not planned to apply the idea of securitization to each of them individually, but rather to show how they have been securitized according to the particular mindset of the neo-patrimonial leaders.

Bringing together the core assumptions and themes upon which the concept of securitization stands, it is now asked: which threat(s) is/are

considered a security issue? Who decides or securitizes such issues in West Africa? Whose security is being threatened? Who has the means to deploy emergency measures beyond normal politics to manage such issue? Above all, who is the audience to be appealed to for the process of securitization to be complete? There is a lack of clarity around these issues when one seeks to analyse the processes of threat securitization in West Africa. For instance, when one mentions the issue of illegal weapons in the sub-region, who is the referent object of security? Is it the state, individual regime or the people? The ECOWAS Moratorium on small arms did not clarify this even with the serious attention that was paid to the severity of the issue. Is ECOWAS now the securitizing actor? If so, who deploys emergency means to deal with it? Unlike the European Union with a much more coordinated mechanism, the ECOWAS either as a regional security complex or regional economic community does not have such an effective institutional framework to deal with threats as it still has to rely on state compliance and cooperation, or sometimes international cooperation. The same ambiguities are apparent in every other single threat one examines but it is sufficient here to address the issues of illegal arms and weapons and illegal drugs as illustrative examples.

Aning (2008; 194) has rightly pointed out that West Africa in recent times has become a critical point and earned notoriety in the new drug triangle – from South America via West Africa to Europe. ECOWAS, the EU, UNODC and the United States have all seen this as a serious security menace. But the question is whose interest or security is being protected? While it is accepted that concerted efforts are being made to tackle the menace especially from Europe, it is argued that it is in the interest of Europe to rid itself of the effects of illegal drugs on the population that this issue is securitized. It is not necessarily in the interests of Africa or West African countries in particular. These issues are securitized in the interest of neo-patrimonial elites. The same applies to other issues such as the HIV/AIDS pandemic. It is not that the USA securitizes it as a serious threat to Africa but prioritises its security implications to America's national security. Consider equally the activities of American African Command (AFRICOM), a body put in place to combat terrorist activities especially in the Gulf of Guinea.

In agreement with the opinion (Wilkinson, 2007) that securitization in its Eurocentric form cannot be applied outside Europe's security landscape, it is argued that the activities and practices noted above are evidence of securitization at work even though analysts are silent on that in the literature. That is what this chapter attempts to establish for subsequent work to build on; that there is securitization at work but it may not be in the discursive manner as prescribed by the Copenhagen School, hence Balzacq's (2008) suggestion that securitization be moved away from discursive to empirical securitizing practices. For instance, the border posts of West African states are heavily manned to combat trans-border crimes, illegal trading in drugs, movement of arms and ammunitions and human

trafficking. Consider again the ECOWAS Protocol on Human Trafficking and ECOWAS Declaration on the Prevention of Drug Abuse, Illicit Drug Trafficking and Organized Crimes in West Africa. Or on the wider African continent, the African Peace and Security Architecture (APSA) adopted by the Peace and Security Council (PSC) Protocol in July, 2002 in Durban. Its main remit is the prevention, management and resolution of crises and conflicts. Being a region recognised for wars and conflicts, it is argued that this and the other points above are part of securitization practices which the literature has not sufficiently acknowledged.

The two major groups of authors studied in this literature review have done remarkably well in helping us in a significant way to engage with Africa's security discourse. Their works have shown what could be taken as the security direction of the African continent and West Africa in particular, especially since the end of the Cold War; particularly in relation to the many wars and conflicts that have taken place in the sub-region, paying special attention on the Mano River Basin (Liberia and Sierra Leone). The frontier of international security discourse continues to expand, thus bringing about new innovations and the reconceptualisation of security to include new issues emerging.

While such excellent research is acknowledged with regard to understandings of security in Africa after the Cold War, a significant gap in the literature is still begging to be filled. Africa's security discourse has not benefited adequately from the application of this useful analytical concept of securitization. Authors who sought to discuss Africa's security threats did not borrow the concept to make sense of many securitizing practices going on in the continent and in regional bodies such as ECOWAS. Such reluctance therefore has become prominent in the security analysis of Africa. There has been no overall scrutiny of the policies and practices of organisations and political actors. It is essential that we establish a systematic analysis of these practices by building on such works that have applied the concept of securitization to Europe. It is strongly argued that Africa's security threats can be approached from the angle of securitization processes. Works such as Abrahamsen (2005), Williams (2008), and Haacke and Williams (2008), while acknowledged as useful starting points, can be built upon to focus sufficient attention on the security practices in Africa and recognise them for what they are – securitization practices. Focussing on this will be useful in identifying the many segments of securitization processes such as the securitizing actor, the referent object of security, the security threat or the audience – which have been, until now, absent from the literature. Africa's security discourse will also be enriched as it will no longer be isolated from such rich innovation in security analysis.

# 2 Ontological security and West Africa

The use of ontological security, developed over the past ten years in International Relations, has proved helpful in better understanding the emotional reasons behind the apprehensions and fears of African citizens (Croft and Vaughan-Williams, 2017; Della Sala, 2017, 2018; Kinnvall, 2004; Laing, 2010; Mälksoo, 2018; Manners, 2002; Rumelili, 2018, 2015b, 2014). The cornerstone of ontological security is the analysis of autobiographical narratives and routines and how they are used as vehicles to relieve one's anxiety. Stevens and Vaughan-Williams also applied the ontological security lens to analyse narratives and better conceptualise and understand how different perceptions and experiences of menaces to public security fluctuate according to identity, ethnicity, religion, class, gender, location and generation (Croft, 2012; Croft and Vaughan-Williams, 2017). Moreover, according to Catarina Kinnvall, an ontological security approach allows us to unveil how fears and anxieties influence groups, states and to understand the psycho-socio-political effects that shape political movements and policy debate at the African security level (Kinnvall et al., 2018). Based on the initial works of Laing and Giddens (Giddens, 2013; Laing, 1999), ontological security seeks, therefore, to dissect biographical narratives and repeated practices as way to understand how these practices outline political choices and their consequences. Despite the fact that physical and ontological security are theoretically different, they are nonetheless intrinsically related. Traumatic events such as being a victim of violent crimes, being a victim of terrorist attacks or subject to harsh physical traumas, may transform negatively personal and collective identities and unleash the feeling of ontological insecurity (Krahmann, 2018; 358–359). Allied to the analysis of the discourses and practices, ontological security emerges as an auspicious theoretical and empirical input not only to this particular project within the African security studies arena, but similarly opens the door to novel theoretical and methodological approaches with security studies in general acknowledging and providing a more holistic approach to answer this research question. Issues related to the emergence of ontological (in)security are mainly related to the search for a self-identity that can emotionally structure the individual within its community. It turns out that when all that

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is socially known and inherently acquired, and when routines are disrupted, there is a destabilisation and a shudder that gives the individual and his society a sense of solidity and confidence, paving the way for ontological insecurity. Moreover, according to Giddens, these disruptions may not be directly aimed at the individual but may be the result of the disruption of traditional ways of life and society through the phenomenon of globalisation and the movements brought about by modernity (Agius, 2017; 110–111; Giddens, 1991).

## West African security, Cold War politics and securitization of threats

The factors that shaped the history, evolution and direction of security in West Africa were not any different from what has obtained for the entire continent especially since the Cold War era. The African interpretation of security and processes of securitization derived from a context of some historical narratives of the people of Africa. This was a people that were just emerging from years of colonial subjugation and being 'born' in the heat of Cold War. The era and the experience of the people defined their construction of security concerns. National security was not a priority to the leaders because they were protected by the Cold War superpower rivalry. The major security concern of the leaders in West Africa and the entire continent as enunciated in the Charter of the Organization of African Unity (OAU) in those early years of their independence was 'to safeguard and consolidate the hard-worn independence as well as the sovereignty and territorial integrity of our states, and to fight against neo-colonialism in all its forms' (see Charter of Organisation of African Unity, 1963; 1). The primary aim of the African leaders who convened at Addis Ababa the capital city of Ethiopia for that historic meeting in 1963 was how to protect the pride of the continent which was translated into securing the sovereignty of the newly independent states. The patron leaders of Africa were in solidarity with one another in securitizing any threat against the major referent object of security; their sovereignty. This section provides a vivid picture of the Cold War status of West African states.

### *Framing the context*

The issue of security is relational. This means that to comprehend the phenomenon of security at the national, sub-regional or even continental level one must factor in the international environment of the given period in which the level is embedded. The understanding is that there is security interdependence between the units and the system level of international relations. 'The security of each is related to the security of all' according to Buzan (1993; 187). However, in the context of West Africa or the entire African continent especially during the Cold War, one may seriously

question this assumption. This is because the relationship between West African countries and the superpowers during this period was not one of mutual security interdependence. The Cold War ideological rivalry between the East and West blocs spilled into Africa in the form of proxy wars. Cold War West Africa could not be said in any strict sense to hold any geostrategic significance to these blocs in the same manner as, for example, the Horn of Africa or Southern Africa did apart from being mere spheres of influence directly to the then colonial masters, and indirectly to the ideological camp the colonial masters belonged. For instance, Liberia was unarguably in the camp of the West bloc spearheaded by the USA with whom it also has some historical relations. Francophone West Africa also had this kind of relationship with France and the pattern extended to the entire continent of Africa. The West Africans, Africans and by extension the Third World countries appreciated the fragility of their new statehood and the risk they would run should they get enmeshed in Cold War politics. These will be well understood when one considers the creation of Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) by those fledgling states whose major strategy in the light of these considerations was to remain neutral and avoid any interference from extra-African actors with their newly acquired sovereignty. The NAM was a loose association of nations opposed to Cold War entanglements, which sought to create a third force between the Communist bloc and the Capitalist bloc. It originally comprised 24 Afro-Asian countries plus Yugoslavia. It held its first summit in Belgrade in September in 1961 (Arnold and Wiener, 2012; 153–154).

Considering the issue of context, it would be wrong to think that the security relationship was entirely a case of mutual interdependence. It could be argued that the Cold War great powers were not altruistically interested in the security of these states. The main interest was to have a foothold in the states as spheres of influence. In a manner of neo-patrimonial patron-client relationship, this interest defined whatever was securitized as threat by the patron states and for the client states. What they saw as referent object was their fragile nationhood and regimes. That would extend to having their support in warding off a rival power in their states, sub-region or the entire continent. Ayoob (1995; 98) supported this line of thought that:

> the superpowers chose the Third World (including West Africa; not in the original text) as the arena in which they could afford to be 'locked in global competition for influence' in the thermonuclear age demonstrated the low priority they attached to gains and losses in the Third World and the vast distance that separated their Third World concerns from their vital interests, which were protected by the nuclear balance of terror.

A good case of external power involvement in the internal affairs of African states will be 'the Angolan crisis of 1975 in which half of the member states

recognized the Popular Movement for the Liberation of Angola (MPLA)' (Burgess, 1998; 40). The MPLA was strongly supported by the communist Soviet Union; thus, the case of Mozambique and several other conflicts in the continent or sub-region of West Africa 'turned into virtual proxy wars between the superpowers' (Ayoob, 1995; 94). The new states in West Africa were mere pawns on the political chessboard of the Cold War's major antagonists. Internal security threats or possible invasions from a fellow African country were not an issue. The primary concern for West Africans and their leaders was the issue of their territorial integrity. As a people just emerging from years of colonialism there was no concise or clear articulation of a security plan to guide them and where one was contemplated, the underpinning interest was the neo-patrimonial relationship. The states were very weak politically and financially to carry any plan through to execution. To accentuate this issue, the Nigerian military president in 1979 frowned at the unilateral intervention of Tanzania in Uganda. The president 'General Obasanjo, held strongly the position that an African regional peacekeeping force should be evolved to intervene in internal conflicts in order to deter the weaker, vulnerable states from being driven into the laps of extra-African powers for defence and security' (Yoroms, 1993; 84). In the following, we turn to consider the ways threats were perceived and some of the strategies adopted by the leaders for their security especially during the Cold War epoch.

### *Threat perception and securitization during the Cold War*

The argument is not that there were no other threats in West Africa or the larger African continent during the period of Cold War. There were certainly issues of cross-border crime, refugee problems and internal conflict, but these were not given much attention in terms of securitization. Internal conflicts were viewed in the light of any problem they could cause to states and regimes stability. Opposition groups or mainstream governments were supported by the rival camps in the Cold War's bipolar structure. Even membership of global organisations such as the United Nations Organization was in a way for the purpose of regime protection.

> The primary concern was to reduce their vulnerabilities; they may occasionally find authoritative international regimes attractive only because they believe such regimes may be able to help them inch toward the overriding goal of reducing state and regime insecurities individually and collectively.
>
> (Ayoob, 1995; 3)

It is against this overriding need for regime security and protection of territorial integrity that one may appreciate certain processes of securitization employed by African leaders especially during the Cold War bipolarity. In the first instance, as far as the post-independence leaders of the African

continent were concerned, no state is secure if its neighbour is under threat – that is, under foreign rule. There were still pockets of territories still under colonial masters such as Cape Verde in West Africa, Namibia, Zimbabwe and apartheid South Africa. The OAU Charter (1963; 3(6)) made a case for 'absolute dedication to the total emancipation of African territories which are still dependent'. It was a common threat perception among the leaders that not until the entire continent was totally liberated from foreign domination could they claim to be secure. Thus foreign rule in any part of the continent was securitized as a threat to complete the decolonisation of Africa.

The second strategy was the idea of not getting involved in the ideological divide of the two Cold War powers expressed through the instrumentality of Non-Aligned Movement (see above). The leaders wanted to avoid a neo-colonial hierarchical relationship with the superpowers which might endanger African states' independence. Kwame Nkrumah of Ghana expressed their fear in these words; 'Neo-colonialism acts covertly, manoeuvring men and governments, free of stigma attached to political rule. It creates client states, independent in name but in point of fact pawns of the very colonial power which supposed to have given them independence' (quoted in Oyebade and Alao, 1998; 6). By adopting this strategy of not getting involved in the superpower antagonism, the leaders were hopeful that their sovereignty would be protected.

Thirdly, African leaders seriously securitized any attempt by fellow African states to unilaterally or collectively interfere in the internal affairs of another African country. This was equally expressed in the Charter of the OAU. If African states could be allowed to manage their 'internal' problems themselves, their territorial integrity, their independence and African brotherhood would be guaranteed. Such action would also discourage extra-African interference in the internal affairs of African countries. Finally, towards securing the independence and regimes of the states, the leaders agreed to respect the boundaries of the states as handed over to them by the colonial masters. It will be recalled that at the Berlin conference of 1884/85 the European leaders arbitrarily redrew the map of Africa (see Adekeye, 2010). After independence and knowing the problem that revisiting such an issue would create, the leaders opted to respect such irrationality and securitized any threat to that status quo. A critical look at the threat perception and securitization of issues by the African leaders at the continental level, especially during the bipolar structure of the international system, reveals the issues given priority – the protection of regimes of individual states. The poor state of African economies was not considered enough of a security threat to Africa at that time. Rather, the leaders were in neo-patrimonial solidarity on the issues of 'interference' and 'territorial integrity'. These were 'confused with the desperate bid to preserve the incumbent leaders in power' – the self-preservation of the regimes (see Oyebade and Alao, 1998; 5–10). The priority given to this particular issue now defined whatever security direction the continent took.

Because the states could not guarantee their individual security, they relied on the assistance of one superpower or the other. This in turn meant that even in their so-called non-aligned position, they were seriously entangled; probably as a conscious strategy to maximise every opportunity to benefit from the Cold War situation.

This section started by tracing the trajectory of security in West Africa but realising that West Africa is a microcosm of the African continent; its security is better appreciated within the context of the latter. Of course, there were sub-regional attempts at having organisations either for economic purposes or integration but they did not withstand the test of time.

> For instance, the Union Africaine ET Malgache de Cooperation Economique (UAMCE) was loose and less functional. The East African Community, which started as a model of African union, got lost in political imbroglio and later broke into pieces. The Maghreb Union has remained in a crisis of ideology among the North African Arab states. SADCC (Southern African Development Co-ordination Conference) was set up in 1979 as a safeguard against South Africa. It lacked retaliatory capability against South Africa; it needed a strong economic base to be able to decide on sub-regional security organs.
>
> (Yoroms, 1993; 84)

The security of the sub-regions and the entire continent especially from the Cold War was therefore seen from the light of the Cold War structure of the international system. Thus, the security of West Africa was a function of the interest of the superpowers that needed them within their spheres of influence. The primary security issue for the leaders of African countries bordered on issue of regime survival and preservation. Their international relations and foreign policy both within and outside the continent revolved around this major concern. Strategies to ensure this goal ranged from ridding the continent of every trace of remaining foreign rule to articulating a policy of non-alignment and frowning at any interference in or encroachment on the territories of member nations. Finally, hard as the states tried to achieve all these security goals, they were hampered by their financial incapability and lack of political will. The history of West African security cannot therefore be said to have started on a strong footing because of the issues above. It was only after the Cold War that one could to some extent talk of an indigenous African security architecture. The following section takes a look at the second defining moment for African security but specifically narrowed down to the West African sub-region.

## West African security after the Cold War

It is generally agreed that West Africa stands out as one of the few areas in the post-Cold War period to have articulated indigenous self-help security

architecture. This was a function of a development; a shift in the tectonic plates of international politics. By the mid-1980s when the leader of the Soviet Union, Mikhail Gorbachev, introduced some reforms in the country, there were signs that the Cold War ideological faceoff was approaching the beginning of its end. The fiscal austerity in the United States and the waning of Communism meant that the superpowers would start cutting their support for some of their client states in some regions in the world. West Africa and the larger African continent ceased to be special friends of the West. The issues formerly considered worthy of securitization ceased to gain attention as constituting real threats. West Africa was no longer courted as the attention of the West shifted to the emerging nations in East Europe. West African countries were left to find African solutions to African problems. This resonates with Buzan et al's (1998; 30) perception that:

> the way the securitization processes of one actor fit with the perceptions of others about what constitutes a 'real' threat matters in shaping the interplay of securities within the international system.

The USA in particular stopped giving support to some of the corrupt leaders – for instance Samuel Doe in Liberia. Between 1989 and 1991 when the Soviet Union was dismantling, West Africa was smouldering. The invasion of Liberia by Charles Taylor and his armed men in December 1989 and the ensuing conflicts in which Doe's forces were defeated and Doe himself eventually captured and killed was one of the first signs of what to expect in West Africa. The support of the East-West bloc had ceased and the sub-region imploded into internal conflicts, exposing the ambiguity of statehood and all the colonial legacies. One major fault against African leaders' approach to security during the Cold War was the state-centric character of their threat perception (Oyebade and Alao, 1998; 9). The end of the Cold War brought a different environment filled with so many old and emerging threats. Specifically, the wars in the Mano river basin (Liberia and Sierra Leone) and the intervention by ECOWAS signified the self-help approach to security in the sub-region and the influence neo-patrimonial relationships had on the securitization of these issues. This section continues the exploration into what eventually became West Africa's security in the light of the new structure of the international system. It considers the security and vulnerability of West Africa, the emergence of security architecture in the sub-region and the securitization processes.

### *A picture of West Africa's security and vulnerability after the Cold War*

One of the elements that contribute to national power is geography. Geography can be defined in terms of location, physical features and/or climate. The location is further explained in terms of the neighbourhood, vulnerability to internal and external threats or natural protection. What is

considered a strategic plus for a nation or region could at the same time be a minus. In the case of the West Africa sub-region, its location makes it a gateway to the Gulf of Guinea. The northern side is vast space (Sahel) under serious influence and threat from events happening in the Arab world. In the first place, the proximity of Liberia, Sierra Leone, Ghana, Togo, Benin, Cote d'Ivoire and Nigeria to the Atlantic coast line confronts them with serious maritime challenges in terms of the activities of pirates. This is compounded further by the fact that the countries are not capable in terms of naval power to confront these challenges. The prevalence of cross-border crimes such as smuggling is also encouraged by this geographic feature. Smugglers can easily escape into a neighbouring country through many waterways and bush paths. Yet these issues – as serious as they might be to national or individual security – may not be perceived as 'real' threats deserving securitization. It could be either because there was no established process for securitization of threats or that they do not fit with threat perceptions of the patron leaders whose sole security interest is their regime security.

West Africa has also become a transit zone for illegal drugs from South American countries en route to Europe. Due to their geographical locations Liberia, Sierra Leone, Guinea, Guinea Bissau and Cape Verde are well placed to serve the interests of drug barons. From these places the illicit drugs are transported to Europe and other West African countries further inland. Considering the weak state institutions of these countries, they serve the function very well. For example, just as Sierra Leone was still reconstructing after long years of war, 'Latin American drug cartels targeted the desperate poor country as they seek to smuggle narcotics to Europe'. And 'in 2007, a large consignment of cocaine landed at Lungi International Airport' (Sierra Leone's main airport) (Blair, 2009). In 2008 a record seizure in one instance of 700 kilos of cocaine was made in Lungi International Airport. The substance was concealed in an airplane bearing a fake Red Cross emblem (UNODC, 2008; 10). In a manner reminiscent of patron-client power relations as we will point out in chapter three, these drug barons employ the services of jobless and desperate youths who carry out their instructions for a fee. Again, the end of the Cold War left the leaders in the sub-region overwhelmed with these threats. Even though there is the ECOWAS Moratorium for illegal drugs, not all the countries in the community securitize the issue. The prevalence of patron-client relationships undermines any effective management of such issues. For example, the government and the army in Guinea Bissau were implicated in drug trafficking according to a report on Guinea Bissau by the UN Secretary-General in 2007 (IRIN, 2008). Cockayne and Williams (2009; 9) noted:

> West Africa's vulnerability to such external intervention is exemplified by Guinea Bissau, to date the most publicized case of drug trafficking in the region. The country has provided a perfect way station or

> transhipment point for drugs, personnel, and other goods on the way from Columbia (often via Venezuela and Brazil) to Europe.

Aning (2007; 199) also noted that 'Accra's Kotoka International Airport (KIA) is increasingly an intersection for traffickers. The Tema and Sekondi Ports are also used, and the border posts at Aflao (Togo) and Elubo and Sampa (Cote d'Ivoire) see significant drug trafficking activity'.

One major thing that makes this possible is the easy accessibility to these coastline states that lack the means to monitor and check their own borders. If one thinks this does not make them vulnerable enough, consider the free exchange of illegal arms across the sub-region of West Africa because of the contiguous nature of their borders. The two countries, Liberia and Sierra Leone, endured years of war which also shook the sub-region. There was a rise in the number of child soldiers, mercenaries and illegal weapons and war lords who were a product of the wars and who were further used in other similar conflicts in the sub-region. Another reason for this apart from the proximity of borders is the geography. In recent times, Mali – a land-locked state in the Sahel region – has witnessed serious existential threats from rebel groups made up of discontented Tuaregs and Islamists from the north of the country. The stretch between Sahara and Sahel – from north western Chad to northern Niger – Mali and Mauritania have experienced the dangerous activities of Islamic fundamentalist and Tuaregs who are influenced by the Arab countries. Since the fall of Gaddafi in Libya, there has been an increase in the number of militants who are returnees as mercenaries who fought on the side of Gaddafi in the Libyan conflict (2011) and they are fighting with the same weapons they got from Libya, possibly including heavy weapons and surface to air missiles. Let us not forget the activities of Al Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb – an affiliate of the greater Al Qaeda network operating since the 1990s when it engaged the Algerian secular government. It has since extended its operations further down into the Sahel region of Mali. There it has been bolstered by these Tuarag rebels returning from Libya (Keating, 2011).

> In early December 2012, General Carter F. Ham, the top American military Commander in Africa said that the Al Qaeda affiliate was operating terrorist training camps in northern Mali and providing arms, explosives and financing to Boko Haram an extremist organization in northern Nigeria.
>
> (Schmitt, 2012)

The point is this: West Arica covers more than 4.7million square kilometres – more than twice the size of Europe. Its coastal line is about 6,000 kilometres. It stretches from the upper reaches of Angola in South West Africa to the lower reaches of Western Sahara to the north and washed by the Atlantic Ocean (see Musah, 2009;1). The geography of West Africa is

both a plus and a minus to the sub-region. The vast area is dotted by small states which are not able to control this vast area therefore making it a safe haven and access route for illegal drugs, small arms and light weapons as well as militants which pose serious existential threat to the states. Sometimes the state leaders engage in these illegal activities or provide succour and protection to perpetrators. Farah and Shultz (2004; A19) have submitted that the former Liberian warlord turned President Charles Taylor had ties with Al Qaeda and this was corroborated by the FBI and Special Court for Sierra Leone. Farah and Schultz (2004; 6) revealed:

> In 2000, among those operating simultaneously in Liberia under Charles Taylor were senior Al Qaeda operatives; Hezbollah financiers; Victor Bout, an arms merchant who was supplying weapons across Africa and to both the Taliban and the Northern Alliance in Afghanistan; Leonid Minin, a Ukrainian-Israeli drug dealer and arms merchant; and Aziz Nassour, the onetime bagman for Mobutu Sese Seko in Zaire and middleman for al Qaeda and Hezbollah.

Hill (2002) noted how the 'terrorist network led by Osama bin Laden struck deals in 'blood diamond' worth $20m with Revolutionary United Front in Sierra Leone'. The prosecutor of the special court in Sierra Leone revealed that Charles Taylor of Liberia harboured al Qaeda members that had gone to Sierra Leone to trade in diamonds with the rebels (see Wanneburg, 2003; 1). What unfolded in Liberia and Sierra Leone to a large extent is representative of the entire sub-region of West Africa, revealing the vulnerability of the two states and the sub-region. This is further compounded by weak state institutions with the result that the issues already mentioned threaten the survival of states. During these challenges West Africa was left with no other choice than to manage its own problems. The sub-region emerged as a security complex and it contributed significantly to its securitization processes which have also been negatively influenced by intricate neo-patrimonial patron-client relationships. There are always different threat perceptions by individual securitizing actors.

### *ECOWAS sub-region as a security complex and the securitization of threats in West Africa*

> The security problem in Africa since decolonization has been dominated by the widespread failure of postcolonial weak states. Such states are not unique to Africa, but nowhere else are they clustered together in large numbers unmixed with stronger neighbours. It is this clustering, plus the extremeness of state weakness that gives Africa its unique security qualities.
>
> (Buzan and Waever, 2003; 253)

According to Buzan and Waever (2003; 10) one of the principal theoretical perspectives of post-Cold War international security is the regionalist paradigm. This particular perspective rests upon two tenets. One is that the decline of superpower antagonism has whittled down the overarching and encroaching influence of global power in different parts of the world. Secondly, most of the former powers cannot project their influence as they used to during the Cold War. They have become weak and distracted by their domestic issues. As a result, they have left 'local states and societies to sort out their military-political relationships with less interference from great powers than before' (Buzan and Waever, 2003; 11). Arising from this, the best approach to security will be regionalist perspective giving rise to the idea of 'regional security complex theory'. In the West African sub-region, ECOWAS became a solution to the second assumption above that the local states and people were left after the Cold War to sort out their security challenges themselves. However the security community that ECOWAS turned into continued the tradition of securitizing just the threats to regime and economic security of neo-patrimonial patron leaders.

The intention here is not to discuss the birth and evolution of ECOWAS but to highlight the unique moment when it morphed from one central objective to incorporate into its portfolio another very critical role in the security architecture in the sub-region of West Africa. The Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) came into existence during the Cold War on 28 May, 1975 by the Treaty of Lagos. No mention was made regarding its role as a security arrangement in the treaty. For example, the ECOWAS (1975, 1; 2(1)) reads thus:

> it shall be the aim of the community to promote cooperation and development in all fields of economic activity particularly in fields of industry, transport, telecommunications, energy, agriculture, natural resources, commerce, monetary and financial questions and in social and cultural matters for the purpose of raising the standard of living of its people.

The central goal was to promote trade, cooperation, communications, monetary union, socio-cultural ties and development programmes among West Africans. There was no concern or need to include any security clause in the treaty. The ECOWAS Protocol on Non-Aggression (1978) condemned in strong terms any attempt by a member state to subvert the territorial integrity or political independence of other member state (Article 2). Article 4 equally distances ECOWAS from any member state which allows its territory to be used by non-resident foreigners as a base for committing the acts condemned in Article 2. It could be argued that leaders that framed the Treaty establishing ECOWAS and the subsequent protocols already knew the terrain they were in and the danger posed by violent change of government to their regimes. As a result they moved to nip that possibility

in the bud. However, whether the aim was achieved is another issue. The ECOWAS Protocol on Mutual Assistance of Defence (ECOWAS, 1981; 2) states:

> Member states declare and accept that a threat or aggression directed against any member state shall constitute a threat or aggression against the entire community.

The Protocol moreover in sections 2 and 3 established the Defence Council and Defence Commission to take care of all measures deemed right by the body in managing any aggression against any member state. Chapter 5, article 13 (1,2) asks member states to 'agree to place at the disposal of the community earmarked units from the existing National Armed Forces in case of any armed intervention… these units shall be referred to as the Allied Armed Force of the Community (AAFC)'.

However, these provisions were not put into use until the end of the Cold War when crises started rocking the boat of statehood of West African states. In addition the provisions did not consider situations of internally-generated crises that could be threatening to regimes. Not until after the Cold War was the sub-region to be considered as a security region even though there were provisions in the treaty that could have put this into place earlier. Even after the Cold War the sub-region's security is still being influence by the interests of ex-metropolitan states, particularly France who still calls the shots in its former colonies. This sometimes clashes with the interests of the sub-regional hegemon, Nigeria. But to a large extent, this period was the beginning of an attempt to indigenise threat perception and securitization in the sub-region. Unlike the European Union which also evolved from an economic community to other remits such as security, ECOWAS's interest in issues of security is still influenced by what the leaders perceive the threat perception to be. There is not yet a unified approach to the securitization issues. It has been seen so far how the security history of West Africa has been at the mercy of the ebb and flow of international politics, Cold War politics and the end of that era. The major issues that emerged in West Africa after the Cold War include the call for the withdrawal of the former great powers from West Africa to face their own domestic issues. The security of the sub-region collapsed and states had to find a way of dealing with the numerous issues that emerged. Such issues included and were not limited to, crisis of statehood, intrastate conflicts, illegal drugs, the availability of illegal weapons, economic crisis, and poverty and an increase in number of armed non-state actors discussed as security and vulnerabilities. Even though the sub-region has been able to articulate a security model in the form of ECOMOG, the states are still too weak to manage myriad security issues. Finally, the securitization of issues is still being influenced by interested neo-patrimonial actors both within and outside the sub-region. The following section takes a look at West African sub-

region in the post-9/11 global political arena which is yet another event that helped shape the security environment of West Africa. This event to a large extent also internationalised and linked together some of the local threats in the sub-region. The section will additionally offer insights into the new geostrategic significance the sub-region has assumed in the light of the emerging global political economy and the increased interest of some great powers.

## The post-9/11 world and securitization of threats in West Africa

On Tuesday, September 11, 2001, an Islamist terrorist group, Al Qaeda, carried out a series of four coordinated attacks that brought down the Twin Towers of the United States' World Trade Centre. Although the attacks were carried out on US soil, the shockwave reverberated across the globe and came to define the current global war on terror. Africa may have experienced just a few terrorist attacks before 2001– including the simultaneous 7 August 1998 attacks in Nairobi, Kenya and Dar el Salaam, Tanzania. West Africa in particular may not have been under any attack, yet the sub-region has come to attract focus in the global war on terror. This section takes a good look at how this singular piece of foreign policy after that event has become pivotal and has helped to define the history and construction of security in the sub-region. The section does not intend to engage in the normative and stereotypical argument about the fight on terror vis-à-vis West Africa but to establish that a relationship exists between the engagement of Western patron states in West Africa, their interests and the securitization of the issue of terrorism rather than the general security interest West Africans.

### *The contextual basis of war on terror in West Africa.*

West Africa has become home to many non-state armed groups posing existential threats to constituted state authorities; causing destruction or death against unarmed individuals, groups, property and/or infrastructure in any given state where they operate. They include but are not limited to Al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM) (operating in the Sahel region of West Africa), the Movement for Unity and Jihad in West Africa (MUJAO) (a splinter group of AQIM), Ansar Dine (operating in Mali), Boko Haram (operating in Nigeria) and Jama'atu Ansarul Musilimina Fi Biladis Sudan (Ansaru; a splinter group of Boko Haram) (Onuoha and Ezirim, 2013). Their origin may not be traced to the 9/11 terrorist attacks in the United States or a reaction to that but their activities and numbers especially in West Africa have increased since these attacks. This has also raised serious security concerns at the national, sub-regional and international levels, especially for the US which has championed the global war on terror since that appalling attack which virtually all governments around the world stood in unanimity

to condemn. The focus on West Africa in this global war on terror and the wider securitization of the sub-region is borne out of a number of broad factors:

- Its openness and perceived lack of effective governance or secure borders.
- A need to integrate the region into a US-controlled global security framework.
- The region at present provides 15 per cent of US oil imports and this is expected to increase to 25 per cent within a decade.
- The possibility of recruiting locals in the 'Muslim Belt' to terrorist cells.
- Opportunities to launder or move large amounts of money using the cross-border trade in 'blood diamonds', timber and arms, and to raise funds within the state of chaos of conflict or emerging post-conflict zones.

(Obi, 2006; 89).

One of the defining features of West African states and borders is the lack of strong and effective government institutions which can exercise Weberian control or a monopoly of the legitimate use of force. Max Weber, a German sociologist (1864–1920) suggested that one of the functions and responsibilities of a 'state' is a monopoly of the legitimate use of force. Such a line of thought was popular in the early twentieth century. In the contemporary dispensation of international politics, it is questionable if the state still retains a monopoly over the use of force considering the rise of armed groups and private security companies (see Zurn and Leibfried, 2005). Practically all states in West Africa and the continent of Africa in general are considered 'quasi' 'weak', 'collapsed', 'failing' or 'failed' states lacking the Westphalian variant of sovereignty (see Jackson, 1986, 1987, 1990; Jackson and Rotberg, 1986; Clapham, 1996, 1998). This has encouraged the rise of several armed groups that challenge states' authority. Coupled with this is the lack of effective control over borders which are very porous and sometimes unmanned.

One of the characteristics of modern statehood is a definite territory and a given population. But states in West Africa cannot really be said to have that. Their territories and boundaries are arbitrary: the product of machination of the European statesmen in Berlin Conference of 1884/85. Terrorist groups can therefore easily penetrate the borders of West African states to perpetrate criminal activities. As the vulnerability of the sub-region is further heightened by the porosity of these borders, there is every need to make sure that the area does not turn into safe haven for terrorist networks. Since 9/11, the USA, in a bid to check all their activities, has seen the need to integrate the region into its global security framework. It is also important to consider that West Africa has a sizeable Muslim population which, it is feared, could be easy recruits for the fundamentalist groups.

The West African population according to Kaplan (2000; 5) is like 'loose molecules in a very unstable social fluid, a fluid that was clearly on the verge of igniting'. This condition creates opportunities for teeming unemployment and poor youths on the streets of Abidjan, Freetown, Monrovia, Accra, Lagos and Abuja or Lomé who latch on to 'opportunities to launder or move large amounts of money using the cross-border trade in "blood diamonds", timber and arms, and to raise funds within the state of chaos of conflict or emerging post-conflict zones' (Obi, 2006; 89). There is a probable relationship between the poor conditions of a population and possible recruitment into terrorist networks. Poverty breeds insecurity, argued Susan Rice (2007). Individual poverty can arise from poor economic policies of poor states:

> Poor states typically fail to meet the basic needs of many of their citizens – for food, clean water, health care or education. Where human needs are great and service gaps persist, people tend to accept help from almost anyone willing to provide it … poor states often lack the legal, police, intelligence, or security sector capacity to control their borders and remote areas and to prevent plundering of their natural resources.
>
> (Rice, 2007; 31–49)

It is important to point out that the US is not the only country that is targeted by terrorist groups but it has spearheaded the war on terror because it considers itself the prime target. Its national, economic and global geostrategic security interests are also seriously threatened, hence the all-out war on terror anywhere in the world including the West African sub-region. The history and direction of security in West Africa is to a large extent a function of what the interests of external actors, especially the US, are since 9/11. The construction of security and the securitization of issues in the subregion are executed in such a way to fit into Washington's hegemonic global security agenda and may not necessarily be because of the internal security of the states in West Africa. Obi (2006; 89–90) summed it up this way:

> To some extent the relevance of the West African connection to the war on terror transcends the concern with internal security. It also attempts to collectively address the 'globalisation' of the region's security. However, in doing this much emphasis lies on the institutional and military approaches to anti-terrorist and defence arrangements, while little attention is focused on providing the national and international resources badly needed for addressing the harsh political and desperate socio-economic conditions that may provide the nourishment for dissent, violence, repression, proliferation of small arms and highly mobile youth fighters, and possibly, terror. Terrorism in West Africa therefore lies more in the realm of possibilities and/or perceptions of potential

> threats in a region that is being further opened up to global influences and transnational actors.

Certainly terrorism in West Africa lies more in the realm of possibilities considering the obvious activities of terrorist groups in the Sahel region and Boko Haram sect in Nigeria.

### *Securitization processes towards tackling terrorism in West Africa*

As has been highlighted above, evidence of terrorist activities in West Africa cannot be traced solely to the post-9/11 era. There had been concerns about them before 2001 and subsequent fears about possible infiltration into West Africa in a fashion of neo-patrimonial patron-client relationships. Farah and Schulz (2004) submitted that the former Liberian warlord turned President Charles Taylor had ties with Al Qaeda and this was corroborated by FBI and Special Court for Sierra Leone.

> In 2000, among those operating simultaneously in Liberia under Charles Taylor were senior Al Qaeda operatives; Hezbollah financiers; Victor Bout, an arms merchant who was supplying weapons across Africa and to both the Taliban and the Northern Alliance in Afghanistan; Leonid Minin, a Ukrainian-Israeli drug dealer and arms merchant; and Aziz Nassour, the onetime bagman for Mobutu Sese Seko in Zaire and middleman for al Qaeda and Hezbollah.
>
> (Farah and Shultz, 2004; A19; see also, Farah, 2004)

Let it not be assumed that there have not been efforts or structures put in place either nationally or sub-regionally to contain terrorism. The UN Security Council (UNSC) adopted Resolution 1373 in 2001 establishing a Counter Terrorism Committee to counter or totally stop terrorism in all its manifestations. In 2005, the UNSC again articulated Resolution 1624 to monitor border security and member states were encouraged to give updates to the Counter Terrorism Committee. The extent to which the states in West Africa have lived up to expectations in this regard is seriously questionable. There is also the US-led Trans-Sahara Counterterrorism Partnership (TSCTP) which provides military assistance, especially in the Sahel. Equally important is the Pan-Sahel Initiative (PSI) under whose directions falls the European Command (EUCOM). EUCOM with headquarters in Stuttgart, Germany oversees the US military involvement in about 93 countries with 120,000 troops. EUCOM has the responsibility combat terrorism in North and West Africa, and the region between the Sahara desert (see Ellis, 2004; 459).

In 1999 ECOWAS established its Protocol for Conflict Prevention, Management, Resolution, Peacekeeping and Security, the main aims of which were to 'strengthen cooperation in the areas of conflict prevention,

early-warning, peace-keeping operations, the control of cross-border crime, international terrorism and proliferation of small arms and anti-personnel mines' (ECOWAS, 1999; Article 3). There has also been increased cooperation between the US, the EU, ECOWAS and member states of the community on individual bases in this regard. Consider also the existence of the West African Police Chiefs Corporation, the African Centre for the Study and Research on Terrorism, and ECOWAS's Inter-Governmental Action Group against Money Laundering West Africa as well as its Committee of Chiefs of Security Service. However the states of the sub-region are seriously incapacitated in so many ways in this fight against terrorism, not least due to the lack of consensus in the threat perceptions of the various leaders and furthermore the lack of clarity as to what the interests of external securitizing actors are. Buzan et al (1998; 31) suggested that 'it is neither politically nor analytically helpful to try to define "real security" outside of the world of politics'. It is therefore argued that the securitization of threats in West Africa in the post 9/11 world hangs between a political culture of neo-patrimonialism and the relationship with external securitizing actors. The construction of threats varies according to the interests of individual state leaders and their friends/patrons from the outside. Even when there is agreement, the states may lack the political will and the resources to fight crime and terrorism and eventually will have to depend on the external actors or patrons who also have their interests to protect. A valid example will be the intervention of the US, the United Kingdom, France and China in Nigeria over Boko Haram terrorist activities. There are political, economic and national security undertones of securitizing the threat of Boko Haram to a very strategically important ally, Nigeria. Therefore the securitization of issues in the sub-region is argued to be in significant measure influenced by the outcome of the 9/11 attacks and the subsequent global war on terror. The way these issues interconnect with security and economic interests of the external securitizing actors will feature in the next section.

This section has focused on the role 9/11 has played in shaping the trajectory of West African security and how security threats have been perceived and constructed by political actors both within the sub-region and outside. The major issues raised are:

- In the wake of the September 11, 2001 terrorist attacks in the US, West Africa attracted special attention 'from strategists, policy-wonks and Beltway insiders' (Ellis, 2004; 459).
- Their fear was borne out of a possibility that the sub-region largely populated by poor and unemployed youths could become a safe haven or breeding ground for terrorists.
- Certain factors could validate this concern; including the absence of strong and effective state institutions to tackle this menace; large expanses of ungoverned territory; and weak states especially in the Sahel that could harbour terrorist recruits. There is also a concern over the general

porosity of the borders of the sub-region which could give accessibility to terrorists into the states of West Africa.
- Efforts channelled towards tackling the problem of terrorism have come from the US, EU and West Africans themselves.

The securitization of this particular issue arises from concern over the security and economic interests of these neo-patrimonial elites in West Africa collaborating with their external patrons.

Some critics (Ellis, 2003, 2004; Obi, 2006) have seriously questioned the altruism and effectiveness of the war on terror in Africa and particularly West Africa. Obi (2006, 89) for instance contended that while strategists have privileged the institutional and military approaches, they have not considered the unfavourable political and socio-economic environment that feeds into potential terrorist activities. Ellis (2003) argued that the hunt for oil drives the war on terror. The following section concludes the narrative on the history and direction of West African security from the Cold War years to the post-9/11 international politics. It points out that the emerging trend of global political economy has as its main characteristic a mad rush for resources wherever they are in the world. West Africa boasts a significant share of world resources needed by Western powers and the emerging economies of Asia and South America. Part of what are considered to be security concerns and the construction of security issues especially with regard to the war on terror in the sub-region of West Africa is a function of the resource-related needs of these external patrons and the need to secure a steady flow. This following section takes a close look at this phenomenon and how it has also helped in shaping the history of security in West Africa.

## West Africa's security: resources hunt and/or war on terrorism?

The ever-changing global geopolitics and political economy meant that the region of West Africa began to be seen from a different perspective – no longer from the angle of the Cold War superpower security calculus but as a gateway to the strategic pool of natural resources. This must be considered, in order to meaningfully explain the history of the security environment facing the states in the sub-region. What is the new form of geo-strategy and security in West Africa since the end of the Cold War and in post-9/11 global geopolitics? Also, the continent of Africa and the sub-region of West Africa in particular have been identified globally as a leading frontier in terms of economic growth and a new destination for world investment. Nothing therefore exists as a grave threat to this assessment more than the issue of insecurity and growing terrorism (see Edem, 2014). It is argued that beyond the mantra of the war on terrorism, the underpinning calculus for securitization by external patrons is the need to protect some client states that house substantial resources which are greatly needed by these external securitizing actors.

***Resources in the sub-region***

The world of the 20th century – in terms of relations among states and the security equation – rested on a variety of ideologies: communism, fascism, democracy, capitalism and humanity. However, it is a common truth that the world of today and beyond will be shaped by geostrategic considerations based on resources and strategic locations for water ways. According to Kaplan (2012), 'The Persian Gulf Sheikdoms are fabulously wealthy not because of ideas but because of large energy deposits underground'. The region of West Africa may not have as much as the Middle East in terms of energy deposits underground, but it can comfortably guarantee quite a number of resources of global value that have helped in shaping its security and the strategic calculus of other nations in their relations with the region. It must not be assumed that these natural resources are a recent discovery; their existence was known before the end of the Cold War. The oscillation in the global political economy only enhanced their relevance.

If Kaplan's (2012) argument about the place of geography and resources in security and geo-politics is anything to go by then the strategic significance of Liberia, Sierra Leone and wider West Africa in the post-Cold War context is unarguable. All West African states have at least one natural resource of global economic significance. While in some cases the quantity may not be particularly large, nevertheless the resource certainly provides some revenue for the host state. Even landlocked Niger has uranium in commercial quantities and Gambia, the smallest country in West Africa, has cotton and peanuts. The point here is that the region of West Africa has its share of the world's natural resources. Secondly the attention it now enjoys from the world largely derives from the global demand for these resources found in Ghana, Togo, Benin Republic, Cote d'Ivoire and not forgetting the 'hegemon' of the sub-region, Nigeria. Their natural resources to a large extent give them significance and attract external attention.

In terms of geography, West Africa is bordered on the West and South by the Atlantic Ocean. This means that with the exception of the three landlocked states (Niger, Burkina Faso and Mali) most West African countries enjoy coastal proximity. On the northern side, West Africa is bordered by the Sahara Desert and composed of the semi-arid plane called Sahel, which is considered a buffer zone between the Sahara and the Savannahs of old Western Sudan. This area is also a route to the Arab nations of North Africa and it matters in West Africa's security analysis. Furthermore, and very significantly, West Africa abuts the Gulf of Guinea – that part of the Tropical Atlantic that stretches from Cape Lopez in Gabon westwards to Cape Palmas in Liberia. The Gulf of Guinea hosts about:

> 50.4 billion barrels of proven resources and it produces 5.4 million barrels of oil per day. Its low sulphur oil and proximity to Europe and the US further raises its strategic importance in global energy supplies.

> The US currently obtains 15 percent of its oil imports from the Gulf of Guinea and this could increase to 25 percent over the next five years. The region has the fastest rate of discovery of new reserves in the world … the huge oil reserve of the region is thus the magnet drawing oil majors from America, Europe and Asia.
>
> (Onuoha, 2012)

While the end of the Cold War to a large extent left Africa to solve its problems by itself and shifted the attention of the West to the emerging regional political dynamics unfolding in other places in Europe, at the same time it gave it a new significance because of its abundant natural resources gravely hunted for by old and emerging economies. Prior to this period, the West had relied on the Persian Gulf for its energy security. But increasing unrest and instability there made the West rethink its source of energy – an alternative source would end the over-reliance on the supply from the Gulf. The easily accessible alternative place that is considered is the Gulf of Guinea where large deposits of hydrocarbon reside (see Allen, 2012). Because West Africa is the gateway to the Gulf of Guinea, what happens to the region of West Africa is of very serious security interest to the energy consumers of Europe and the Americas. With the recent oil finds further away off the coasts of Liberia, Sierra Leone and Ghana the security in the Mano River basin and the entire West Africa will be a serious issue on the international agenda. It is important to analyse the relationship between security and natural resources in the West African sub-region.

### *Resources in West Africa and securitization of threats: weaving a relationship*

A carefree observer will conclude that the military presence of the US and some European countries in West Africa is for the altruistic purpose of internal security in the sub-region. The mantra of the war on terrorism does not completely add up: it is suggested that the military presence of these extra-African actors (especially) in West Africa is essentially to secure their national security and economic interests. After all, the US Security Strategy for Sub-Saharan Africa (United States Security Strategy for Sub-Saharan Africa, 1995; 3) clearly stated that America had 'very little traditional strategic interest in Africa' (see also Gilbert et al, 2009; 264–265). It would therefore agitate every analytical mind if a paradigm shift in America's security direction towards Africa and West Africa in particular started to appear. President George W Bush acknowledged this rethink when he stated that:

> In an era of global trade and global terror, the futures of the developed world and the developing world are closely linked. We benefit from each other's troubles. We share the same threats; and we share the same goal – to forge a future of more openness, trade and freedom.
>
> (quoted in Kalu and Kieh, 2014; 12)

The national security of the Western powers very importantly revolves around securing sources of natural resources especially in the light of the intense global competition for these resources by emerging economies such as China, India and Brazil. Beyond the so-called global war on terror is a serious strategic concern in Africa which borders on an intense need to secure sources of energy supply and other strategic mineral resources (cobalt, uranium, gold, diamond, manganese, rubber and cocoa) from the sub-region of West Africa. Also, Gilbert et al (2009; 23) noted that:

> Since the end of the Cold War, amidst a deepening crisis in the Middle East and tightening petroleum markets, the US has increased its search for new sources of oil. This has led to renewed interest in the 'African oil triangle', which is centred in the basin of the Gulf of Guinea. Therefore, any attempt at destabilising oil production activities in oil-rich states like Nigeria is viewed as a threat to America's energy security that must be contained.

It is against this backdrop, and in light of patron-client power relations, that we would appreciate the President of Liberia, Ellen Johnson Sirleaf, agreeing to host the headquarters of AFRICOM in West Africa (Pham, 2009; 72). It will be unimaginable what a destabilised West Africa would mean to America's and Europe's energy and economic interests in the sub-region. This important area must be seriously secured not necessarily because of the national security interests of the sub-region itself but the perceived threat its insecurity poses to Western powers. Consider also Operation Enduring Freedom – Trans Saharan (OEF-TS) and Operation Enduring Freedom – Horn of Africa (OEF-HOA), two of the operation units under America's African Command. The responsibility of these units, among other things, includes working with African nations from the north east to the west into the oil-rich Gulf of Guinea for adequate security. Arogbofa (2014; 174) pointed out that the US is directing all these military and/or security policy 'initiative[s] towards Africa especially the continent's Gulf region to enable the US to secure an alternative source of crude oil supply to sustain its huge economy'.

In summary, this section concludes the discussion on the politics of security in West Africa. It sought to balance the mantra of the war on terror which has beamed a special focus on the sub-region of West Africa. The end of the Cold War presented the political world with a lot of security challenges, not least the emergence of terrorist activities which attracted global attention with the heinous attacks in the US in September 2001 now commonly referred to as '9/11'. The need to contain this menace has coincided with another important phenomenon which is an intense hunt for natural resources wherever they are located in the world. The sub-region of West Africa boasts an abundance of these resources. Unfortunately, it has large swathes of weakly governed territories which can be and in fact are easily

exploited by terrorists. This has made it imperative that to ensure steady access to strategic natural resources in West Africa and the entire continent, the challenge posed by terrorism must be arrested. This section therefore argues that as much as it is important to securitize activities of non-state actors and the existential threat they pose to national security of West African states, that reason is not as absolute as it is being presented. Rather, what is uppermost and hidden under the need for security of West Africa is a foreign policy thrust by Western powers that seeks to secure the needed natural resources in West Africa before everything else. This is further accentuated by the intense rivalry and competition from emerging economies of the world for these same resources. The incapability of West African states to take care of their security has encouraged external actors to intrude in their internal affairs. The result is that security in West Africa has been significantly externalised. Another result is that the sub-region and its many security threats have been severally and differently securitized according to the interests of different actors. The following section concludes the chapter and will also show the relevance of this particular chapter to the overall thesis.

## Conclusion

This chapter has discussed the origin, evolution and direction of what could be called West Africa's security under three distinct periods: Cold War, post-Cold War and post-9/11. The issues discussed can be itemised thus: West Africa, like other African regions, did not have any indigenous security direction during the Cold War. Their securitization of whatever threat there was, was a function of the high politics of Cold War era which bordered on the rivalry between the antagonists. The major referent object of security to the leaders was the protection of their newly-won sovereignty, and for the superpowers it was the protection of their spheres of influence translated into the containment of rival ideologies in client states. The end of the Cold War redefined issues of international politics and the superpowers paid more attention to their domestic issues. West African security issues were no longer high on the list of their securitization. They became the responsibility of West Africans. The implosions in sub-region forced the states to articulate security architecture to securitize the emerging security issues in the sub-region. The processes were seriously influenced by the dynamics of neo-patrimonial statehood.

In a policy rethink, the neglected sub-region of West Africa suddenly reappeared in the foreign policy radar of the Western powers because of the issue of terrorism and terrorist activities after 9/11. In order to arrest such phenomenon, the security of West Africa became once again externalised according to the interests of external actors. There is a serious argument as to whether the much-trumpeted war on terrorism and the focus on West Africa are real or imagined. It is argued that the war on terror is only a

smokescreen for the deeper issue of a new scramble for West Africa's natural resources by Western and emerging economies. Whatever the case may be the security of the sub-region and the processes of securitizing threats are seriously shaped by the interplay of these issues. This narrative is relevant for showing the developments that have shaped the history, security dynamics and the securitization processes of not only West Africa but to a great extent the African continent generally. Threat perceptions and the processes of securitization can be said to be largely influenced by the neo-patrimonial patron-client power relations that characterises the political culture of the states in the sub-region. The exploration is also relevant to the study for bringing to focus the changing security environment in West Africa and the relationship with international security; how the emerging threats are perceived and constructed the political leaders, bearing in mind the two major ideas in the theoretical framework; securitization and neo-patrimonialism and their interrelatedness.

In chapter one, presenting the analytical framework, two major concepts were discussed and integrated which formed the standpoint from which to look into the securitization processes in the sub-region of West Africa. In the first instance was the idea of securitization as espoused by Waever (1995) and Buzan et al (1998). It is explained that an issue is considered meriting a securitization move when it 'is presented as an existential threat, requiring emergency measures and justifying actions outside the normal bounds of political procedure' (Buzan et al, 1998; 23–24). Furthermore, Buzan et al (1998) pointed out that for any process of securitization to be complete and successful, it must have three components, namely: an existential threat is identified, extraordinary` measures are required to deal with it and to get this done there is an expected impact on inter-unit relations by breaking free of rules. 'What is essential is the designation of an existential threat requiring emergency action or special measures and the acceptance of that designation by a significant audience' (Buzan et al, 1998; 26–27). At the background of this postulation is the role played by linguistics (the speech-act) which makes securitization a universal principle disregarding the importance of uniqueness and the peculiarity of different contexts. West Africa as a unique regional context does not accommodate the universal application of the securitization concept. This uniqueness must be factored in to benefit from the usefulness of securitization ideas in security analysis of the region.

One deficiency in the securitization concept as presented by the Copenhagen School was pointed out by Leonard and Kaunert – the lack of clarity on the issue of audience. Leonard and Kaunert (2011) reconceptualised this idea but still limited it to developed Western democracies. This study has therefore borrowed from this to apply the concept to Africa and specifically to the West African sub-region. But that will be difficult until we have factored in the nature of statehood in West Africa. Applying the idea of neo-patrimonialism the study argues that the construction or securitization of

security issues in West Africa will be better understood with a good understanding of the dynamics of the political culture of the states in the sub-region. In three sections, this chapter has explored the history and direction of West Africa's security from the Cold War years to the post-9/11 international system.

# 3 A new securitization framework outside of the West

## The securitization-neo-patrimonialism nexus

The most popular concepts in the discipline of International Relations and the debates thereof are deeply rooted in Western (especially Europe and North America) historical and political epistemology, as outlined in the previous chapter. The domain of the discipline does not greatly influence other social science disciplines,. Rather it is constantly being influenced and it also lacks contextual dynamics. In other words, the IR discipline focuses more on European and North American political terrain without significantly accommodating socio-cultural variations of other societies. This has therefore wrongly (we argue that it is overstated) earned the discipline of IR a serious bashing as a failed intellectual project (Buzan and Little, 2001). The authors of that statement made a provocative and interesting statement which some people may perceive as going a little too far, but which may have some merit. Another reason for this unfriendly tagging of IR also arose from what has been explained as its Westphalian straitjacket; 'the strong tendency to assume that the model established in seventeenth century Europe should define what the international system is for all times and places' (Buzan and Little, 2001; 25).

The sub-discipline of security studies is not an exception in this intellectual parochialism – the Westphalian and Eurocentric bias in understanding security. From the realists (Morgenthau, 1965), to neo-realists (Watz, 1979) and neo-liberals (Keohane and Nye, 1977), the focus of security debate remained on the place of state (a Westphalian contraption) in explaining the international security dynamics. The discussions coming from these various corners were anchored on certain historical or founding problematique created by the World War I, World War II and the Cold War. The intellectual world was fed with a realist perspective of security along the state-military power line. While the neo-liberals differed a little, they still leaned towards the primacy of state as major actor and referent object in the security debate. The problem with this lies with the Westphalian understanding of state which does not appreciate other societies from other cultures at various stages of socio-political development. This narrow way of viewing global politics meant that even security studies were seen as strictly addressing issues of military power and national/state security, paying little or no

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attention to emerging challenges such as migration, ethnic minorities, intra-state and cross-border security issues, human security challenges, environmental challenges and terrorism.

Shifting the goal post of security studies from that traditional standpoint eventually became 'something of a cottage industry' as observed by David Baldwin (1997; 5). There are now the critical security studies, emancipatory security, and Human security (Klause and Williams, 1997; Booth, 1991 and Kaldor, 2007) creating cacophony of voices over the same subject. It is apparent that one of the most popular and successful of these efforts has been the securitization theory of the Copenhagen School (Waever, 1995, Buzan et al, 1998, Buzan, 2003), which has generated a lot of commentaries and footnotes (Boot, 1991; 37). However, while Buzan and Little accused the discipline of IR of Westphalian straitjacket, he and his other colleagues in the securitization project can be argued to have become guilty of the same bias (cf, Waever, 1995, Buzan et al, 1998 and Buzan and Waever, 2003). The idea of securitization was developed and applied consciously or unconsciously, aimed at the established political contexts and democracies of Europe. Even later works and commentaries on the subject of securitization were to not significantly different (Huysmans, 1998, 2000; Balzacq, 2008; Karyotis and Patrikios, 2010; Leonard, 2010). To this effect, Claire Wilkinson (2007) questioned if securitization theory can be useful outside the European security and political environment.

This book builds on the literature on securitization and neo-patrimonialism, as well as subsequent works which focused on various elements of these concepts. Yet, this book, while using these terms derived from the literature, will use them critically to highlight the need to explain them through the prism of colonialism and postcolonialism. As suggested before, colonialism and colonisation are practices of securitization. Mudimbe's engagement with colonial securitizing discourses also highlights that practices and processes of securitization vis-à-vis colonisation, are intimately intertwined with questions of sovereignty and that a multitude of actors are responsible for securitizations at any given point in time. Practices of 'state-building' through colonial encounter were, therefore, part of a securitizing arsenal of discourses and practices which sustained the negation of African subjectivities. Moreover, civilisation or securitization demonstrably continues in the post-independence period through the mobilisation of the concepts of 'state weakness' and 'state failure'. Thus, this book, while using these terms derived from the literature, will use them critically to highlight the need to explain them through the prism of colonialism and postcolonialism.

It examines a few cases in West Africa in order to explain the securitization-neo-patrimonialism dynamics. The book seeks to make vital contributions to the literature by suggesting: a) there is an absence of an institutionalised and non-personalised securitization framework in neo-patrimonial statehood; b) what is defined as a security threat is a function of the narrow threat perception of the neo-patrimonial states' leaders at

national and sub-regional levels. Thus, theoretically, the book introduces a new securitization-neo-patrimonialism framework for security analysis outside Europe and the West, a framework based on a synthesis of the concepts of securitization and neo-patrimonialism. This chapter offers analytical scrutiny of academic works on general security in West Africa. It has a special interest in the changing perspective of security in West Africa especially since the end of the Cold War.

Africa's security analysis is not limited to some literature on the security upheavals in the Mano River Basin in the 1990s. It cannot be argued that Africa's security is wholly encapsulated in the motley of works on Africa's numerous wars, conflicts, post-conflict resolutions and settlements. Understanding security thinking for either the wider African continent or specifically in the sub-region of West Africa certainly goes beyond Security Sector Reform (SSR) of individual countries. Giving such restricted attention in explaining security dynamics in the region denies the focal benefit of looking at its many security threats from the prism of securitization – an approach of considerable analytical utility regardless of its weaknesses. It is an approach which it is argued is Eurocentric in both origin and application but can hugely benefit Africa's security discourse. The preceding chapter demonstrated the narrowness in the literature on Africa's security. This book does not claim to offer a complete or comprehensive approach but is aimed at offering a unique analytical approach to Africa's security – a blend of securitization and neo-patrimonialism which have been variously treated disparately ideas but whose synthesis can enrich understanding of processes of threat perception and securitization in Africa.

The goal of this chapter is to offer an analytical framework which will be rich in integration, analysis and synthesis in answering the question: 'to what extent and in what ways has neo-patrimonialism and the nature of statehood in Africa influenced securitization of threats in West Africa?' In other words, the chapter offers an interface between the concepts of securitization and neo-patrimonialism. To understand and competently discuss security dynamic in Africa requires a firm grip of what the idea of 'threat' is and secondly what qualifies what amounts to a security issue. This is at the core of the idea of securitization. On the other hand is the idea of neo-patrimonial political culture which is a system of leadership rooted in personal rule, patronage politics and a blurred line between what is in the private and public spheres. It is therefore argued that this nature of statehood in Africa and West Africa in particular greatly impacts on how threats are perceived and securitized in the sub-region. It is further argued that in neo-patrimonial regimes, issues securitized are narrower according to the narrow interests of the political actors. The circle of securitizing actors and audience is also narrower, limited to a clique around the patron leader of neo-patrimonial state. Consequently, issues of security are securitized differently – for instance at the sub-regional level according to differing interests of individual member countries of the community. The chapter will further develop the idea

of securitization and integrate it into the idea of neo-patrimonialism. The chapter is therefore divided into three sections.

In the first section, a deeper navigation into the concept of securitization is carried out, bringing out the element(s) of it that are relevant to the book. Of particular significance will be the questions of who qualifies as a securitizing actor and the audience needed for the process of securitization to be complete. Briefly, Buzan et al (1998; 27) submitted that in securitization, 'what is essential is the designation of an existential threat requiring emergency action or special measures and the acceptance of that designation by a significant audience'. Who is that person that constructs such appellation? That individual or entity is called a 'securitizing actor'. It could be the state that is represented by someone. It is also 'possible for other social entities to raise an issue to the level of general consideration or even to the status of sanctioned urgency among themselves' (Buzan et al, 1998; 24). There is serious conflation and tension on the one hand over this issue of who can be a securitizing actor and on the other hand who the audience is, since according to the Copenhagen School securitization is an intersubjective endeavour. This is a critical point especially in the case of Africa where there is no clear demarcation between the leader and institutionalised framework for security. In the second section, a synthesis or integration of the two concepts of securitization and neo-patrimonialism which would have been discussed will be carried out – how does neo-patrimonialism influence how political elites or securitizing actors perceive threat(s)? Finally, in section three, the synthesis of securitization and neo-patrimonialism is operationalised by applying it to West Africa at three levels – national, regional and trans-national.

## Securitization theory

For some years, a sizeable range of approaches to International Relations has been produced by intellectual illuminations from social constructs. At the same time these constructs engendered alternative paradigms in the study of international politics. A valid example will be the idea of social constructivism. Developed in the waning years of Cold War politics, these constructs were popularised in the 1990s, the decade in which the Cold War ended. Particularly in security studies, these new theoretical constructs have seriously challenged the traditional European and American military-realist perspective in security studies. They are more contemporary, dynamic and in tandem with emerging global security issues away from a static 'as-it-is' idea of world security (Stritzel, 2007; 357). One aspect of these new theoretical innovations is the idea of securitization, introduced by the Copenhagen School whose main scholars are Ola Waever and Barry Buzan. They have defined securitization as a speech-act process 'through which an intersubjective understanding is constructed within a political community to treat something as an existential threat to a valued referent object and to enable a call for urgent and exceptional measures to deal with the threat'

(Buzan and Waever, 2003; 491). But the threat only becomes securitized 'only if and when the audience accepts it as such' (Buzan et al, 1998; 25). In the preceding chapter, this idea of securitization was introduced in relation to Africa's security discourse without sufficient discussion; in this present chapter, whole body of the concept of securitization will be unpacked.

### *Speech-act: a central feature of securitization process*

'The process of securitization is what in language theory is called a speech act. It is not interesting as a sign referring to something more real; it is the utterance itself that is the act. By saying the words, something is done (like betting, giving a promise, naming a ship)' (Buzan et al, 1998; 26). One outstanding trait in the whole process of securitization is that security is a function of an 'utterance' a 'speech-act'. Every security threat is designated as such by someone. It therefore means that there are not any real, independent or objective security issues out there. They become existential threats to a valued referent object because a securitizing actor has uttered a statement that has tagged them as such. The Copenhagen School adapted this idea from J. L. Austin's (1975 [1962]) speech-act theory. When for instance it is said 'I name this ship the Queen Elizabeth' or 'I do' before the marriage registrar or altar, the utterance becomes the act and gives force or power to what is uttered. According to Austin (1975; 6–7), it is called a

> performative sentence (emphasis in the original) or performative utterance … The name is derived, of course, from 'perform', the usual verb with the noun 'action'; it indicates that the issuing of the utterance is the performing of an action – it is not normally thought of as just saying something.

For Austin (1975), these utterances do not describe or report anything at all. They are rather part of the doing action with potentiality for creating a new reality requiring exceptionality in dealing with it. Utterance sentences are also not true or false statements but their acceptability is contingent upon meeting certain conditions: existence of conventional procedures; 'that procedure to include the uttering of certain words by certain persons in certain circumstances and further, the particular persons and circumstances in a given case must be appropriate for the invocation of the particular procedure invoked' (Austin, 1975; 14–15). The significance of this 'Austinian' line of thought to international security studies is creating a paradigmatic shift from the traditional threat-reality nexus '(i.e. whether a claim that there is a threat is actually true) to what a speech act does (i.e. what happens because of its utterance)'(Stritzel, 2007; 361). Security is therefore seen as a matter of perception, branding and utterance. In an issue of Foreign Affairs, Anthony Lake (1994), US National Security Adviser under the Clinton administration, intoned that 'the reality of recalcitrant and outlaw states that not only

choose to remain outside the family of democratic nations but also assault its basic values'. Subsequently, by way of a securitization speech-act, Lake labelled five regimes (Cuba, North Korea, Iran, Iraq and Libya) as rogue states. These were regimes whose 'non-democratic' principles, human rights abuses, radical ideologies, siege mentality, a defiant stance against the outside world and possible attempt to possess weapons of mass destruction, contributed to their construction in the eyes of the US as posing existential threat to world peace and security. Adapting the Austinian approach to security discourse and the concept of securitization as useful as it is has narrowed the application of the concept and made the perception and construction of security a function of one actor or a group of interests. This is not mindful of the role of for instance televisual images in contemporary political communication. William (2003, 512) posited that 'as political communication becomes increasingly entwined with the production and transmission of visual images, the process of securitization takes on forms, dynamics, and institutional linkages that cannot be fully assessed by focusing on the speech-act alone'. Consider also Balzacq's position that:

> A speech act view of security does not provide adequate grounding upon which to examine security practices in 'real situations'. For instance, many security utterances counter the 'rule of sincerity' and, the intrinsic power attributed to 'security' overlooks the objective context in which security agents are situated.
>
> (Balzacq, 2005: 171)

### *Mapping the securitization process: actor and audience*

The two major aspects of the securitization project that are very critical to this book are the ideas of the securitizing actor and audience. Unfortunately, the Copenhagen School has left these issues both contradictory in the process of trying to work out their modalities and under-theorized, thereby problematizing their application to West Africa's security context. Therefore the intention in this study is to smooth the edges of these issues to benefit the idea of securitization in relation to West Africa's security context. On the issue of audience, the book will build on Leonard and Kaunert's work (2011; 57–76, 'Re-Conceptualizing the Audience in Securitization Theory'). Austin stipulates that for the smooth and effective functioning of performative – the speech-act process – there must exist side by side a conventional procedure having a conventional effect. In his words, 'that procedure include the uttering of certain words by certain persons in certain circumstances … the particular persons and circumstances in a given case must be appropriate for the invocation of the particular procedure invoked' (Austin, 1975; 14–15).

The question of who frames security is embedded in this Austinian procedure. And in the context of Africa's security, it is clear how this speech

articulator can be identified into the neo-patrimonial political structure. This is made clearer when one considers that in Africa the authority of the neo-patrimonial leader determines every security move. The question of legitimacy or otherwise of the person that articulates the security threat is not difficult to resolve in the African context because neo-patrimonial leaders are not concerned with legitimacy. This is further clarified when one considers that Africa or West Africa in particular has been replete with authoritarian and neo-patrimonial regimes who cash in on the lack of institutionalised security framework to articulate security threats according to their personal interests. This is in line with Buzan et al's (1998; 24) argument that '"security" is thus a self-referential practice, because it is in this practice that the issue becomes a security issue – not necessarily because a real existential threat exists but because the issue is presented as such a threat'.

A neo-patrimonial leader in Africa who abhors opposition can construct dissenting voices as security threat and could deploy exceptional means to deal with such. Williams (2008; 7) put it this way; 'At the same time, there may be other states where there is no obvious separation between normal politics and security, particularly when regime or even personal survival considerations trump the protection of other referent objects or values'. This is however contradictory with the 'intersubjective' aspect of securitization, as was argued by Buzan et al. (1998; 31). They contended that:

> Securitization is intersubjective and socially constructed … successful securitization is not decided by the securitizer but by the audience of the security speech act: does the audience accept that something is an existential threat to a shared value? Thus security (as with all politics) ultimately rests neither with the objects nor with the subjects but among the subjects.
>
> (Buzan et al, 1998; 31)

This internal contradiction needs to be resolved to benefit both wider security discourse and Africa's security. Much as it does not detract from the analytical utility of the concept of securitization, it needs to be known who should be legitimate in articulating a security threat. Secondly, who is the audience and how do we determine the audience? This is very important considering the types of public that obtains in Africa and their different levels of allegiance to political actors.

### *Audience*

Securitization requires a speaker or an articulator of the security threat, a performative step in form of the speech-act and a public or audience whom the speech argument will resonate with (Waever, 1995; Buzan et al, 1998; 25–34; Balzacq, 2010; 8–11; Williams, 2008; 5–7). In the preceding subsection it is suggested that the identity of the speech actor in the

securitization process – especially in African security discourse – is unclear, thereby making it a serious limitation for the application of the securitization concept in its original form to African context. In the same manner, the idea of audience as articulated by the Copenhagen School has been criticised as being under-theorised (see Leonard and Kaunert, 2010; 57–70). The point is that for a security actor to declare any threat a serious issue meriting a measure outside normal politics – exceptional and emergency approaches – the actor should be able to convince (perlocutionary effect) the public or an audience who will permit the speaker or accede to his argument. Balzacq (2010; 9) proposed that 'to persuade the audience (e.g. the public) that is, to achieve a perlocutionary effect, the speaker has to tune his/her language to the audience's experience'. On the surface this is very easy but when one considers the complexity of publics and differences in political orders, securitization in its simplistic form becomes harder to apply, especially in Africa. Williams (2008; 7) posited that 'this raises questions about who counts as a "significant audience" and how this idea should be applied to states or organizations that do not boast a functioning public sphere' or an established democratic decision process (Vuori, 2008; 68).

Concerned about this ambiguity as to who constitutes an audience and how to assess its security threat argument, Leonard and Kaunert (2011) made a profound contribution in reconceptualising this aspect of the securitization concept. Whilst a good contribution, it is simultaneously restricted to and inherently favours well-established liberal democracies. Despite this, here this book aligns with Vuori (2008) who applied securitization to non-democratic orders but it shifts focus to Africa which is inundated with neo-patrimonial, authoritarian statehood and regimes. This, according to Vuori (2008; 66), is very important in order to appreciate the idea of securitization; 'If Securitization Studies is to be an encompassing research programme, it should take into account security speech and politics in all types of political systems'. It is reiterated here that privileging more democratic orders in securitization analysis is due to its Europeanist understanding, origin and application. Consider also Huysmans (1998, 2000), Bigo (2002), Leonard (2007) and Karyotis and Patrikios (2010) who have concentrated on the securitization of immigration and asylum in the European Union (EU). Specifically, Huysmans (2000) takes a critical look at the contradictory policies of the EU in securitizing migration as a serious security threat and at the same time promoting the common market. Wilkinson (2007) recognises that the idea in its original form cannot be successfully applied outside Europe's security environment. It will need some reconceptualization; a position this book has adopted for West African security context.

## Reconceptualising the audience in the securitization process

The Copenhagen School of Security Studies ascribed special position or role to the 'audience' in the securitization process. Buzan et al (1998; 30, 31)

argued that 'our argument is that securitization, like politicization, has to be understood as an essentially intersubjective process… securitization is intersubjective and socially constructed'. The emphasis is on the intersubjective character of the process of securitization. If it is intersubjective, it therefore requires a dialogue or a consensus of opinion for completion. At one end of the spectrum is a securitizing actor and at the other end is an audience who accedes to the reasoning of the securitizing actor. Buzan et al (1998; 25) again argued that 'a discourse that takes the form of presenting something as an existential threat to referent object does not by itself create securitization – this is securitizing move but the issue is securitized only if and when the audience accepts it as such'. Other considerations of the audience can also be found in Buzan et al (1998; 34). Granted that securitization is accepted as speech-act process, they argued that 'the speech-act approach says only that it is the actor who by securitizing an issue – and the audience by accepting the claim – makes it a security issue'. In order to further strengthen the argument, Buzan et al (1998; 31) stated that 'successful securitization is not decided by the securitizer but by the audience of the security speech act'. It is not argued that the idea of an audience in the securitization process is not accepted, but as other analysts have argued (see for instance Balzacq, 2005; 173; McDonald, 2008; and Vuori, 2008) clarity is demanded in order to benefit security analysis of especially undemocratic regimes and uninformed public.

Buzan et al (1998; 40) submit that 'a securitizing actor is someone, or a group, who performs the security speech act. Common players in this role are political leaders, bureaucracies, governments, lobbyists, and pressure groups' (at least in advanced democracies). One would expect that such an attempt would apply to clarify who an audience is within the securitization framework. Leonard and Kaunert (2011) stepped in to clear the conceptual fog around the idea of audience in securitization analysis. According to Leonard and Kaunert (2011; 50):

> The role of the audience in securitization processes remains significantly under-theorised in the Copenhagen School's formulation of securitization theory. Although Buzan, Waever and de Wilde emphasise that securitization is an intersubjective process, in which the audience seemingly plays a crucial role, this concept remains rather vague and under-specified. How it could be operationalised in empirical studies is also far from clear.

Leonard and Kaunert (2011) built their reconceptualisation of the audience on key suggestions by Balzacq (2005; 172–3) that securitization should not be interpreted wholly as a speech act but rather as a strategic practice amalgamating several 'circumstances including the context, the psycho-cultural disposition of the audience, and the power that both speaker and listener bring to the interaction'. The speech act model presents securitization as a sustained strategic action aimed at convincing a target audience to accept

based on what it knows about the world. But Balzacq (2005; 172) proposes to recast this speech act model by elevating

> securitization above its normative setting and in so doing ensconces it in the social context, a field of power struggles in which securitizing actors align on a security issue to swing the audience's support toward a policy or course of action.

The idea here is that the actor has to find a platform or line of argument that will effectively resonate with or swing the audience in full of support of the intended line of action. Segregating these issues will make the securitization approach empirically more operational especially in West Africa.

Other suggestion came in the form of Vuori's (2008) proposition of the possibility of multiple audiences depending on specific contexts and 'specific socio-historical situations' (Leonard and Kaunert, 2011; 61). This is very significant in the African context where there is the the possibility of diverse allegiances, ethnic cleavages and interests; for example, as is evident in Liberia among the Americo-Liberians and Native Liberians which very often divide the public. The audience during an inter-ethnic war in West Africa certainly will be different from the audience when issues of cross border crimes, illicit drugs and illegal weapons for instance are being securitized by national governments or a sub-regional body. Vuori (2008, 72) therefore submits that 'audiences depend on the function the securitization act is intended to serve'. It may also be difficult in societies where issues of religion and politics are intricately interwoven (Karyotis and Patrikios, 2010; 13).The audience may not necessarily be the public. It could also be members of government institutions and representatives whose political support is very important. Such support has been classified as formal support whereas that of the public is moral support, which frequently is not enough to move an issue to the realm of securityness (see Balzacq, 2005; 185; Leonard and Kaunert, 2011; 62; and Roe, 2008).

Leonard and Kaunert (2011) injected profound sense into the issue of audience in the securitization process by adapting from Kingdon's (1984) agenda setting in public policies and the three 'stream model' – problem, policy and politics. This book is not delving in detail into these but will bring out the salient elements in the discussion and how Leonard and Kaunert (2011) have synthesised the discussion with a securitization framework. The agenda, according to Kingdon (1984; 3 quoted in Leonard and Kaunert, 2011; 63) 'is the list of subjects or problems to which governmental officials and people outside of government closely associated with those officials, are paying some serious attention at any given time'. In the setting of the agenda, participants in order to formulate and change policies employ the three process streams, i.e. problem stream, policy and politics. Leonard and Kaunert (2011; 64) identified 'points of convergence and possible cross-fertilization between this model and the securitization framework'.

One, they argued that the two factors, participants and the process in the agenda and alternative setting, can be likened to the 'process of securitization' and the 'securitizing actors' (Leonard and Kaunert, 2011; 65). In the problem stream, conditions such as bad weather, illness and poverty are only conditions but not political per se. 'They only become political problems once decision-makers perceive them as such and come to believe that they should be tackled'(Leonard and Kaunert, 2011; 65). This, according to Leonard and Kaunert (2011), can be likened again to the securitization framework of the Copenhagen School. Consider that one of the strands of the Copenhagen School's idea of securitization is that there is no objective security issue out there but a threat becomes a security issue 'because the issue is presented as such a threat' (Buzan et al, 1998; 24). In this sense, the securitizing actor will seek to convince other neo-patrimonial leaders (in the case of West Africa) who will have to consent to his argument to treat a condition as a security issue. These other decision-makers are the 'audience' in Kingdon's (1984) problem stream model.

Note that Kingdon (1984; 3) argues that those involved in agenda setting include government officials 'and people outside of government closely associated with those officials and paying some serious attention at any given time'. In the policy stream, for the decision-makers to take actions, formulate policies or alternatives the technicality of the process has to be considered. 'Alternatives would be compared systematically, assessing costs and benefits, and the most-cost efficient alternatives would be chosen' (Leonard and Kaunert, 2011; 67). In this stream the audience is the policy community made up of those specialists and technocrats whose support is won over by serious arguments on knowhow. 'This implies that some problem constructions may persuade technocratic communities but not the general public or decision-makers (and vice-versa)' (Leonard and Kaunert, 2011; 67). In the politics stream, the public comes in view through elections, the mood of the polity, trade unions and pressure groups. These deeply impact on the outcome of persuasions for the adoption of any proposal. In other words, the politics stream involves all the bickering, horse-trading, debates, lobbying, campaigns, and alliance-building by and among the policy entrepreneurs towards the public, aimed at winning their support for any policy decision. According to Leonard and Kaunert (2011; 68):

> In the politics stream, changes mainly occur because of either the shift of important participants (e.g. administrations or legislators in parliament) or shifts in political mood. As far as the audience in this stream is concerned, one can analyse it as comprising two different groups, namely the decision-makers involved in the decision making process and the general public.

It is important to glean from Leonard and Kaunert's (2011) analysis that there is the possibility of multiple audiences depending on the context. This resonates with Vuori (2008; 72), that these 'audiences depend on the

function the securitization act is intended to serve… that the audience has to be such that they have the ability to provide the securitizing actor with whatever s/he is seeking to accomplish with the securitization'.

Leonard and Kaunert offered us (a) an unpacking of the framework of securitization as regards the issue of audience and the possibility of multiplicity and (b) a line of correlation between the Copenhagen School's securitization process and Kingdon's (1984) agenda setting process and three stream model. It is a great insight and effort in reconceptualising the under-theorised concept of audience in the securitization project. The work, for all its in-depth analysis at the end, went the way of focusing on and thereby restricting the framework of securitization to advanced liberal democracies – specifically with respect to asylum and immigration in Europe. If it is uprooted and planted in an African setting in its raw form, how will it be empirically practised? It is the proposal here that (a) the securitization framework can benefit Africa's security discourse; (b) for it to be applied, the issues of who the securitizing actor and audience are have to be clarified; and (c) the peculiar setting, i.e. Africa's neo-patrimonial statehood, has to be factored in with all its uniqueness and specific rules of the game. In support of this, Vuori (2008; 68–69) in applying the theory of securitization to non-democratic political orders argued that:

> Even tyrants need people to do their bidding, and loyal actors and subjects are important in totalitarian systems. In the long term, purely coercive rule is impossible and brutal oppression can turn into a disadvantage for the oppressor. Even authoritarian regimes have to legitimize their use of extraordinary measures, and security is a strong legitimator even in non-democratic political systems… However, we can say that all societies have 'rules'. These 'rules' are products of historical and social contingencies, as are the referents objects and threats in security. When security logic and rhetoric is utilized to legitimate the breaking of these rules, we have a case of securitization.

This chapter therefore aims at taking a lead from Leonard and Kaunert (2011) to analyse Africa's security process with its personal rule character, keeping in view the questions of who the securitizing actor and audience(s) are. The overriding question remains; 'To what extent and in what ways has neo-patrimonialism influenced construction of security threats particularly in West Africa?' The following section synthesises the two themes of securitization and neo-patrimonialism but will first offer a discussion of the concept of 'neo-patrimonialism'.

## The patrimonialism-neo-patrimonialism continuum

In an interwoven labyrinth of 'big man-small man' networks of favour for support, the political elite in Africa have monopolized both the tangible and

intangible resources of the state to maintain their hold on power and define the security pattern of their individual countries. The preceding section dissected the body of the securitization framework especially as it relates to the securitizing actor and the audience. Borrowing from Leonard and Kaunert's (2011) contribution, the intention is to advance and stretch the frontier of the Eurocentric and under-theorised concept to benefit the discourse on African security in a setting of neo-patrimonial statehood: who frames the threats and to what extent the neo-patrimonial character of the state abets this securitization in Africa, especially since the end of the Cold War? This section starts by discussing the idea of neo-patrimonialism and synthesises it with securitization before moving on to operationalise the synergy. There has been a significant effort on the part of the Africanists from the African divide to deny the influence neo-patrimonialism can have on the whole workings of the state (Mkandawire, 2015; 106–136) and an overstatement or distortion of the dynamics of the patrimonial system (Bayart et al, 1999; 131). Nothing can better explain the trend or direction of a state's policy than its internal dynamics. Taylor (2010; 2) remarked that 'erroneous is the unwillingness to acknowledge that the state-society complex evident across many parts of sub-Saharan Africa has critical implications and a vital – possibly decisive – influence upon many aspects of the continent's international relations'. Falola (2006; 18) argued that the 'nature of the patron-client system in a country is necessary to understand the behaviour and activities of members of the political class and warlords'. Part of the reason for this disagreement is probably because the issue of patrimonialism has been painted in a negative light and also it is an integral part of the African society that has been bastardised and capitalised on for personal aggrandisement by the political class. The aim here is to explore this system that has been variously dubbed the 'politics of the belly' (Bayart, 1993; 228–259), the 'politics of belonging' (Chabal, 2009; 43–64), the 'state-society complex' (Taylor, 2010; 1–8) and the 'politics of regime survival' (Clapham, 1996; 4). What is significant in these works is their recognition of the agency of African states in their international relations or their political development whilst the extent to which it affects the construction of security threats in Africa remains largely uncharted.

### *Patrimonialism*

Having acquired independence after a series of struggles, the new political class tried to slough off elements of Europeanism bequeathed to them by their erstwhile masters and reassert their local identity. 'These elites were drawn to highly personalized political forms based on a patron-client relationship' (MacQueen, 2007; 153). This had a semblance to what obtained before the colonizers arrived. Patrimonialism therefore is a system of 'personal leadership on the basis of loyalties that do not require any belief in the ruler's unique personal qualification, but are inextricably linked to material

incentives and rewards' (Guenther, 1968; 194–206). This is an adaptation of Max Weber's types of authority based on legal authority; traditional authority and charismatic authority (see Weber, 1947; especially 304–350). Without going into much detail, it will just highlight the essential elements of Weber's (1947) thesis and show how the concepts of authority apply to African states. According to Weber (1947), legal authority is where the person in authority exercises power not because of his person but based on a legal document and/or agreement – for instance the constitution establishing the authority. The traditional authority on the other hand respects not any given agreement but is more representative of ancient traditions and is the custodian of the established culture. Obedience is not to the person but the traditions, precepts and the spirit of the ancestors. The third variant in the Weberian model of authority is charismatic which hinges on the natural charisma for leadership that the person in authority (usually the chief) seems to possess.

> The chief, as the embodiment of the living community, the point of contact with its ancestral past, and the trustee of its generational future is usually surrounded by highly elaborate rituals that emphasize all or any combination of these sacral roles.
>
> (Le Vine, 1980; 659)

The patrimonial system of authority can accordingly be said to draw from a combination of the traditional and charismatic authority. The chief gains 'legitimacy' from his being a custodian of traditional ways of the people and a certain heroism he might have displayed in wars against the people's enemies. Instead of a bureaucratic staff, his staff is drawn from his household members, slaves, personal retainers and also from his cronies who are beholden to him in a favour-for-support reciprocity. The pre-colonial patrimonial authority in Africa – whether headed by Shaka of Zulu kingdom, Osei Tutu of Ashanti confederation or other renowned rulers such as Othman dan Fodio and Samori – fits well into this 'big man-small man' arrangement. It must be recognised that the chief does not have the freedom to do as he pleases because he is bound under a certain unwritten constitutionalism that does not allow him to overstep his bound or else he would incur the wrath of the community and could be deposed. This description of authority under a patrimonial system is significant because it illustrates that it is a system that has survived over the years. It was not a negative system per se and should not be mistaken for authoritarianism, exclusiveness or totalitarianism but part of the everyday life of the people. It has also evolved into different things for different people and has been equally bastardised (see Price, 1974; 172–204; Lemarchand and Legg, 1972; 149–178; Theobald, 1982; 548–559; Kaufman, 1974; 254–308).

It is equally noteworthy that patrimonialism is not restricted to Africa whether in its traditional pre-colonial form or in the post-colonial fashion.

For example, Weber (1947) identified the existence of such system in Japan, Middle East and even in feudal Europe. Guenther (1968; 198) also suggested that behind the fabled charismatic appeal of president John F. Kennedy was actually a Kennedy 'clan', a clique kitchen cabinet, and his personal apparatus who were beholden to him in an intricate web of reciprocity. The same could also be said of post-Cold War Russia, the inheritor of much of the former Soviet politburo machinery which has survived to present day. In other words, every leadership of any government probably has a veneer of personal leadership arising from an old platform of patrimonialism whether in advanced institutionalised bureaucracies or in the blurred potpourri system of developing democracies. The argument is that patrimonialism in Africa has been practiced in an extreme form, thereby undermining the benefits of the system. When juxtaposed against Chabal's (2003 'politics of belonging') and Bayart's (1993 'politics of the belly'), it would be clear that the African variant of patrimonial practices has evolved antithetically against the unifying nature of pre-colonial African statehood. This will be appreciated when one considers the dramatic changes that African societies have undergone since the balkanisation of the continent and eventual colonialism which resulted in the separation of once-single entities into disparate groups and states. Additionally, it is important to keep in mind how this has resulted in antagonism, engendered ethnic allegiance and undermined national cohesion. The political calculation therefore has degenerated into how to grab state power and resources to please an ethnic group, favour faithful friends and cronies, and enrich oneself as politics is transformed into economics of 'I chop, you chop'(promise of a Nigerian party; quoted in Bayart, 1993; 235). These have given rise to a phenomenon known as 'neo-patrimonialism', a bastardised and extreme form of patrimonialism on which we now focus.

### *Neo-patrimonialism*

In the brief description above, three suggestions have been made: firstly, patrimonialism in its default form is not a negative system. Secondly, it is part and parcel of the workings of all traditional societies – Africa, America, Asia and Europe. In other words, it is not restricted to Africa. Finally, its bastardisation in Africa especially resulted from of ethnic and class consciousness originating from their colonial experiences. The natural product of this corruption is neo-patrimonialism – a system of patrons and clients, big men and small men in a social network, prebendalism and personal rulership. Their dynamics are explored here at the national, sub-regional and transnational levels. Do these interrelationships in anyway influence the national and sub-regional threat securitization processes in West Africa and in what ways, especially since the end of the Cold War? The evolution of patrimonialism with a 'neo' prefix started in the 1980s with the works of Medrad (1982) and Clapham (1985). It came to be seen as the corrupt and

bastardized form of patrimonialism which was regarded as a critical part of African society which the ruling elite latched on for personal benefits once in power. Ever since then it has assumed a prominent place in the literature on African studies (Clapham, 1982; Bratton and Van de Walle, 1997; Chabal and Daloz, 1999; Van de Walle, 2001; William, 2003; Erdman and Engel, 2007; Chabal and Vidal, 2008; De Grassi, 2008; and Pitcher et al, 2009). While patrimonialism was seen in terms of social capital as a way of explaining political cohesion in Africa societies (Theobald, 1982; 555), neo-patrimonialism is 'regarded as a functional threat to the peaceful political development of African states and the development of societies in general' (Erdman, 2009; 97).

The salient feature of the neo-patrimonial system of authority is that the Weberian rational-legal bureaucracy is inconsequential. In other words, even though there are institutions and bureaucracies they are personal tools in the hands of the ruler to wield his authority over the people. It is neo-patrimonial because it is a medley of tradition and modernity in which the Prince-leader controls the whole modern state apparatuses including the security sector in the same way the chief in the traditional authority in pre-colonial days would do. Any semblance of dichotomy between the public and private is a mere charade as 'these rulers bear the national synonym of sovereign statehood in the manner of "l'Etat, c'est moi"' (Boas, 2001; 699). Kamuzu Banda was Malawi personified as Nkrumah was the embodiment of Ghana. Zaire (DRC) was the personal property of General Mobutu as Houphet Boigny was seen as the 'father' of the people of Ivory Coast. The African variant of the Machiavellian Prince will not tolerate any opposition to the seat of state power as he uses the state's resources to securitize any semblance of opposition, control the military, the police and the judiciary, and in some cases the media are seriously circumscribed and gagged while the constitution is severely manipulated, all in the bid to ensure the survival of the 'big man' in the state house (see Clapham, 1996; 3 and Cammack, 2007; 604–605).

What lubricates the tool of neo-patrimonialism and keeps it functioning is the oil of resources, in the form of wealth accruing from the abundant natural resources in many of the post-colonial states in Africa under the control of individual rulers. Where a state is lacking in natural resources or the price slumps, the 'hand-out' – aid, loans and grants from foreign donor patrons – becomes a 'pull factor' towards a competition to control state power in order to be in control of such funds. In both cases, the contracts, the mining licenses and oil blocks, and choice appointments are handed out to the patron's faithful 'servants' 'friends' (local and foreign), family members or people from his ethnic group (see McFerson, 2010; 342–344) and for Chabal and Daloz (1999;81–87) that is the way Africa works. For Richards (1996; xviii), the Sierra Leone war as well as the ones in Liberia, Guinea Bissau, Congo DR and Cote d'Ivoire, and the restiveness in the Niger Delta region of Nigeria, are all 'a product of this protracted, post-colonial crisis of

patrimonialism'. Let it be quickly reiterated that like traditional patrimonialism, the 'neo' version is not in any way restricted to post-colonial states of Africa. Taylor (2010; 3) and McFerson, (2010; 343) have noted that it can also be identified in other places such as Ukraine, North Korea, Kazakhstan, Turkmenistan, Myanmar, Indonesia, Russia and various Latin American nations (see also, Lemarchand and Eisenstadt, 1980; Clapham, 1982).

The impetus for the intricacies and dynamics of neo-patrimonialism in Africa lies in what Chabal (2009; 43–64) termed the 'politics of belonging', in which the kinship affiliation is very strong and the people will always want to identify with where they come from. The abuse of this by the political elite becomes an extreme manifestation of neo-patrimonialism. This can be evidenced from the cases of 'indigene and stranger', 'insider and outsider' politics in Africa and of course the ethnic favouritism pervading the political landscape of Africa. It can be safe to suggest that neo-patrimonialism in Africa is as a result of a struggle by a continent stuck between a need to find its route back to its identity and a need to benefit from the modernisation and the wave of democratisation especially after the fall of Berlin Wall that presaged the end of the Cold War. The adaption of concepts of patrimonialism and neo-patrimonialism is not without criticisms.

### *Patrimonialism-neopatrimonialism framework*

The concepts of patrimonialism and neo-patrimonialism have attracted arguments and criticisms as to their appropriateness as analytical concepts in accounting for the politics of statehood in West Africa, especially in relation to security discourse. What is done here is highlight some of those arguments and then show how the concepts still retain their analytical usefulness. Ever since Max Weber (1947) employed the concept of patrimonialism, modernisation scholars have relied on it with a view to explaining the lack of modernisation and development in sub-Saharan Africa (Roth, 1968; 194–206; Lemarchand and Legg, 1972; 149–178; Le Vine, 198; Theobald, 1982; and specifically on West Africa, Zolberg, 1969). The first major criticism against Patrimonialism – Neopatrimonialism framework arises from what Erdman and Engel (2009; 103) termed a 'catch-all' concept. In other words, it has been seen as deus ex machina – one -size-fits-all in African political discourse. For example, William (2003; 61) used it to shift analytical attentions from nation state patrimonialism to the patrimonial dimension of rebel regimes (child soldier-warlord relations) especially in Liberia and Sierra Leone in what Richards (1996; xvii) called 'a crisis of the patrimonial state'. Also de Grassi (2008; 107–133) used it to analyse agricultural development in Africa. Though William (2003; 63) appreciates that developments in Liberia and Sierra Leone or other West African countries cannot be summed up in one theoretical formula, he argued that 'the sociological principles of patrimonial politics and patron-

client relations provide important theoretical tools for understanding the institutional transformations of child and adult relations during these civil wars'. This 'catch-all' status that the framework has been subjected to has put it in 'danger of losing its analytical utility' (Theobald, 1982; 555). According to Levine (1980; 663), 'the idea is useful as an organizing concept but much less so as an analytical guide'.

Another major criticism is that authors and analysts either find it difficult or do not think it necessary to delineate between patrimonialism and neo-patrimonialism. They use the two concepts interchangeably, failing to draw attention to the difference which will make it difficult to operationalise them. It must be realised that patrimonialism is a personalised traditional type of domination or authority often found in empires and absolute monarchies not accountable to legal-rational institutionalised bureaucracy. But neo-patrimonialism according to Clapham (1985; 48) is:

> A form of organization in which relationships of a broadly patrimonial type pervades a political and administrative system which is formally constructed on rational-legal lines. Officials hold positions in bureaucratic organizations with powers which are formally defined, but exercise those powers … as a form … of private property.

Clapham did not bother about the definition but treated the elements of the system; corruption and patron-client relations. But Bratton and Van de Walle (1997; 62) gave a more acceptable definition of neo-patrimonial authority distinct from patrimonialism – a hybridisation of elements of informal patrimonialism and rational-legal formal institutions. The conceptualisation of neo-patrimonialism must recognise the two types of regimes as failure to do so will reduce all official relations in Africa to the level of personalization. The reality is that:

> Not all political and administrative decisions are taken according to informal rules determined by private or personal interests. The distribution of jobs, administrative careers, as well as credits and licences is also exercised according to fixed procedures, and laws that follow the formal course of a legal rationality.
>
> (Erdman and Engel, 2007; 104)

In other words, it may take the form of legal-rational procedures, but behind it is a systematic manoeuvre with an emblem of personalisation.

Another challenge confronting patrimonial and neo-patrimonial framework arises from what de Grassi (2008; 109) called 'methodological limitations – a focus on relatively few countries, restricted attention to only a few journals, a tendency to present anecdotal evidence, insufficient to conceptual roots, and overgeneralization'. For de Grassi (2008), extrapolating from a small set of countries – Nigeria, Senegal, Democratic Republic of Congo

(DRC), Liberia, Sierra Leone, Ivory Coast, Kenya, Zambia, and especially Cameroon – is inappropriate as their circumstances may be different. In other words, one may not generalise from these few examples. For Pitcher et al (2009; 125–156), the problem is not with the concepts but their application. Are the concepts causes or effects or the explanations for all of Africa's woes? They appreciate the existence of patrimonial-neo-patrimonial authorities and their intrinsic elements and also recognize their historical trajectory. Their major reservation is that analysts see these concepts as the bane of African societies. Citing Botswana as an example, Pitcher et al (2009; 130) examined the possibility of a modern democratic state being established on historical foundations of patrimonial authority. Having said that, can any usefulness still be found in the framework as tool for analysing Africa's politics of statehood and securitization processes?

The first line of defence against the attack on this framework is that it has been cast in a negative mould. Weber (1947) saw patrimonialism as a practice consistent with people's traditional way of life. Like Feudalism, it was part and parcel of the socio-cultural life of a people still in their early stage of political development. It was not seen as a negative phenomenon. It has already been noted that neo-patrimonialism is a bastardized and corrupt form of patrimonialism. The 'catch-all' approach by scholars as noted by Theobald (1982; 555) is as a result of the manner in which the elite in Africa especially have employed the strategy for their own personal interests. While the framework may not explain it all, it is at the root of understanding the politics of threat securitization in African states. An important insight offered by Chabal's (2009) work touches on those benign aspects of African society that the elite have manipulated and transformed into politics of cronyism, ethnicism, favouritism, clientelism and big man-small man reciprocity. It can be comfortably argued that the concept is not 'catch-all' as alleged but provides clues to deep-rooted crises of poverty, insecurity, conflicts and underdevelopment that have held the continent backwards.

Diamond (2008; 138) observed two trends in the governance in Africa, namely the 'highly centralized and overpowering presidencies and the steeply hierarchical, informal networks of patron-client relations that draw their symbolic and emotional glue from ethnic bonds'. The other trend is the rise in democratic principles along with institutions which exist in tandem with the informal networks of clientelism, corruption, ethnic mobilisation and personal rule by extremely inordinate presidents. These are all elements of neo-patrimonialism which it is argued aid in security perception and the securitization process. The concept is also not 'catch-all' but is rooted in the historical sociology of African society. Eke (1975; 91–112) postulated two publics in Africa: a public realm in which age-old groupings, ties and sentiments influence and determine how an individual lives in public, and another public historically associated with colonialism in which bureaucracies and institutions have become identified with popular politics in post-colonial Africa. Ekeh further argued that 'the dialectical relationship

between the two publics foments the unique political issues that have come to characterize African politics which is neo-patrimonialism' (1975; 93).

It is true that some authors (de Grassi, 2008; Pitcher et al, 2009; and William, 2003) use the terms patrimonialism and neo-patrimonialism interchangeably. But there is a demarcation between the regime of patrimonialism and when it assumes a 'neo' prefix. In the light of this, it must not ignore the core intricacies and elements common to the two ideas. What has been done from the beginning is to argue that neo-patrimonialism starts where patrimonialism stops. Both account for a system of favour and reciprocity; one (patrimonial) in informal way and the other (neo-patrimonial) in both formal and informal ways. As Erdman and Engel (2007; 104) noted, neo-patrimonialism involves 'invasion of informal personal relations into the formal structures of legal-rational relations'. It is therefore argued that using the concepts interchangeably (as some do) should not diminish the potency of the framework, but rather a dichotomy is placed between the two sides of the same phenomenon; the historical and the new form it has assumed in the African political process for proper analysis.

It is strongly argued here that the effectiveness and appropriateness of the patrimonialism-neo-patrimonialism framework is evident when it is properly applied. The allegation that it obtains evidence from few countries is very weak. The question is not where it takes place but where it does not take place. It is yet to pick a country in the West African sub-region which does not manifest elements of neo-patrimonialism from the post-colonial years up to the post-Cold War epoch. So the argument that drawing from a few examples to generalize is a methodological weakness for the patrimonialism-neo-patrimonialism framework should not arise. De Grassi (2008) should be reminded that the whole concept of patrimonialism in its original Weberian form did not refer to Africa. Weber (1947) focused on the Feudal and agrarian societies of Asia and Europe but the concept has subsequently been adapted – as is the tradition in the social science discipline – to explain the evolving political process in the post-colonial states of Latin America, Middle East and Africa. On the question of generalisation, Chabal (2009; 179) opined:

> It is incumbent upon social scientists to explain what they witness, however unpalatable that explanation… it is not the analyst who creates the realities in Africa today. To deny the validity of an interpretation merely because it is derived from a generalization is to deny the very essence of research-based analyses.

Pitcher et al's (2009) position that Botswana has been able to construct a modern democratic state from the historical foundations of patrimonialism is the closest to this postulation. As this book suggests, the whole wrangling about the validity of the concepts lies in the negative manifestation in the neo-patrimonial system of authority which is the corrupt and bastardised

form of patrimonialism. What this book seeks to establish from empirical findings is how the intricacies and dynamics of the patrimonialism-neo-patrimonialism continuum influence security perceptions and the securitization processes of issues in the West African sub-region drawing from findings in Liberia and Sierra Leone. That a country like Botswana has been able to construct a modern democratic state from historical foundations of patrimonialism shows that the system is not bad after all.

## The securitization/neo-patrimonialism nexus

It is important to look again at the salient element of neo-patrimonial statehood: (a) it is a system that thrives in the monopoly of state resources of power and wealth by one man – the leader and his acolytes and (b) it is also a political leadership arrangement that lacks a line separating personal and public spheres in exercising political authority. Neo-patrimonialism is 'a hybridization of customs and patterns of patrimonialism and modern rational-legal institutions' (Bratton and Van de Walle, 1997; 62). In the words of Bratton and Van de Walle (1994; 458):

> In neo-patrimonial regimes, the Chief Executive maintains authority through personal patronage, rather than through ideology or law. As with classic patrimonialism, the right to rule is ascribed to a person rather than an office. In contemporary neo-patrimonialism, relationships of loyalty and dependence pervade a formal political and administrative system and leaders occupy bureaucratic offices less to perform public service than to acquire personal wealth and status. The distinction between private and public interests is purposely blurred. The essence of neo-patrimonialism is the award by public officials of personal favours, both within the state (notably public sector jobs) and in society (for instance, licenses, contracts, and projects). In return for material rewards, clients mobilize political support and refer all decisions upward as a mark of deference to patrons.

In the security sector, unlike in advanced liberal democracies where the processes of securitization may go through legitimately constituted authority, in neo-patrimonial regimes especially in Africa, the security architecture is not so constituted. It is more ad hoc than following specific procedures. This, it is argued, is part of the reason why securitization in its Eurocentric form cannot be applied to Africa's security context. However, when refined and stretched some lines of convergence can be identified. In neo-patrimonial regimes the authority resides with the Chief Executive who maintains authority through personal patronage in lieu of laid-down law and order. The patronage structure works in pyramidal form, meaning that there could be other persons or groups who are interconnected and working for a common cause – the security of the 'big man' and his regime (Clapham,

1996). Such persons or groups can raise issues to the level of securitization according to their interests. This finds convergence with the securitization framework. Consider Buzan et al's (1998; 21, 24) suggestion that:

> by saying 'security' a state representative declares an emergency condition, thus claiming a right to use whatever means are necessary to block a threatening development … it is possible for other social entities to raise an issue to the level of general consideration or even to the status of sanctioned urgency among themselves.

The difference is that whereas in advanced democracies the means employed may be necessary and popular with the larger population, in undemocratic neo-patrimonial regimes such as those found in West Africa the measures may be by military fiat, draconian rule in an unpopular constitution. These measures are decided by the neo-patrimonial leaders. Ethnic groups or other opposition groups outside the 'mainstream' of the power grid of the patron leader may be securitized thereby necessitating emergency measures or rule of exceptionality. This can be compared with the Copenhagen School's securitization process where there is no objective security threat. Conditions and issues are securitized by a political actor according to their perception of security and what he or she considers a referent object of security. Consider also that in neo-patrimonial leadership; because of a blurred distinction between private and public interests, what is securitized is for the interest of the neo-patrimonial leader which is presented as being in the public interest. And the leader may not need to go through the process of campaigning and building a convincing argument as is the case in advanced democratic countries.

The intersubjective character of securitization makes security a socially constructed issue. However, it does not stop there; Buzan et al (1998; 31) argued that 'Successful securitization is not decided by the securitizer but by the audience of the security speech act'. This implies that the process of securitization is an interaction between a securitizing actor and an audience. Two issues arise from this in relation to neo-patrimonial regimes: (a) if this is applied as it is in Africa's security discourse, it cannot stand because the securitizing actor often does not need the permission of the audience since he is almost above formal institutions of decision making; (b) the issue of who this audience is in the context of Africa has not been properly clarified. Leonard and Kaunert's (2011) contribution to further polish the idea of audience in the securitization process still did not take it further to lead to understanding Africa's security culture. It is not argued that there is no audience in the neo-patrimonial statehood in Africa: there are of course audiences, as illustrated by Vuori's (2008; 68) observation that 'Even tyrants need people to do their bidding, and loyal actors and subjects are important in totalitarian systems'. These loyal people, actors and subjects are the audiences that are needed to complete the process of securitization in

undemocratic and authoritarian regimes like some states in Africa. But what is not guaranteed is whether these audiences are needed by the patron leader to construct any security threat in the processes of securitization. The leader can ignore even close allies and do things the way he wants. This, when reconceptualised along the line of neo-patrimonial regimes in Africa, will find the audience including the patron leader's clients, stooges and praise-singers. The public mood, election results or ideological distribution in the political institutions are rarely given consideration.

It is equally important to point out that because of the weak nature of state institutions and security apparatuses in Africa, splinter groups, warlords, armed groups and militant groups may also be securitizing actors against the constituted authority and its policies. This finds resonance with the Copenhagen School's suggestion that 'it is possible for other social entities (opposing groups; emphasis mine) to raise an issue to the level of general consideration or even to the status of sanctioned urgency among themselves' (Buzan et al, 1998; 24). This calls for the issue of who the securitizing actor is to be refined to benefit Africa's security discourse by taking into consideration the nature of statehood in the region. So far in this chapter, three themes have stood out. In the first section a deeper exploration of the Copenhagen School's securitization project was carried out. Its strengths and weaknesses were considered paying particular attention to the two major elements that need to be reformatted for it to fit very well into Africa's security context with regard to its neo-patrimonial statehood. In the second section, we looked at the idea of neo-patrimonialism and synthesised it with the securitization process. Subsequently, we will be looking at operationalization the African context to see how neo-patrimonialism influences securitization process in Africa.

Neo-patrimonialism is evident not only at the national government level of African states. It is argued that it can be conspicuously identified at the sub-regional and transnational levels. In the same manner its influence over the security culture and the securitization of threats can also be identified. The significance of 'context' in this study in relation to the idea of securitization is very important and requires a brief discussion here. Securitization is a commendable innovation which has been applied to so many perceived threats such as 'immigration, health, political dissidence and minority rights, particularly in the context of the post-2001 US-led 'war on terror'(McDonald, 2008; 563). But there has been too much emphasis on the speech-act without appreciating the divergence and peculiarity of contexts for individual securitization processes. This is a minus for innovation. For instance, McDonald (2008, 571) argues that such a 'universal framework for the designation or construction of threat through speech acts…downplays the importance of contextual factors – such as dominant narratives of identity – that condition both patterns of securitization and the broader construction of security'. In Liberia, Sierra Leone and larger West Africa, these narratives could be colonial experiences, patterns of societal configurations

and political goals of dominant political actors. This is in agreement with Balzacq's (2005; 172, 183) position that 'the performative dimension of security rests between semantic regularity and contextual circumstances' and these include 'the psycho-cultural disposition of the audience, and the power that both speaker and listener bring to the interaction'. This is very important if the securitization concept is to benefit Africa's security discourse. For easy understanding and clarity, the application is done at the three levels: national government, sub-regional and transnational levels, bringing it nearer home to the West African sub-region (and later, two cases – Liberia and Sierra Leone – will be specifically considered).

### *National level*

In Africa's neo-patrimonial setting, the major referent object for security is the state and the state is not distinct from its patron leader. In this setting, the most important issue of security in that state is the survival of the regime claimed to be threatened by opposition groups, militant groups and warlords such as is the case in Nigeria and Mali presently. Liberia, Sierra Leone and Cote d'Ivoire also went through all that. This is understood against the backdrop of recurrent issue of unconstitutional and violent overthrow of government. It is not argued that there are no other referent objects in the areas of the environment, economy, military or even human security and gender issues. Rather, it is argued that these other issues may not merit securitization in the perception of the leaders because they are secondary to him. It is the nature of the leadership under a patronage system which defines issues to be securitized and not the concerns of the people. Whatever threatens the working of the neo-patrimonial state is securitized. Consider two occurrences that took place in Odi, Bayelsa State and Zaki-Biam, Benue State in Nigeria between 1999 and 2001 respectively. The government in power ordered the massacre of thousands of people in a reprisal attack in what could be likened to emergency measures in the securitization process (Ikelegbe, 2001; 13).

Like a pyramid, the neo-patrimonial setting runs from top to bottom creating branches in the process. As already mentioned, choice offices and appointments are handed out by the 'prince' in a personal rule system to his party faithful, personal friends and in some cases to people from his ethnic origin. Again, sometimes the opposition is co-opted into this arrangement if it does not want total elimination. In other words, in its extreme form it is a zero-sum game; winner-takes-all. It breeds corruption, emasculates genuine dissent and encourages politics of exclusion and acrimony. In plural ethnic states, it abets stranger-indigene sentiments and the result sometimes is conflict, war and/or general insecurity as the polity becomes overheated and the struggle for resources of power to control the material resources heightens. This is conducive for warlord politics as can be seen in West African states of Nigeria, Liberia and Sierra Leone. Warlord politics,

according to Allen (1999; 373), 'implies intensified competition for resources, and increased use of violence as an element of competition. It also implies a growing vulnerability of those in power, and thus a willingness to contemplate extreme means to retain power'.

What is so obvious is that a clear delineation between the private and public is hard to discern and the system is so pervasive that one finds it difficult to say where clientelism ends and the reciprocity that characterizes social life generally begins. This has earned this approach some criticisms (see Theobald, 1982; 553). Yet the kind of reciprocity that characterises neo-patrimonialism originates from the 'big man' who uses his monopoly of the state to attract support in exchange for favour, sycophancy from the clients to hang on to power (see Lemarchand and Legg, 1972; 151). What gives further impetus to national level neo-patrimonialism is the high level of poverty among the populace and the fact that access to political power has become the easiest route to acquiring enormous wealth. The ruler latches on this in order to extract support from the people if they must eat. In this atmosphere of extreme desire to hold on to political power, the securitizing actor is the patron leader and the audience is not necessarily the public but the cronies whose means of survival is dependent on doing the bidding of the leader. The cronies may include those in the military, police and judiciary.

### *Sub-regional level*

The logic of neo-patrimonialism and securitization as an analytical tool for the security culture of West African states will be appreciated in three different ways at the sub-regional level. In the first instance, the patrimonial practices of the political class in the immediate post-independence days are being re-enacted by the personal rulers of the post-Cold War years with more vigour and sophistication. There were not many security issues to be securitized in the sub-region. The leaders were to a certain degree concerned about protecting their hard-won independence, national cohesion and development. Different treaties at the continental and sub-regional levels frowned at contemplating unconstitutional change of government or redrawing the default map of the states. The leaders were in a kind of solidarity among themselves. There was not much fear of security threats or invasion arising from neighbouring states. The post-Cold War era leaders however confronted serious security challenges such as intrastate war, conflict, human trafficking, cross-border crime, human security issues and ethnic tensions in Liberia, Senegal, Sierra Leone, Guinea, Nigeria and Niger. In some instances there is still the fear of potential issue of violent overthrow of government. These are certainly serious issues but the most pressing threat needing every possible means to confront is the state itself, specifically the regime's survival. This is the primary referent object whilst every other issue is subsumed under that. The securitizing actor in the

securitization process is always the patron leader of individual West African countries who have some interests to protect. Their audience will be other leaders also from the sub-region whose support may be needed. It could also be his close friends and those in the security community that need to be appealed to in any security decision. The idea of securitizing issues according to sub-regional needs is out of consideration. The security perception and measures will be according to the alliances of the leaders in the sub-region. This has seriously undermined national development and coexistence and impacted on the security culture of the sub-region. There is no other time this played out more than the two wars in Liberia when the sub-region body ECOMOG intervened. The major argument for the intervention was to avoid encouraging dissident soldiers in individual countries to carry out the same violent incursion into government. It was not the peace and security of the sub-region that was uppermost but the protection and survival of regimes.

The effect of neo-patrimonialism on the threat securitization processes in West African States will also be appreciated by looking at the expression of esprit de corps among the members of the ruling class across the sub region of West Africa. From the national level, this camaraderie spills over to the sub-regional level. Analysts (Bach, 2006; 4 and Taylor, 2010; 137–149) have argued that the transmutation of Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) from its original objective of economic integration and development of the sub-region to a security architecture serves as the agenda of mutual interest of the leaders: supporting one another to hold power. It is also a distraction and diversion from focussing on the main issues of good governance, broad-based sustainable development and above all ensuring security in the sub-region. This obtains because of the extent of neo-patrimonial interconnectedness in the sub-region. Consider Faure, son of the former president Eyadema of Togo who came to power by trampling upon constitutional norms when his father died. Yet ECOWAS leaders turned a blind eye to that. The best ECOWAS did was to weakly order an election to give the unconstitutional take-over of government some legitimacy (Jaye, 2008; 154). The place that Charles Taylor, the former Warlord-turned President of Liberia, turned to for protection at the end of his years of brutal governance was Cote d'Ivoire, and Nigeria was later to offer him protection despite his obvious complicity in the murder of so many Nigerians in the Liberian war. Let us consider also the insincere condemnation that the West African leaders gave to the series of power tussles in Guinea Bissau and the constitutional alteration that ensured continuation of the regime in Niger Republic. Even though in the ECOWAS Treaty the unconstitutional overthrow of governments is seriously frowned on, yet securitizing such issues is subordinated to the interest of the patron leaders. This framework strongly disagrees with the seemingly altruistic agenda of the West African leaders in their security ambition. Behind the façade of being arranged to benefit the wider populace and ensure stability in the sub-region, it is geared towards

regime survival and this is achieved through access to state resources, power and recognition distributed through the network of cronies.

The third element that supports the analytical utility of neo-patrimonialism and securitization structure in West Africa's security discourse is the preponderance and connection of Nigeria's influence in the sub-region. Armed with military purchases, a large population and an abundance of natural resources, Nigeria has championed from its inception the cause of ECOWAS. Post-Cold War leaders in Nigeria have taken advantage of this already-established hegemonic influence to pursue their objectives. Consider the enormity of resources Nigeria expended to prosecute the ECOMOG intervention in Liberia and Sierra Leone at the end of the Cold War. It is suggested that there existed a special friendship between Samuel Doe of Liberia and the Ibrahim Babangida of Nigeria which was given priority over the normal process of securitization in the Copenhagen School sense. Of course, there could be other interests that influenced the course of the intervention – for instance, the relationship between and among the leaders of Cote d'Ivoire, Burkina Faso and Liberia and between Guinea and Sierra Leone. However, the 'big brother' power preponderance of Nigeria was prominent: fighting for democracy abroad while its citizens were groaning under the military jack boot of the leaders back home (see Jaye, 2003; Mgbeoji, 2004; 218–225; Obi, 2010; 183–196). This will be discussed in detail in chapters five and six.

It is pertinent to note that what encourages this neo-patrimonial relationship among the sub-regional actors is the coterminous nature of West African states. So it is possible for a leader in Nigeria to close the border against a 'disobedient' leader in Benin Republic or Niger Republic. Or a leader in Togo to award contracts, business licenses, and loans to coterie of friends from neighbouring countries in the sub-region, and have some national edifices named after national leaders from other countries in a show of support and solidarity. The Biafran secessionist leader Emeka Ojukwu was harboured in the Ivory Coast for about 13 years after the Nigerian-Biafran war and this was one of the few countries that supported the secessionist bid of the Biafrans. What was the ambition of the Ivory Coast? In the light of these, the security culture and the processes of threat securitization obviously reflect the neo-patrimonial arrangement in the sub-region. The patron leaders are the securitizing actors and audience among themselves, hence the need to reconceptualise the ideas of securitizing actor and audience to reflect this nature of statehood in the continent as a whole and West Africa in particular.

It is important to reiterate that the countries of West Africa do not have to fear the threat of military invasion from neighbours. What poses a serious security concern is the fear that the neighbouring countries might be used as staging post usually by non-state actors which could pose serious threats to their own regime's survival. It could also be in the form of an impetus provided by events or developments from one country to another.

In other words, a successful coup d'état in Togo may be a source of encouragement to the military men in Ghana or Nigeria. Furthermore, non-state, non-military threats come from drug trafficking, cross border crime, terrorism and activities of mercenaries. These could also be from other generalised categories such as youth unemployment, environmental degradation and social exclusion. However, Addo (2008; 200) argued that these threats are of varying importance to individual West African countries and that will influence the extent to which they securitize the issues.

***Extra-regional or transnational level***

To further accentuate the analytical relevance of the impact of neo-patrimonialism on the security culture and processes of threat securitization in West Africa, one should also consider it at the extra-regional level. Sometimes analyses of the socio-economic, political and security challenges of the African continent tend to place Africa as an entity standing on its own. Africa is portrayed as having had a dependent position in the structure of international politics. The question here according to Bayart (2004; 217–267) is; is Africa really dependent? This framework again seeks to establish whether there is a mutual and beneficial relationship between Africa's political and business elite and their international counterparts. An African proverb suggests that it is the rat in the house that leaks information to the one outside that there is fish in the fireplace. In other words, exploitation would not be possible without the collaboration of the local elite. In the context of security, the salient issues in Africa and West Africa in particular have a spill-over effect on national security of the developed countries of Europe. Take for instance the issues of illegal drugs, the availability of illegal arms and ammunitions and terrorist activities and their impact on international security and the global political economy. The securitization of these issues sometimes is not dependent on the African countries but the extra-regional interests.

Since independence, at the height of the Cold War and up to the post-Cold War epoch, Africans – especially sub-Saharan Africans – have maintained contacts with outsiders in three major ways that are germane to this work. At the business level, it should be noted that African countries depended heavily on revenues from raw materials to run the states. Lacking the technological know-how to turn these resources around, they depended on foreign firms which do the work and pay rent to the 'big men' in the government houses. In turn, they distributed the proceeds to their cronies. The foreign firms are sometimes exempt from taxes, or pay low taxes and given the latitude to do what they want. Apart from extractive industries, other commercial alliances are established between the elites and their foreign counterparts. The outsiders take advantage of the weak nature of the state institutions to establish a patron-client relationship that is solely concerned with the interest of the local and foreign bourgeoisie.

When conflicts or wars erupt as happened in Sierra Leone, private security companies are contracted to ensure the security of, for instance, mining sites and government houses while the outlying provinces are controlled by the warlords struggling to gain access to resource areas. When they extract these resources (oil, rubber, timber, diamond, and rutile), it is the foreign firms that buy them (see Reno, 1997; 165–185, 1998; David, 1999; 319–338; McFerson, 2010; 335–353). Consider for instance the activities of warlords such as Charles Taylor in Liberia, Forday Sankoh in Sierra Leone and Tom Ateke in Nigeria's Delta region. They could not have operated without transnational connectedness. One should also look at the exploits of private security companies in Sierra Leone, Liberia and Angola such as Executive Outcomes, Sandline international and Gurkha security guards. Jarding (1999; 322–324) noted that:

> Executive Outcomes is still based in Pretoria and has 'representatives' in the UK, Germany and Holland… The main target of the mercenary companies is not military installations, but to secure the strategic mineral fields which are then handed over to government. Once these mineral assets are secure, the government then grants valuable concessions to private companies owned by or affiliated with these mercenary companies.

What keeps states under such circumstances going is no longer the monopoly of the legitimate use of force but the services of the mercenaries who are rewarded with the resources in 'bullet and barrel' exchanges (Friedman, 2009).

With the prices of primary goods plummeting, the fortunes of governments start dwindling. This situation was prevalent in almost all the resource-rich countries of Sub-Saharan Africa that depended on the wealth of the 'devil's excrement' – oil, gas, gold, zinc, rutile, diamonds, rubber and cobalt (Naim, 2009; 159–160). The result is crisis in government, a struggle for regime survival, dislocation in the polity and further crisis of authority. To ensure regime survival, the neo-patrimonial network must be lubricated. As can be seen in the cases of Togo, Niger, Cote d'Ivoire, Nigeria, Kenya, Liberia and Sierra Leone, foreign donors come to the rescue with aid, grants and loans. These foreign donors (the patrons) call the shots, telling the beleaguered states (clients) what to do and what conditions to meet. When the loans are received, the local patrons systematically distribute some to his clients. It could be fertilisers, planting seeds and farming instruments. Those who are not part of the inner circle of government functionaries who do not know someone that knows the patron Prince are schemed out in the zero-sum game of neo-patrimonialism.

Superimposing the above two dimensions of extra-regional or transnational level of neo-patrimonial relationship in West African states are the colonial and great power linkages. The 'umbilical cord' relationship between

the African states and the West by the implication of colonialism has remained a major defining factor in their post-Cold War international relations. The colonial relationship that borrowed from the patrimonial dynamics of pre-colonial African states subsisted to post-colonial and Cold War years morphing into a phenomenon of more extensive patron-client, big power-small power vertical relationships with the big powers having greater leverage. The receding of the Cold War meant a shift of the tectonic plates of international politics and thus African states ceased to offer any strategic relevance. However the immediate post-Cold War 'cold shoulder' given to African states that forced them to look for African solutions to African problems did not last long. The events of the 1990s and beyond – the conflicts and wars in Africa, the rise of activities of non-state actors posing a serious threat to international commerce and security, the September 11, 2001 terrorist attack on America, the rise of China, India and other emerging economies – forced the West to make a diplomatic U-turn in a new scramble for Africa in a new matrimony underpinned by a realist perspective of international politics: states' interests.

In the context of West Africa with regard to Copenhagen School's securitization concept, the securitizing actor(s) can be the external patrons whose economic or national security interests may be threatened by several perceived threats in the client states in West Africa. It is argued again that the audience here may not necessarily be the public whose opinion or consensus may not after all be required to finish the process of securitization. The audience certainly is the political and economic elite whose cooperation is needed to keep the process. Consider for instance the placing of terrorist activities going on in West Africa as needing emergency measures by the United States or the securitization of HIV/AIDS in Africa. It is argued that it is the national security interests of the big powers – USA, Britain or France – that count and not the interests of the African public. Specifically, the meddlesomeness of France in West Africa, the traditional, conservative, tactical and cunning involvement of Britain and self-assigned world police role of the United States of America when critically analysed will validate this claim.

## Conclusion

This research focuses on the influence that the neo-patrimonial nature of statehood in Africa and West Africa in particular may have on the security culture of the sub-region. It was previously argued that the application of the idea of securitization was largely focused on liberal democracies of Europe with little or no attention paid to Africa. This book seeks to bridge that gap. In this present chapter it espoused a unique innovation to Africa's security discourse by marrying together the two ideas of securitization and neo-patrimonialism. This prepared the ground for the research question: 'To what extent and in what ways has the political culture of neo-

patrimonialism influenced securitization of threats in West Africa?'. No answer or approach in the social sciences is absolute. By this framework and its detailed analysis, all elements of the concepts are considered together and in relation to each other. This will offer us a systematic insight into the interconnectedness between the elements of securitization process and dynamics of neo-patrimonial statehood. This will form a confident platform for assessing the question of influence of one on the other. Considering the case studies of Liberia and Sierra Leone and the wider West African sub-region, the framework provides an effective way to link the case studies and extrapolate to wider sub-region of West Africa. Combining the two ideas of securitization and neo-patrimonialism in such a framework speaks for itself in being convenient for this research. This research focuses on diverse elements of political culture, emerging security threats in West Africa, and the economic and security interests of local and international political and economic actors. This framework accommodates all in analysing West Africa's security dynamics.

# 4 Liberia

## Neo-patrimonial statehood and securitization processes

This chapter empirically assesses how and in which ways neo-patrimonialism influences securitization processes. While considering the wider West African sub-region, particular attention is focused on Liberia from which a generalisation is made to the sub-region. The examination is done at three levels as proposed in the theoretical framework chapter. These are the national government, sub-regional and transnational levels. It demonstrates that in a neo-patrimonial political structure such as we have in West Africa and Liberia specifically, there is no established rule for securitization processes. Secondly, threats are defined by the neo-patrimonial leaders according to their perceptions and regime-defined interests. Thirdly, the emergency measures of securitization are articulated by the patron leader in the pyramidal structure of neo-patrimonial statehood. Finally, the audience which needs to be persuaded to complete the process of securitization often may not be the larger population but cronies and close allies of the leader. The chapter proceeds in the following order: firstly, it presents a descriptive overview of politics and the security dynamics of the Liberian state. This is important as it further emphasises the overall justification for the study. The second section carries out a systematic analytical discussion of some of the most critical immediate past regimes in Liberia, their threat perceptions and the resultant securitization. This also stands for the assessment at the national level. Evidence of neo-patrimonial patronage politics and the impact on the securitization processes will be demonstrated. This is followed by the sub-regional and transnational levels in the third and fourth sections. Based on the findings from these sections, an overall evaluation of the interrelatedness of neo-patrimonial statehood and the securitization processes will be made.

The intention here once again is to accentuate the relevance and justification of Liberia to this study. Firstly, it is important to consider the place of the Liberian state in the political and security history of West Africa. Liberia became a place for repatriated slaves from America; this group eventually dominated the political landscape of the country by gaining the economic and political supremacy over the native Liberians and this set in motion what was to define the political culture of patronage politics in the

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country (interview with Police Intelligence Officer at Loguato, Liberia, 2011; see also Clapham, 1978). Secondly, it is apt to test the hypothesis of the book against the heterogeneity of the Liberian state and compare it to the more homogenous society of Sierra Leone.

In a previous chapter (chapter two), a trajectory of West Africa's security was outlined. The relevance is also considered against the critical role that the Liberian state played in the security trend of the sub-region of West Africa. It was pointed out that the end of the Cold War signalled an era of indigenisation of the security of the sub-region; when West Africans were left to manage their security challenges by themselves, in their own way and according to their own capabilities. Liberia and Sierra Leone (especially the former) became a litmus test for the capability and capacity of the leaders to take control in the absence of sufficient external assistance. The crises in Liberia in the 1990s and the creation of ECOMOG peacekeepers by the ECOWAS community became a defining moment for the security in West Africa. That particular intervention has remained one of the largest missions of the Economic Community of West African States to date. Others include: the intervention in Cote d'Ivoire (2010); intervention in Guinea Bissau (2012); and intervention in Mali (2012). The successes and shortcomings of the ECOMOG mission in Liberia also unfurled the complex diplomacy of the neo-patrimonial leaders of West African states and the failure of securitization politics; not just for that country but in subsequent missions. Sesay (1999; 27) pointed out that 'ECOMOG is the product of a complex mix of circumstances, among others, the domestic politics of member states, regional politics and leadership idiosyncrasies, rather than the establishment of an institutionalized conflict resolution blueprint' (see also Sesay, 1995; Adeleke, 1995; Mortimer, 199; Howe, 1996; and Obi, 2009). In the light of the securitization concept, the history and political culture of Liberia will help us test its core components – the security threat, the securitizing actor, the audience and the emergency measures utilised to deal with threats against a neo-patrimonial background. These will be evidenced from this chapter and the subsequent chapter on the case of Sierra Leone.

## The Liberian state

This section offers a brief descriptive overview of the historical and political background of the security environment in Liberia under which neo-patrimonial politics was suggested to loom large and dictated the securitization processes in the country. The intention is to provide a lucid picture of the context for the case study before the analytical discussion which follows. It must be noted that the principles of freedom, liberty and equality upon which the American Constitution was anchored were not extended to the Negroes. The condition of Negroes was seen 'as one of "imperfect connection", just raised from the abyss of slavery, but not to the level of freedom,

suspended between degradation and honor' (Tyler-McGraw, 2007; 2). Even when the US banned slavery in 1808 although emancipation was also widespread, the resurgence of cotton plantations gave it new life. This was also in response to the increasing demand in British industries. There was a contradiction in the whole manumission process: the southern states were eager to reintroduce measures to bring back freed Negroes to slavery or throw them out. The northern states did not want to accommodate so many slaves and so proscriptive and discriminatory measures were put in place to avert such an influx that could result from the South. Some well-to-do Americans such as President Thomas Jefferson who encouraged manumission still held on to the discriminatory policies against the Negroes (see Clegg, 2004 and Tyler-McGraw, 2007). Jefferson and Abraham Lincoln would have preferred an America free of blacks; both of them encouraged the mass exodus of blacks to somewhere definitely not near America.

The solution was therefore a colonisation project in Africa which Paul Cuffee was to champion with the first 38 Negro settlers. 'Colonization… rested upon the contention that blacks and whites – due to innate racial differences, polarized societal statuses, and pervasive racism – could not live together in social harmony and political equality within the same country' (Clegg, 2004; 3). This inspired the formation of the American Colonization Society – a private organisation committed to the mission of sending Negroes to Africa. It was 'formed in 1816 in Washington, D.C., by white men who believed that racial prejudice in the United States which they shared to varying degrees was an insuperable barrier to black citizenship and freedom' (Tyler-McGraw, 2007; 2). The initial plan of securing a settlement for these near Sierra Leone did not succeed because of a fear of unhealthy competition and lack of support from Sir Charles McCarthy, Governor of Sierra Leone. The new arrivals eventually settled on the north Shore of Sherbro Island, off the coast of Sierra Leone. After years of settling and battling with death and disaster, those that survived found permanent domicile on the Cape Mesurado promontory, which later became Liberia (Sirleaf, 2010).

### *Liberian independence*

The territory of Liberia had engaged in years of bitter rivalry between the descendants of Negroes and the native people on one hand and between and among the different ethnic groups on the other. These, as in other West African states, have sometimes precipitated war, chaos and general conflict which seriously affected the general security ambience of the sub-region. Liberians made comparatively reasonable progress: the official leaders remained the settlers. Under Jehudi Ashmum the territorial boundaries expanded and new settlements sprang up. Attempts were also made to stop the trade in slaves and in its place the alternative trade in palm oil and cam wood was established. This lured some Europeans to seek to trade directly

with Africans in the interior of Liberia which started causing some problems between the Europeans and the settlers in Liberia. To stop this unwelcome manoeuvre from the Europeans, Liberia was declared independent in 1847 and became part of America's sphere of influence and special friend in Africa. During the American civil war, more numbers were added to the settlers in Liberia from the Negroes seeking to emigrate. To prepare itself for a steady influx of immigrants, in the 1850s Liberia made some territorial expansion through treaties with neighbouring African chiefs. The influx was to reduce significantly with the hope that the Negroes would gain equality in the United States. By 1860, Liberia claimed a coastline of 600 miles which was lost to the British and French during the scramble for Africa.

Three issues are prominent from this brief excursion into the early history of modern Liberia. One is the dominance of Liberian politics by these settlers from America from 1822 onwards and the birth of patrimonial state. Another is the challenges the people in the hinterland posed to them and how these have shaped the political life and heterogeneity of Liberian society. Finally, what has been the role of America in Liberia's political development especially since the Cold War and post-Cold War periods derived much from this early period. Clapham (1978; 117) therefore suggested that no meaningful intellectual discourse on Liberia can be achieved without unravelling the interaction between the first two points. They form the basis of the underlying weakness of the Liberian state structure which ultimately became the catalyst for the catastrophes of the 1990s and beyond.

### *The failure of a noble idea*

Historian Niall Ferguson has persuasively argued that one of the reasons the West (initially Europe and later extended to North America) has dominated the world – despite China being at the top for centuries before the emergence of Europe – was because of the superior ethics and institutions which evolved in Europe, especially in the United Kingdom. Ferguson (2011; 96–102) strongly argued for this by pointing out that North America took off in grand style, progressed and consolidated better than South America where Spain was in control. In his words:

> It was an idea that made the crucial difference between the British and Iberian America – an idea about the way people should govern themselves. Some people make the mistake of calling that idea 'democracy' and imagining that any country can adopt it merely by holding elections. In reality democracy was the capstone of an edifice that had as its foundation the rule of law – to be precise, the sanctity of individual freedom and the security of private property right, ensured by representative constitutional government.
>
> (Ferguson, 2011; 97)

He concluded that the institutions that evolved in Britain percolated to North America and eventually set the pace for the 'westernization' of the world. Of course, Ferguson was adapting Max Weber's idea from the *Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism* (Weber, 1930[1920]). Both Ferguson and Weber argued that the many competitive wars among the European kingdoms from the High Middle Ages and the challenges posed to the Roman Catholic Church by the likes of the Calvinists, Lutherans and Puritans led to a wide range of changes in Europe. Amongst these changes were the radical thoughts of the Reformation which eventually led to articulation of state institutions by European philosophes. This was later to be exported – with different variations – to North America, South America, Asia and Africa by the agents of colonialism. Granted that western ideologies and institutions brought about domination of the rest of the world by Europe because of their 'superiority' – and given that the progress and rapid development witnessed across the Atlantic was a result of those institutions – what happened to the colonised societies, especially in Africa where the same institutions and ideologies were planted at the expense of local institutions?

Liberia was to be a litmus test for the grandiose aspiration to install the so-called noble ideas of the American Colonizing Society (ASC). Tarr (1993; 74) therefore remarked that:

> the Liberian civil war suggests the failure of a grand illusion – the idea of Liberia as an African outpost of Western civilization. Unresolved cleavages between settlers and indigenes, and among indigenes, ensured the poor governance which sustained failed policies.

Those unresolved cleavages have remained the subject matter in public debates and discourse among Liberians and were at the root of the catastrophes of the1980s into the 1990s.

The repatriated slaves that sired the Americo-Liberian group which was later to dominate the Liberian political economy did not come with the mission of blending with the local people. Of course they were living out the ideals of the ACS, namely to dominate the indigenous people. There was no mission to make sure that the so-called western institutions and civilization took root. They were simply rejected souls in America and Britain shipped to the far away 'Dark Continent of Africa'. They were however to dominate believing in their 'superiority' over the indigenous Africans whom they met on arrival. Sawyer (1992; 303) concluded that 'the source of these problems can be traced to the colonial heritage of the patrimonial state or in the case of Liberia, the imperatives of establishing a settler-dominated "civilized society" in addition to the impact of European colonial influences'. The aims and objectives for Liberia were arguably the same in all the states in Africa, especially south of the Sahara: domination and extraction of the resources of the land with little thought about long-

term development or sustainable policies. Chazan et al (1999; 41) posited that:

> [t]he formal agencies transferred to African hands were thus alien in derivation, functionally conceived, bureaucratically designed, authoritarian in nature, and primarily concerned with issues of domination rather than legitimacy. During decolonization, these patterns were in most cases elaborated rather than transformed.

In other words, the foundation of what was to unravel in Liberia – especially at the end of the Cold War – was laid with the domination of the political economy by these settlers whose attitude of superiority and disdain stemmed from their various experiences in America. As Denis and Denis (2008; 3) remarked:

> the effect of slavery and racism in America had a huge impact on Liberia's ruling class and thus Liberia's destiny. Liberia's story begins with America's story. From their arrival in 1822, these few slaves (later to be known as Americo-Liberians) did not see the indigenous Liberians as their equals – due to their perceived superior education and western civilization.

In 1847, they proclaimed independence, freeing themselves from the influence and control by the ACS. Initial intra-settler squabbles were resolved in 1871 by the victory in the elections of the True Whig Party which remained in control until the coup of 1980, bringing to an end 133 years of the dominance of the Americo-Liberians (see Quentin, 1999; 163–164) and an end to the 'First Republic'. The cleavages between these two groups have defined the politics of Liberia and it is couched in the 'we and them' or the 'in-group–out-group' dichotomy and enmity. It was further characterised by co-optation of the few privileged indigenous people, especially local chiefs, into the 'mainstream' politics in the patron-client power relations characteristic of neo-patrimonial statehood. In security terms, the securitization process in the construction of security threats hinged on the interests and concerns arising from this political configuration of the state of Liberia rather than any established and institutionalised political process that took into serious consideration the interest of the larger population.

### *Crises of statehood*

The dominant and ruling True Whig Party with William Tubman (from 1944 until his death in 1971) and William Tolbert (1971–1980) at the helm of affairs went on a rampage in Liberia. Sawyer (1992; 8) noted that 'settler patrimonialism was characterized by aspirations about the creation of a "common patrimony" in which all settlers would have a personal stake with

which they could readily identify'. The patron-client arrangement with the centralisation of power in the presidency weakened institutions of control. Factionalism, party cronyism and favouritism – the hallmarks of neo-patrimonial statehood – dominated the politics of Africa's oldest republic. The military intrusion of the 1980s masterminded by Master Sergeant (later, General) Samuel Doe further compounded the situation. The incursion of Charles Taylor in December 1989 with his men pushed the Liberian state overboard and redefined the security and geo-politics of the region, with extra African patrons and internal actors jostling to protect or project their interests. In the following section, this book will outline the regimes' internal dynamics; their threat perceptions and securitization processes and finally bring out the linkages with the security in the sub-region of West Africa.

The regimes of William Tubman and William Tolbert in Liberia prepared the ground for the total breakdown of the constitutional process of leadership. It continued also as one of the hallmarks of Master Sergeant Samuel Doe's period as leader. Doe's regime came to power through the military intrusion of 1980 and eventually incubated the wars which started in 1989. This in several ways equally affected the security and securitization processes of countries in the Mano River basin (Sierra Leone, Guinea and Cote d'Ivoire) and the sub-region of West Africa more broadly (Farah, 2004; 8–10 and Sawyer, 2004; 438–448). For example, there were spill-over effects as the war set off similar bitter experiences in Sierra Leone and Guinea. There was a mass exodus of people in the form of refugees to Ghana, Cote d'Ivoire and Nigeria. The leaders of West African countries equally became apprehensive of the situation: where it would happen next, their preferred client to support in the crisis and how the situation mattered most to them to call for extra-political emergency measures. It is equally important to point out that as people moved, illegal drugs and arms accompanied them through the porous borders of the states with all the attendant security implications. The root of the crisis in Liberia could be traced to the domination of its politics by the offspring of the settler group to the exclusion of the indigenous groups (Sawyer, 1992). One may contest this position by questioning or calling attention to Sergeant Doe's regime who as an indigenous person overthrew the regime of Tolbert in 1980 and under whose watch Liberia imploded. According to Tarr (1993; 75):

> By the end of the 1980, Liberia was a police state with some of the world's worst human rights abuses. Eventually the brutal suppression and worsening poverty led to a civil war in which four warring factions waged reciprocal tribal vendettas, looted public and private assets and destroyed social infrastructure.

However, it could still be argued that developments in the later regimes were a product of the Americo-Liberian period of hegemony.

In this section, a short description of the historical background to the politics of Liberia is provided to show the leaning towards patronage politics and the implications on the securitization of perceived threats. It started with the regimes of Tubman and Tolbert and climaxed with the regime of Doe before the country was plunged into brutal and messy civil wars that lasted for more than a decade with serious security implications for both the state and the sub-region of West Africa. Three issues are prominent in this section. Under personal rule or neo-patrimonial regimes of patronage politics, security and securitization of perceived threats are personal. In other words, the rulers securitize threats according to their individual threat perception and interests. The leaders were sometimes not confident of the formal state security measures. They therefore resort to their own security or turn the formal state security institutions to their personal use to protect not the state itself but their specific regime. Secondly, the presence of an external patron gives a client state confidence that the ruler is secure as we will see in the case of Liberia and the US. Thirdly, with neo-patrimonial politics of exclusivity, economic deprivation and marginalisation, the disfavoured associates of the regime and the opposition end up forming groups to destabilise the regime. With the ubiquity of small arms and light weapons, a certain level of security complex is created. The regimes and armed groups securitize threats in their own way with all the attendant security effects to the state and the neighbourhood. In the case of Liberia, attention is now focused on the national level of the three-level proposition. This is followed by the sub-regional and transnational levels.

## Neo-patrimonial statehood and the securitization process at the national level in Liberia

The preceding section gave a brief overview of the political timeline of the Liberian state. It brought out the foundation upon which rested the political culture of neo-patrimonial statehood and its implications on the securitization of threats. In Chapter 3 on analytical framework, it was proposed that there is a relationship between the political culture of neo-patrimonialism and securitization processes in West Africa using Liberia and Sierra Leone as case studies. It was also postulated that this phenomenon could be ascertained at the national, sub-regional and transnational levels of patron-client power relations. This section now empirically demonstrates this proposition by looking at the three regimes that spanned the Cold War era. This corresponds with the first of the three stages in the history of security in West Africa. It will also factor in the core components of the securitization concept – threat, securitizing actor, audience and emergency measures outside the normal bounds of politics. It is demonstrated further that the securitization process in its strict Copenhagen School reading does not fit in very well with the neo-patrimonial state of Liberia. For instance, in the case of Liberia, the idea of the audience is not clear as securitization was not

derived from normal constituted process but was a function of neo-patrimonial leaders' perception. The patron leader depends on personal security arrangements for the survival of his regime and threats are perceived and securitized according to the sole aim of keeping the regime safe (see Clapham, 1996 and Bayart, 2009).

### *President William Tubman: neo-patrimonial state and the securitization process in Liberia*

The survival of the regime rather than the state is paramount under neo-patrimonialism. The securitization process is often the prerogative of the neo-patrimonial patron who of course has centralised the government security machinery and made himself supreme. The emergency measures of the securitization process is not according to independent arrangements where everybody is under the same law but rather personal arrangements in terms of security outfits used to secure the leader and his cronies while opponents are intimidated into submission. The threat perception is a reflection of the interests of the patron leader whose audience in the securitization sense is his cronies and personal clients rather than the population.

Boas (2001, 702–703) has this to say about the Liberian state:

> Governed by institutional rule under a constitution, the Liberian state cannot be characterized as a patrimonial society per se. Rather, it was governed both by patrimonial and bureaucratic logics. It is possible to speak of a distinction between private and public, but such delineation is severely blurred.

Part of the reason for classifying this settler state as a neo-patrimonial society arises from being consistent with a blend of the Weberian ideal of typical patrimonial society and rationality based on legal bureaucratic institutions (see the section on neo-patrimonialism in chapter two). Before Tubman became president in 1944, Liberia was already steeped in personal rule but the party politics of the patronage system reached its greatest height under Tubman and Tolbert (both of them Americo-Liberians) between 1944 and 1980. One major factor probably accounted for that.

The arrival of Firestone Company (a rubber processing company) in the 1920s generated much wealth for the Liberian state. Processing of iron ore and other mineral resources also ushered in period of unprecedented wealth to the state. For instance, Gifford (1993, 13) noted:

> It is estimated that between 1926 and 1977, Firestone made a total profit of between US$410 and 415 million though the Liberian government received $110 million. This means that nearly three out of every four dollars that Firestone made in Liberia were transferred to the United States. Between 1962 and 1973, the American-controlled National Iron

> Ore Company shipped nearly $300 million worth of ore out of the country; the Liberian share over a 16-year period around this time was $2.5 million.

Like in other African countries where natural resources are the mainstay of the economy, multinational companies take advantage of weakly constituted bureaucratic institutions and corrupt leadership to do whatever benefits them. Of course, they know how to buy off those that would challenge them or pose security threats to their interests. The little amount the companies agree to pay in taxes end up in the private pockets of the president, his cronies and the ruling elite in the typical patron-client relationship. Again, Gifford (1993, 13) in the case of Liberia noted that:

> What enabled the concessions to operate like this was not just the inexperience of the Liberian authorities. The multinationals bought off important people in Liberia's ruling elite who in return for personal gain protected the companies favourable terms. The revenues which should have flowed to the government treasury flowed instead to influential individuals, like President Tubman, Emmett Hermon (executive secretary of the Joint Liberian-US Commission for Economic Development (1952–70)), or Richard Herines (the speaker of the House, 1952–80 and legal counsel for leading foreign concessions including the Firestone plantations company).

Since these individuals made up the government – and considering that the line between the private and public was blurred – they were free to dispense the little wealth that remained in Liberia according to their whims and interests. Under Tubman, the cult of the Presidency reached its peak. In the way of 'I am the state', he tailored national institutions to bear his image as the symbol of sovereign statehood (Boas, 2001; 704). Tubman engaged in neo-patrimonial exchange with other notable Liberian 'big men'. There was no demarcation between the ruling Party (The True Whig Party), Tubman as an individual, the government and the workers. For instance, government workers were meant to contribute annually a portion of their salary to the party (see Gifford, 1993; 14). That probably meant that only members of the TWP could work in government. Every institution of the state was subverted to enhance Tubman's power.

It must also be remembered that the time of Tubman's regime coincided with the politics of the Cold War. The security of Liberia, like those of other Third World countries, was dictated by the politics of the superpower rivalry. Client states like Liberia could therefore ensure their regime security with the assistance of their patron states. In the case of Liberia during Tubman's regime, the state offered the US a strategic hold for some military and communication facilities such as the airport and offices of Voice of America and the Central Intelligence Agency (see Dunn, 2009; 3). The point here is

that the security arrangement of Liberia at this point was a product of the patron-client relationship between Monrovia and Washington according to the politics of the epoch. With Uncle Sam strongly behind the regime in Liberia, the rational bureaucratic state security structure meant nothing and Tubman did everything outside the formal bounds of politics to keep his regime secure by securitizing any semblance of threat to it.

The Machiavellian Prince of African patronage politics would not tolerate any opposition (Boas, 2001). Tubman's opponents were victimised, accused of felonies or completely securitized as posing serious existential threats to the regime. They were destroyed by being sent to a 'correction' centre from where few were to return (Gifford, 1993; 14–15). It must be noted that such practices across the West Africa sub-region instilled fear into opponents, civil society groups and the masses. It even served as warning to would-be dissenters from the government camp. Achebe (1987, 2) succinctly captured it thus:

> Days are good or bad for us now according to how His Excellency gets out of bed in the morning. On a bad day, such as this one had become after many propitious auguries, there is nothing for it but to lie close to your hole, ready to scramble in. and particularly to keep your mouth shut, for nothing is safe, not even the flattery we have become such experts in disguising as debates.

The disposition of Tubman defined the politics and securitization procedures of the state. Even with his 'Open Door' policy, government policies were still dictated by him, his party and his close men. The 'Open Door' policy was designed, among other things, to incorporate the indigenous ethnic communities into the emerging peripheral capitalist economy, particularly through the penetration of foreign capital by removing all bottlenecks road blocks erected by the natives. It also involved an attempt to integrate the locals into the mainstream politics of Liberia – at least in principle (see George, 2008; 138). According to Clapham (1978; 12):

> Opportunities for increased participation did not extend to political activity outside the True Whig Party and the system of centrally administered patronage over which Tubman presided. Even when formally within the bounds of constitutional politics, this has been equated with treason and suppressed.

Consider the case of Didwo Twe Kru who challenged Tubman's plan for re-election in 1951. He was forced to flee before the election date. The Report of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Liberia (2008, vol. 1; 51–52) laid much of the blame at Tubman's door step for the breakdown in the relationship between the natives and the Americo-Liberians which had to do with favouritism, oligarchy politics and cronyism that disenfranchised and marginalised the natives. The Report noted:

> Tubman's three-legged policies of 'unification' 'open-door' and 'integration' were meant to redress historical inequalities or disenfranchisement of indigenous Liberians from political and economic sectors, an issue which Tubman's government officially recognized.

However, these ground-breaking measures failed because of constitutional constraints. 'For instance while universal adult suffrage was declared in 1946 in favour of the natives, the fact that only natives who paid hut taxes could vote effectively neutered that measure'(Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Liberia (2008; 52)

***Tubman: Regime survival and personal security arrangement***

It is important once again to appreciate that the neo-patrimonial regime, whether in Africa or elsewhere, thrives on the back of the long stay in power of a particular leader or the same party machinery. Consider a few instances from outside Africa such as Moscow and Pyongyang and some in Africa – Tripoli, Yaounde, Libreville, Kinshasa, Nairobi, Lome and Freetown. Particularly in Liberia, during the reign of Tubman it is important to see how the securitization of threats was influenced by the neo-patrimonial regime of the patron leader. The constitution of Liberia under William Tubman was altered to ensure that he stayed in power, ultimately until his death in 1971. Whoever challenged him was forced into exile. Considering that there is only a blurred line between what is private to the leader and what should be the public, the securitization processes and security arrangements under the Tubman regime were geared towards 'stamping out the enemies' of the state. The sense of suspicion and personal security arose because Tubman knew that a lot of people had become marginalized and excluded from central government and these people mainly from the natives would one way or another be planning to destabilize the government. Securitization and emergency measures must therefore be taken to protect the regime whatever it took. The Truth and Reconciliation Commission in Liberia corroborated it noting:

> Also, it was Tubman who introduced into Liberian politics the partisan use of democratic institutions, the political control of the military, the culture of extermination of political opposition, invidious destruction of lives and property, and more importantly the rise of authoritarianism and political brutality. All these vices festooned during this period and set into motion a political culture that would birth future wars.
> (Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Liberia (2008, vol. 1; 52–53).

In a manner reminiscent of the securitization process, some of the emergency measures of extra-political measure of Tubman's regime included the establishment of a modern secret police network which became a priority.

Let us be reminded that in the personal rule system of neo-patrimonial arrangements the survival of the regime and security of the patron is paramount over state survival. Against this backdrop Tubman had the security measures and apparatus expanded to meet his personal security needs. These included the Special Security Service, the National Bureau of Investigation, the Executive Action Bureau and the National Intelligence and Security Service. In addition to these agencies, there were networks of informants jostling for favour from the presidency who reported to the Executive Mansion (Government House in Monrovia the capital of Liberia). All these security measures were outside the formal security architecture of the Liberian state. The people used in these outfits, local chiefs and other close members of the cabinet were the audience. Precedence was set for such informality during Tubman's regime as we will see also occurred in subsequent regimes. By the end of the regime of Samuel Doe in the 1980s, the end of the Cold War and the emergence of Charles Taylor, these personal security measures, details and opposition groups had metamorphosed into armed groups with allegiance to the ruler and some to the decamped associates and opposition groups. According to Sawyer (1992; 282):

> By the time of Tubman's death in 1971, the security network was in virtual control of Liberia. At least three celebrated treason trials had been held. In addition, countless instances of arbitrary arrest, detention and torture of students, civil servants, and others had taken place under a veritable reign of terror as suspicion and fear gripped the society. Dismissal from positions in government and from employment with mining and other concessions 'for administrative reasons' was a tool of control and punishment frequently used by Tubman.

He installed several household attendants, dependents and confidants of his as chiefs, not minding if such action went against the traditional procedure of chieftaincy appointment. These were people that listened to him, did his biddings. They were his audiences for the securitization processes. On Tubman, the availability of revenues from resources made the president

> The ultimate source of individual livelihood. Whether derived as a gratuity from the briefcase carried by Tubman's valet or from earnings from private agricultural estates or peasant farms, all incomes were perceived to be derived from President Tubman. Accordingly, all praises went to Tubman.
>
> (Sawyer, 1992; 285)

A clear demarcation between the public and private domains is conspicuously absent in any neo-patrimonial regime. The institutions that should ensure continuity in terms of succession or respect for law and order are stifled by the patron leader. Against this backdrop will we be looking at

the seemingly great achievements of Tubman especially in the areas of infrastructural development and integration. Tubman failed to establish independent, non-personal institutions that operate according to rule of law. He personalised presidential prerogatives and at his death left Liberia as a state heading towards the precipice.

### *Exits Tubman and enters Tolbert: Two of a kind*

Patronage politics works like a continuum with varying degrees according to an individual patron's disposition. Siaka Stevens in Sierra Leone could choose to focus his favours on people and individuals from his political party and /or his ethnic origin. But his successor may decide to incorporate the opposition in order to expand his political base and ensure his security while in office. The common thing is that it is a system of political manipulation that favours some, deprives and marginalises others and depends on state resources to achieve these. Furthermore, it is a system that prioritises personal security over state security.

Tubman died in office in 1971, and when his Vice President William Tolbert came to power, presidential authority was already personalised with its entire extravagant patronage network. So, while trying to denounce or reject the paternalistic style of the previous government, Tolbert still needed to maintain a hold on presidential authority with all the extravagant prerogatives that came with it. In other words, Tolbert could not entirely stay clean of the excesses of the previous regime in patronage politics and in securitizing anything that worked against the survival of the regime. President Tolbert also came to power at a very critical period for the global economy. 'The oil crisis of 1973, global recession and the continuous decline in the price of iron ore were among the external factors that made 1970s a period of recession' (Sawyer, 1992; 288–289). With all the economic conditions, the people at the receiving end were the ordinary citizens – 'the loose molecules in a very unstable social fluid, a fluid that was clearly on the verge of igniting' (Kaplan, 2001; 5). This condition equally gave rise to outbursts via the formation of political and social groupings and organisations in all sectors of society.

Because patronage politics is all about the patron and his clients, what occupied the President was how to secure this power and not the people. Even though Tolbert worked to reconstitute the political order by rationalising the presidency, he could not reduce the inherited excessive and exclusive privileges of the presidency. It was therefore a case of 'the same taxi but different driver'. 'He sought to "deTubmanize" Liberia but without successfully developing viable political infrastructures as alternatives' (Sawyer, 1992; 287).

Of course, viable political infrastructures, institutions and alternatives are not on the menu of neo-patrimonial policies. For instance, even though Tolbert introduced an anti-corruption agency, his immediate family

members were engaged in the total abuse of political office. His brother Stephen was both Minister of Finance and a major businessman in Liberia, owner of the Montserrado group of companies. In 1980, another was made pro tempore president of the Senate in Liberia with vast assets. Tolbert's daughter was an Assistant Minister of Education and was in control of all textbooks in Liberia. The sale of Liberian diplomatic passports among other rackets was carried out by Tolbert's son Adolphus. The proceeds of course ended in the pockets of the Tolberts instead of the Liberian state. William Tolbert himself in 1979 lavished $100 million in constructing a conference centre for the hosting of the Organization of African Unity Heads of State of which he was the chairman (Gifford, 1993; 15–18).

### *Tolbert: personal rule, national security and securitization process*

Tolbert was a product of the old order under Tubman and the major countervailing force that confronted him was from within the ranks of that patronage network. His efforts to establish a bureaucratic rationality and a sense of decency in the polity were simply a façade and they clearly conflicted with the interests of the old guard, his personal disposition and family demands. Seeking to be in firm control of politics in Liberia, Tolbert took steps in the manner of Tubman to securitize any threat against his regime. He also went out of the normal bounds of political process to achieve his personal security interests. He therefore started by restructuring the state military outfit. About 400 ageing soldiers were retired and replaced with young ones from urban areas who were not well trained at the Tubman Military Academy. Of course what Tolbert did was to ensure loyal security arrangements; further personalising the military, a policy that had started with Tubman. This seriously altered the character of the military in Liberia with consequences beyond the period and space as already known – polarising the military and making it partisan. They were his audiences in the securitization processes; a failure of politics reminiscent of Copenhagen argument.

With the lavish life style and high-handedness of Tolbert and his close associates, the natural thing would be for the people to resist. Autocrats and patrons loathe any challenge to their political authority and can go to any length to securitize and stifle such opposition. When the government decided to increase the price of rice, the Progressive Peoples Party's (PPP) leadership organised a demonstration. It was not lost on the people that Tolbert's relatives would be the major beneficiaries since they were the highest rice producers. The demonstration and its architect were securitized, arrested and accused of plotting armed insurrection. Between 150 and 200 people died and hundreds were injured as the security forces loyal to the patron leader engaged in extra-political emergency measures reminiscent of the securitization process to intervene in the 14 April 1979 demonstration (Wiseman, 1986; 115).

Another general strike in March 1980 angered Tolbert as he was gradually losing grip of the government. He had the leaders of the strike arrested and as their trial was about to start a band of 17 soldiers led by Samuel Doe overthrew the government killing William Tolbert and 27 others, ending more than a century of political dominance by the Americo-Liberians (see Sawyer, 1992; 291–293; Gifford, 1993; 15–16; and Boas, 2001; 703–704). A very important question at this juncture might be – where was Liberia's patron, the US, when all these events were going on? All that was paramount to Washington at that point was the geo-strategic calculus of Cold War politics. The US therefore kept supporting its client regime in Monrovia, neglecting its human rights abuses. The equation changed once Tolbert started hobnobbing with the Soviet Union and its satellite states in East Europe. Exasperated and fed up with Tolbert's double dealings, the US ended the support for his client regime and supported the military take-over that ended his regime (Kieh, 2012; 177). Being a small state incapable of providing its own security, Liberia at this point depended on an external economic and military boost. The internal formal institutions did not matter or were not in existence. Security became a personal ambition for a personal end.

This chapter started and progressed with the argument that the foundation of the Liberian state was laid and consolidated upon the total dominance of the settlers in the political economy of the state. The lopsided character of the polity was manifested and heightened in the neo-patrimonial politics especially during the regimes of Tubman and Tolbert. It is therefore important to emphasise these historical contexts before discussing the wider West African security issues. Boas (2005) has argued that all the regional and extra-African connections in the security issues in West Africa are rooted in these historical contexts. Subsequent leaders in Liberia before the war that started in 1989 and after the war (the regime of Charles Taylor) tended to follow the Tubman and Tolbert tradition (Boas, 2005; 78). In fact the military insurrection led by Samuel Doe could be argued to be both the revenge of native Liberians against the Americo-Liberians and a general protest against deprivation, exclusivity and marginalisation suffered by the common men in the patronage politics of Liberia.

### *The regime of Samuel Doe: personal security and securitization process*

Apart from being a 'revolt' of the natives against the 'usurpers' of their natural right to power (Americo-Liberians), the 1980 putsch by Doe and his men could also be argued to be against endemic poverty and unimaginable repression suffered by the people (both natives and settlers alike) at the hands of their leaders. According to Reno (1998; 82) 'Doe's coup appeared to unseat an aristocracy dominated by Americo-Liberians, the descendants of about 300 families of American blacks who settled in Liberia in the nineteenth century'. As has been stated, the military men were a bunch of

ill-trained and poorly equipped young officers with a poor urban background initially used by Tolbert to secure his throne – presidential power at the Executive Mansion in Monrovia. It is however interesting to note that these same people were no better than their predecessors. They had witnessed the massive looting of the public treasury by the Americo-Liberians under Tubman and Tolbert. Being offered the opportunity, they sought to enjoy the same trappings of political power, disregarding national security.

In a speech at the London School of Economics in 2000, Nelson Mandela sought to excuse African leaders of the 'big man' disposition while in office because they had grown up in poverty. In his words:

> poor children eating porridge in the morning, porridge at lunch, porridge as their dinner, unable to concentrate; large families with little room to move about; a child who shares a room with about three or four others; no table, no chairs; doing their homework on the floor.
>
> (quoted in Dowden, 2009; 77–79)

Issues such as poverty, economic downturn, sub-regional migration and underdevelopment were not considered serious enough to be securitized by the leaders. The most important issue of security is always their regime survival.

It could have been conversely argued that African leaders who grew up under poverty or came to power after fighting off either erstwhile colonial lords or preceding dictators should have been encouraged by these experiences to identify with the poor. However this is not the case for Africa's 'Big men' leaders. Their states have become synonymous with their person and they have run the affairs of their states as their personal fiefdom with a culture of impunity, driving fear into the people or their opponents. It was under this situation that Master Sergeant Doe and his colleagues struck in Liberia killing President Tolbert and his men in the early hours of 12 April 1980 (Gifford, 1993; 16). Initially, there was wild celebration in the streets by people who supported the coup as an end of about 158 years of Americo-Liberian domination in the affairs of the state. The Krahn people whom Doe belonged to saw it as an opportunity for their ethnic group to be in power and enjoy what others had been enjoying. It does not mean here that identifying with one's ethnic group when in power is all part of the patron-client relationship. Even in a leader's ethnic group, there are people who are favoured by a leader to enjoy from his patronage largesse. Doe, like all patrons, started with instilling fear in people by brutally executing 13 former members of the previous government. That action set the tone for what would come in the future for Liberians. Doe simply adhered to the Machiavellian exhortation to the Prince that:

> the lack of strong roots and ramification in government would lead to its destruction at the first sign of trouble, unless those who have

> suddenly become prince are of such prowess that overnight they can learn how to preserve what fortune has suddenly tossed in their laps.
>
> (Machiavelli, 1975; 54)

Fear and brutality are part of the emergency measures of a patron leader in his bid to securitize anything that stands in his regime's way. This, it is assumed, will put the opposition in check and drive the people into hiding. A king of Kano in northern Nigeria was advised 500 years ago in the same manner:

> Vigorous is the cock as he struts round his domains. The eagle can only win his realm by firm resolve and cock's voice is strong as he masters the hens. Kingdoms are held by the sword, not by delays. Can fear be thrust back except by causing fear? Ride then, the horses of resolution upon the saddles of prudence.
>
> (Maghili, 1932 quoted in Kirk-Greene, 1991; 186)

The 'Redeemer', as Master Sergeant Doe would want to be addressed (Kirk-Greene, 1991, 178), and his men in the military government of the People's Redemption Council (PRC) were driven by fear and suspicion of possible attempts to recapture the Executive Mansion from them. They were also driven by opportunism to have access to the state's already empty coffers. To counter the fear and suspicion, Doe the patron and his men securitized almost every similitude of opposition or rivalry. They used extraordinary measures of brutality and tyranny, with the liberal use of fear, force and machine guns (Sawyer, 1993; 293–294).

It could be argued that Doe and his men did not have any plan for Liberians except to line their own pockets with what remained in the state. If the Junta set off as revenge against the Americo-Liberians, the events that followed showed that even native Liberians were not to be spared from the brutal repression of the 'Redeemer'. Patron Samuel Doe's regime employed some emergency measures to protect his regime. Doe carried out purges within the military: the Vice Chairman of the Council was executed in 1981, and the commanding general was dismissed and subsequently executed in 1983. Those and many more left Doe as the sole authority in the military government. Prominent individuals such as Amos Sawyer, a university academic and the current President, and Sirleaf Johnson, had their bitter taste of the regime's repressive approach when they raised their voices against Doe. When the University of Liberia called for the release of Amos Sawyer and students staged a protest march, Doe ordered his Minister of Defense and Army Chief of Staff to disperse the students without delay. The riots troops descended on the campus community and Gifford (1993;19) recorded that for five days the university was cordoned off and there was indiscriminate shooting of fleeing students, beatings, rape and looting. At the end, the Ministry of Health admitted treating about 74 students but denied any killings had occurred. What report would one expect from an agent of

such a repressive regime where everyone was scared not to incur the wrath of the 'almighty' patron? The university administrators were all dismissed at the end. According to Sawyer (1993; 294):

> No sector of the Liberian society escaped military repression. Upon seizing power, the military banned all political activities, decreed strikes to be illegal, banned student campus political organization, closed newspapers, imprisoned editors, and looted business houses. People of the interior did not escape military terror as individual members of the military junta imposed their personal control over villages and districts, sometimes instigating communal conflicts among ethnic groups or lineage segments. The only consistency about military rule in Liberia was the repression rained upon the people and the looting of society.

The major issues in neo-patrimonial politics in relation to the securitization of threats is that everybody, even the highest patron is living in fear and suspicion and the system is over-heated with a feeling of insecurity. Every threat against the regime – real or imagined – is securitized. The opposition that refused to be co-opted into the patronage network is securitized and will have to go underground, escape into forced exile or remain in the public at risk of his or her life. And no matter how bad such a regime is, there must be sycophants, favour seekers, clients and beneficiaries. In Samuel Doe's Liberia, they were those former politicians, professionals seeking favour by all means. They also included junior officials in the previous administrations of Tubman and Tolbert. Of course, one must not forget the inordinately ambitious young military officers. In the fashion similar to the Copenhagen School's concept of securitization, the audience in a neo-patrimonial statehood is drawn from this group of individuals. They were carrying out the bidding of the patron leader and did not need much persuasion from the 'big man' at the top to carry through his own emergency measures in the securitization process. Doe doled out largesse in the form of higher salaries for public servants, in order to keep servicing the patronage network system, Doe went borrowing and continued until the external debt as at 1985 stood at $1.4billion (see Dunn and Tarr, 1988).

### *Samuel Doe's patronage politics and personal securitization measures*

During Doe's regime what remained of national cohesion in Liberia from the preceding regimes was left in tatters as Doe turned the security apparatuses of the state into his personal securitization measures. What was expected to be formal state security became the exclusive preserve of the select few – his Krahn-dominated government and close allies. In a manner reminiscent of neo-patrimonial patronage system and the Copenhagen School securitization concept, Doe left sections of Liberia in the throes of exclusivity, deprivation and marginalisation. This equally entrenched

mistrust and suspicion among the people and subsequently gave rise to insecurity. Chaos was the norm and wars were fought along ethnic lines. For instance, the researcher coincidentally was in Liberia some days before the 2011 elections. He encountered some supporters of Prince Johnson, one of the presidential candidates and a major player during the civil war years. The researcher asked one of the supporters why he supported Johnson and his answer was; 'he is our own' (field work interaction with one of the locals. both of them being form the same Nimba county of Liberia).

Suspicion, fear and insecurity are the major elements in the life of patrons. They do not trust even their closest allies who would be securitized on any slight suspicion. Thomas Quiwonkpa was a Gio from Nimba county and former commander of the Armed Forces of Liberia (AFL). Suspicious of his popularity, Doe securitized and transferred him to become the secretary of the PRC and subsequently had him arrested in 1983. Protests from Nimba chiefs and some of other Liberians got Doe to allow Quiwonkpa into exile. The next time Quiwonkpa was to be mentioned was in the November 1985 coup which he and a group of others organised from across the Sierra Leone border. The coup did not succeed and Quiwonkpa did not survive either as he was beaten to death by the guards at the Executive Mansion in Monrovia which was dominated by the Krahn people (Adekeye, 2002; 29–30). At this point, Doe had sowed a bitter discord between the Gios and Manos on one side and Krahns and Mandigos on the other (these are some of the ethnic groups in Liberia). Doe's men went on a rampage in Nimba killing men and burning houses (Ellis, 1995; 167). Just like Tubman and Tolbert, Doe turned the formal security architecture of Liberia into informal and personalized agencies and surrounded himself with special groups that were protecting him and his regime. According to Sawyer (1993;298), 'beneath the trappings of a constitution that contained guarantees of civil liberties, a legislature, and a judiciary, the military, under the control of a Krahn ethnic core, remained the ultimate instrument of Doe's authority'. These military officers were trained by Israel with the permission of Liberia's chief external patron, the United States.

> The emphasis of the Israeli-sponsored section of the training program was on the development of a praetorian squad to protect Doe, and to wage terror on his regime's opponents. The 'brainchild' of this program was the notorious 'Special Anti-Terrorist Unit' (SATU)'.
>
> (Kieh, 2012; 175)

In this section we have presented a detailed demonstration of how the neo-patrimonial statehood in Liberia relates to threat perceptions and the securitization of issues at the national level. This was achieved by looking at the evidence from the three major regimes of the Cold War period, especially before the country was shoved over the precipice by armed groups. Some salient points were evident from the analysis:

- In the patronage politics of neo-patrimonial statehood, threats are defined by what the patron leader at the national level considers a threat to his regime, rather than what threatens the state or the population.
- The national security and the process of securitization manifest the failure of neo-patrimonial leaders and failure of politics.
- Through the three regimes of William Tubman, William Tolbert and Samuel Doe, extraordinary measures were employed to keep regimes in power.
- The audience which is needed to complete the process of securitization is neither the people nor a legitimate group within a rational bureaucratic regime. Rather, it is the patron leader's cronies and clients in a favour-for-support manner.

In accordance with the three level proposition of the analysis outlined in the analytical framework, the following section looks at the sub-regional dynamics of this phenomenon. This is done by looking at the complex and intricate diplomacy between and among the leaders in West Africa that defined the interventions in Liberia during the wars of 1990s.

## Neo-patrimonial statehood and securitization process in Liberia: an analysis of sub-regional connectedness

Through his highhandedness, brutality and repression Samuel Doe had broken ranks with many of his men. One of these men was Charles McArthur Chankay Taylor. In the December of 1989, Charles Taylor and his men trained in Libya as Gaddafi clients travelled through the common border with Cote d'Ivoire, invading Liberia and setting the country on the road to cataclysm which resulted in the emergence of several warlords with their armed factions (see Ellis, 1998; 155–171). While the Liberians hoped that the US would intervene, that was not to be as the US only got involved to evacuate its own citizens in 1990. It then encouraged the intervention by the Economic Community of West Africa States (ECOWAS). Through an intricate 'big man-small man' relationship, the war in Liberia manifested the interests and concerns of the actors. This section considers from the available evidence how the intricate neo-patrimonial relationship of the leaders at the sub-regional level influenced the securitization process of the threats in Liberia; the sub-regional considerations; the emergency measures and the audience persuaded to complete the process of securitization. Let it be noted that due to the high profile status of some of the actors involved in this narrative and security around them, interviews were limited but were augmented with the evidence and information gathered from published texts.

Mortimer (1996; 295), Adebajo (2002; 31–32), and Obi (2009;123) have suggested that it was far from an act of serendipity that Charles Taylor and his men invaded Liberia from Cote d'Ivoire in December 1989. During the years before the war started, Charles Taylor had developed a 'father-son'

relationship with the President of Cote d'Ivoire, Felix Houphouet Boigny. Secondly, Sergeant Samuel Doe came to power in 1980 by assassinating William Tolbert in Liberia (see above). Doe incurred the resentment of Houphouet Boigny of Cote d'Ivoire by that act. Why? Tolbert's son Alphonsus was son-in-law to Boigny. He was married to Boigny's adopted daughter, Daise Delafosse. It was not clear if Taylor cashed in on that or on the personal relationship with the old man of Cote d'Ivoire. But what was important is that a special client-patron relationship evolved between them and extended further to Burkina Faso and Libya. The same daughter of Houphouet Boigny later remarried to Blaise Compaore the patron leader in Burkina Faso (see also, Brown, 1999; Khobe, 2000). It was therefore only natural that when Charles Taylor and his National Patriotic Front of Liberia appeared in Cote d'Ivoire, Boigny would stop at nothing in offering his support to the men who would eventually get rid of his enemy in the Executive Mansion in Monrovia – Samuel Doe. Both Boigny and his in-law Compaore gave Taylor and his men the necessary support and contact with Muammar Gaddafi in Libya where they were trained and prepared for the eventual assault on Liberia. Gaddafi also had issues with Doe for closing down the Libyan embassy in Monrovia and supporting the US (Obi, 2009; 123).

It must be noted that when Thomas Quiwonkpa's coup against Doe failed, Doe carried out a systematic and brutal retaliation against the Gio and Manos from the Nimba County where Quiwonkpa came from. These people took refuge in neighbouring Cote d'Ivoire. Subsequently, Taylor recruited these men into his NPFL. Consider also that Taylor was related to Quiwonkpa by marriage and that Prince Yomie Johnson, one of the eventual warlords, was an aide to Quiwonkpa (see Mortimer, 1996; and Howe, 1996). The special relationship played out as we will see shortly in the military intervention in Liberia and Sierra Leone. For example, Burkina Faso soldiers fought alongside the NPFL in the war in Liberia. The leaders and actors involved would therefore securitize Liberian security issues differently. The emergency measures suggested were also a matter of the underlying neo-patrimonial relationships among them.

The same patron-client power relations existed between the Nigerian Head of State Ibrahim Babangida and Samuel Doe in Liberia. The Nigerian leader initiated the intervention when wide-spread violence broke out in Liberia in order to prop up Doe. Adeleke (1995; 578) argued that:

> There is no doubt that relations between their administrations were very strong. Nigeria paid US$20 million to establish the Ibrahim Babangida School of Political Science and Strategic Studies in Monrovia and during the NPFL rapid advance on Monrovia, the only country visited by Doe was Nigeria, with a request for arms.

It is indisputable that there could be other political and strategic motives on the part of Nigeria, but the special conviviality between the two leaders

played a prominent role in the threat perceptions of the leaders and their securitization process in that first collective intervention in West Africa.

### *ECOWAS, neo-patrimonial relationship and securitization of threats in Liberia*

It was therefore not a surprise when in 1990 ECOWAS, under the Nigerian leadership, created the ECOWAS monitoring group (ECOMOG) to intervene in Liberia in the early days of the wars in that country. There were arguments and criticisms against such a military move. Blaise Compaore argued for instance that 'ECOMOG did not conform to the constitutional legal requirement of ECOWAS' (Adebajo, 2002; 64–65; see also Wippman, 1993; 157–203). From earlier information about his relationships, it is not difficult to understand his motivation. Given that there was no authorisation anywhere in the protocols for such action in Liberia, why did the member states move in? There were yes and no votes from the member states. The point is that the military action (securitization) was more political than based in law - and the politics is based on the interrelationships among the leaders in West Africa with biased interests. For instance, Compaore (see above) had equally become a 'special one' in the sub-region. Adebajo (2002; 64) again revealed that Compaore had a client-patron ties with Eyadema, President of Togo who had supported him when he gained power in Burkina Faso. Compaore reciprocated by mediating in Togo's internal crisis and sending troops to monitor Togolese elections in 1993. Mali and Niger had benefited from Compaore's 'good gesture' when he helped in resolving Tuareg challenges in the two countries. Remember the special relationship that Compaore and Boigny of Cote d'Ivoire shared – a relationship based on matrimonial ties. The support was extended to Charles Taylor and his National Patriotic Front of Liberia (NPFL) (see Obi, 2009; Kromah, 2008; Khobe, 2000; Adeleke, 1995; Adibe, 1997).

The regional security thinking and securitization processes drifted from the interests of the population of the community to those of individual leaders. According to Adibe (1997; 482):

> In this regard, in West Africa and much of Africa, diplomacy has really been about the politics of personality. In the case of Liberia, a complex web of personal ties and 'friendship' involving the principal actors in the conflict - Samuel Doe, Charles Taylor, Ibrahim Babangida, Blaise Compaore and Jerry Rawlings, among others -posed enormous challenges to the presumption of impartiality by ECOWAS.

The clauses in the ECOWAS Treaty or the protocols can either be circumvented or abused to achieve those personal interests of the leaders. When Samuel Doe asked for assistance from President Babangida of Nigeria at the point when his regime was caving in, he did so believing first in the

strength of their relationship. The intervention of ECOWAS could be argued to largely be a fall-out of this intersection of interpersonal conviviality and interests of individual states according to the security perceptions of the 'big men' at the top. This intricate and complex diplomacy neutralizes the common good agenda in the securitization of West African security issues. Accordingly, Brown (1999; 11) suggested that:

> Looking at the players involved and the final score card, it appears that ECOWAS states overcame their differences in support of a common cause. In reality, preservation of the unique self-interests of the West African states propelled them to work together to resolve the Liberian crisis.

Consider these instances: Mali became involved in ECOWAS's effort in Liberia by sending troops. This was seen as a diversionary strategy by the President Alpha Omar Konare. Having succeeded the former leader Moussa Traore, Konare decided to send troops comprising those that were loyal to the Traore administration. In other words, it was a way of keeping them busy abroad instead of staying at home to cause trouble for the Konare regime (see Keita, 1998; 22–23). Secondly, it was another attempt by a French-speaking state at balancing Nigeria's (English speaking) hegemony in the sub-region. So Konare essentially was using his domestic security perception to approach the securitization of regional security crisis. Like Mali, Ibrahim Bare of Niger in 1996 came to power through a bloodless coup. Sending troops to Liberia was a ploy to keep the troops busy. There was relative equanimity in the north of the country following the settling of the Tuareg insurgency. There was nothing to keep the military busy. Considering that not all members of the Armed Forces supported Bare, it would be a security miscalculation to keep them at home (Brown, 1999; 15–16). There was a need to enhance the international image of the regime, having been criticized for violent overthrow of former regime.

It is ironic how regimes that came to power through illegal and unpopular means try to send military help to places where the same thing was happening. According to Ofuatey-Kodjoe (1994; 295) 'the notion that a group of states headed by military dictatorships have the right to intervene in another state in order to establish a democratic regime is grotesque'. Apart from sending help to rescue a friend in Liberia, Nigeria's Babangida was concerned about the effect of the crisis in the sub-region in terms of encouraging soldiers to do the same in other countries. Sierra Leone and Guinea had a substantial number of men involved in the war in Liberia and many Liberians living as refuges in these two countries and beyond, including Ghana and Cote d'Ivoire. So it is argued that the countries and their leaders could only be concerned about how that would affect their regime security and not necessarily because of the securitization of sub-regional security issues.

In summary, this section has focused on assessing the extent and in which ways neo-patrimonial political culture has influenced the processes of threat securitization at sub-regional level in West Africa evidencing from events that played out in Liberia during the crises of the 1990s. From the available data, it is safe to make some conclusions:

- Before the ECOWAS intervention in Liberia, there was no institutionalised security framework for the sub-region of West Africa.
- Even when improvised provisions emerged, they were not accorded sufficient legal backing to authorise intervention.
- The eventual intervention uncovered the neo-patrimonial idiosyncrasies of the leaders of West African countries.
- Their attempt at the securitization process was merely a manifestation of personalised concerns that factored in the interest of the leaders rather than the security concerns of the larger population of the sub-region.

Accordingly, considering the four cardinal points of the Copenhagen School's securitization concept, it is not difficult to see that what were considered threats by the leaders were the issues that threatened their personal interests and regimes. The leaders were also the securitizing actors who manipulated and projected their interests in articulating the extra-political measures needed to tackle the security threats. The audience once again was not the people but the leaders, their allies and their friends who were needed to be persuaded for the intervention to take place. This could be evidenced from the arguments for and against the military involvement in Liberia. The following section comes up with the transnational level of the securitization process in patron-client power relations that characterize neo-patrimonial statehood. Here we look at extra-African involvement in Liberia and how it is indicative of the wider common practice in the West African sub-region.

## Transnational patron-client relations and securitization of threats in Liberia

One of the international hypocrisies in the Cold War politics was witnessed in Liberia during the second half of Samuel Doe's regime. Morphing from a military leader to 'democratically' elected head of state in an obviously stage-managed process received no modicum of condemnation from their patron – the US. Chester Crooker, the Assistant Secretary of State for Africa justified the US aloofness by claiming that though the election could have been flawed, it was a movement towards democracy and that elections in Africa were always rigged (PBS, 2002). The demands of the realist Cold War politics in the 1980s – to contain Communism and maintain spheres of influence even with despotic regimes around the world including small countries in West Africa – made the US tolerant of Doe. Doe understood and latched on to the dynamics of the geopolitics of the era. He unleashed

mayhem on his countrymen and women; settlers and indigenous Liberians alike. The waning days of the Cold War coincided with the climax of Samuel Doe's regime in Liberia. With the Cold War receding and eventually coming to an end in 1989, the great powers' interests dimmed and Doe, Liberians and other people in West Africa came to the stark realisation that they no longer counted in the geopolitical equation throughout the 1990s. This section concludes the three levels of neo-patrimonial relationships outlined in the analytical framework chapter which is argued impact significantly on the securitization process of threats in Liberia and by extension the sub-region of West Africa. It specifically looks at the relationship with the US which is considered Liberia's extra-African principal patron.

### *Liberia in complex USA patron-client relationship and the securitization process*

The geopolitical calculation of the Cold War continued in relations between the US and Liberia. Liberia needed the support of the US for regime survival, national security and economic interests (Dunn, 2009; 1–3, corroborated in interview with Aide to the Liberia's Army Chief in Monrovia, 2011). From Tubman to Samuel Doe, Washington made its presence felt in Liberia, which responded in the typical transnational patron-client relationship. From 1960 to 1980, about $280 million in aid from the US was received by Liberia, the highest to any African country at that time. Liberia offered its land free of rent to the US for its facilities. Under Tubman, Liberia voted alongside America at the United Nations on most Cold War issues (Dunn, 2009; 2; Kieh, 2012; and New World Encyclopedia, 2008). The securitization process was a product of the calculation of what the relationship would offer rather than in line with any established rule of the process that factors in real security issues that the client country faced.

The vacillation in Liberian policies became evident when in the 1970s William Tolbert hobnobbed with the Soviet Union, China and Cuba by welcoming their ambassadors to Monrovia and suspending diplomatic relations with Israel during the Yom Kippur War in 1973. The relationship with the United States further soured as Tolbert negotiated a better deal with Firestone. What ordinary Liberians did not understand was that the US was in Liberia for their own national interests. During the research trip, it was obvious how Liberians felt about this relationship. The native Liberians are quick to point out that they were not colonised by the US; however some – especially the Americo-Liberians – are proud to identify themselves as an American outpost in Africa. Remember that the national flag of Liberia was based on that of the US showing the apparent closeness. In a discussion with the researcher during the research trip, the aide of the Army Chief of Staff (interview with Aide to the Liberia's Army Chief in Monrovia, 2011) had this to say:

> The USA presence in Liberia is for personal reasons. Even though other countries like China show interest in Liberia, America resents such rivalry. The American rubber plantation in Liberia is the highest in the world. But the processing plant is in the US. Because of the historical 'umbilical cord' relationship with Liberia, America is a force to contend with in Liberia.

It is therefore interestingly revealing how the realpolitik of Cold War epoch in Liberia played out. Because the relationship with the US was seriously threatened during the Tolbert regime, America offered its support to Samuel Doe in the 1980 coup which saw Tolbert and some of his cabinet members assassinated. The patron state securitized the regime that it felt threatened its national and geopolitical interests. The American support for Doe was despite the violent way through which he came to power. America's backing gave Doe much power and confidence knowing that there was a patron out there supporting him. Doe was to become an all-important ally of the US during the period receiving $500million through assistance and some found their way to Doe's personal pocket. Through times of repression, human rights abuse, brutality the US staunchly supported Doe up to the shambolic 1985 elections with Doe transmuting from military ruler to civilian president like Eyadema did in Togo, Mobutu in Zaire and Abacha wanted to do in Nigeria before his death on 8 June 1998. In all these the patron nation, the US, did not identify any security issue in the regime's administration to be securitized let alone articulating any form of emergency measures to tackle the problems emerging from the regimes in Monrovia. When the crises of the 1990s erupted, the US evacuated its citizens from Liberia and the country's security was left at the mercy of armed groups and their leaders. The country and the sub-region were left to find solutions to their emerging security issues.

To recap, the trajectory of the Liberian state from the Cold War period to the crises that rocked its statehood in the 1990s and beyond is filled with numerous security threats. Its relationship with its patron – the United States of America – in relation to the securitization process of threats is discussed this section and summarised thus:

- The Liberian state lacked any constitutional security architecture due to its weak state structure arising from the neo-patrimonial political order pervasive in the sub-region.
- Its age-old father-son relationship with the US offered the patron state the opportunity to call the shots in the politics of the client state.
- The argument in this section is that these threats were not accorded any attention according to the process of securitization; a failure of politics.
- Rather, what defined the securitization of the threats were the interests and power calculus arising from the patron-client relationship between Liberia and the US.

*Table 4.1* Securitization processes in Liberia

| *Securitization process in Liberia* | *National level* | *Sub-regional level* | *Extra-African level* |
|---|---|---|---|
| Securitizing actor | Civilian, military or rebel group leaders | Leaders of the ECOWAS body | International patrons (the USA) |
| Audience | Clients, cronies, rebels and supporters of the leaders | The leaders in solidarity with one another | Their public, media or other interested international partners |
| Threats | Any threat or opposition to the regimes or the rebel groups' interest | Threats to security, peace, interpersonal relationships, and regimes of the community | National security and economic interests of the patron nations. |

The threats were defined by the patron state according to its interests. That equally defined the emergency measures to be taken in tackling the threats. The audience whose consent is needed was not the Liberian people but often the American public or the congress whose approval was needed to take any action (see table below). The table indicates what the threats were perceived to be, who the securitizing actors were and the audience(s). This was indicated at all the three levels discussed above.

## Conclusion and overall evaluation

Liberia has provided us a valid case study for assessing the relatedness between neo-patrimonial statehood and the processes of threat securitization in West Africa. This assessment was done against the backdrop of the core issues from the ideas of neo-patrimonialism and securitization. In neo-patrimonial statehood, there is a blurred line between the person of the patron leader and the state. There are no institutionalised procedures for governance. Running the affairs of the state revolves around the patron leader and his cronies who do his bidding in a favour-for-support arrangement. The institutions of the state are often tools in the hands of leader for his personal interests. These institutions include but are not limited to the security architecture of the state and different arms of government.

In the strict sense of the Copenhagen School's idea of securitization process we see some essential themes running through this case. In the first instance, one issue that has been identified is that someone has tagged it a serious threat to the referent object needing security. This object may include but is not limited to the state, society, individuals or segments of the society. Considering the urgency or importance of the security situation, an

extra-political process may be required to deal with it. This calls for measures outside the normal bounds of politics. Someone politically influential is needed to place some significance on such issues by way of securitization. To achieve this, an audience is required to be convinced to complete the whole process of securitization. The relationship between these two ideas may not be absolute but there is a significant level of intersection between the two in the context of security analysis. At the national level of neo-patrimonial state the referent object is the state as epitomised by the patron leader. This is because of the lack of a dividing line between who the patron is and the state as an entity. There is no difference between private and public interests. The threat is anything that stands in the way of the patron leader and his regime and he is the securitizing actor. He also articulates the emergency measures needed to confront the security issue. The audience need not be the larger population but the specific segment of the society which is very loyal to the patron leader. At the sub-regional level, the patron-client relationship existing among the leaders bears on the securitization process of the sub-regional threats. The solidarity and interpersonal relationships among the leaders underpin the construction of threats and definitions of which issues needs emergency measures. The referent objects of security are regime survival and the person of the patron leader. Finally, the audiences are those in the circle of friends of the leaders across countries in the sub-region. There is the possibility of multiple audiences as suggested by Leonard and Kaunert (2011).

At the transnational level of the nexus, the threats in the securitization process are defined by what the patrons in the patron-client relationship consider their interests to be. They are the securitizing actors and they are the ones that have the capability to articulate the emergency measures required to manage the security situations. The audience(s) is/are those who have one thing or the other to benefit from the securitizing actor and who are also loyal to them. In the context of more democratic institutions the audience may include the general public who must be persuaded before extra emergency measures can be carried out. But in weak states as we have in West Africa, the larger populations and their opinions do not count.

From what we have seen so far from the available evidence from Liberia's political history issues were securitized not because they were threats against the entire population or the state per se. Instead, they were securitized because they were threats against the survival of the regime or the patron leader at the Executive Mansion in Liberia. We could see that individual leaders defined their own security direction. They devised their own emergency measures which of course did not need approval by any person or group. These measures were seen in the form of personal security measures and outfits which were not within the framework of any constitution. From William Tubman and William Tolbert to Samuel Doe, they all had their personal security arrangements for tackling threats which were defined as opposition to their regimes. The lack of institutionalised, strong and

effective state structures – which is the hallmark of neo-patrimonial statehood – encourages this practice. Moreover, the experience from the crises that erupted in Liberia in the wake of the end of the Cold War exposed the same practices at the sub-regional and transnational levels. The leaders in the manner of neo-patrimonial political structure privileged their interests, interpersonal relationships and solidarity among themselves above the population in securitizing threat in the sub-region. Leaders of different countries had personal interests according to their regime demands for engaging with the intervention in Liberia. The sub-regional security outfit, ECOMOG, as an embodiment of emergency measures seriously suffered from these differing interests. The leaders and their allies were both the securitizing actor and audience. The ECOWAS leader at that point was Nigeria and needed only to convince fellow leaders to deploy any emergency measures to arrest the situation in Liberia. The major transnational patron of Liberia was the US. It was very obvious that what was of greatest interest to the US was its economic and national security interests and not what was happening in the small West African state of Liberia. Regimes in Monrovia as in other West African countries were courted according to the interests of these extra-African patrons. It is not restricted to the US but also includes other patrons such as Britain and France who have some historical ties with the states in the sub-region by virtue of their colonial past. The securitization of threats is therefore defined by the interests of these patrons. Threats and the nature and extent of emergency measures are articulated from the prism of these interests. This is partly because of the nature of the client state, which is neo-patrimonial in character and too weak to articulate their security direction. In the case of US-Liberian relations, it was evident from the way the US removed one regime and favoured the other at will (Dunn, 2009; interview with locals in Monrovia, 2011; see also Pailey, 2012). The audience was not the Liberian people or wider West Africans but the American people or Congress and some West African political elites whose opinions mattered more and must be factored in before measures will be approved.

It is not argued that the influence of neo-patrimonial statehood on the securitization process – especially in Liberia and wider West Africa – is absolute. It is accepted that there could be some other elements that are brought to bear on the process of the securitization of threats but it is obvious from the evidence so far that the relatedness is adequately significant to make the conclusion. Thus far we have considered the Liberian state which can be described as heterogeneous. It is important to consider another state with a more homogenous configuration but shares the same historical similarities with Liberia. The intention is to further assess and evaluate the plausibility of the conclusion. The next chapter therefore focuses on Sierra Leone, a neighbouring country to Liberia, which also endured years of crises immediately after the Cold War.

# 5 Sierra Leone

## Neo-patrimonial political culture and securitization processes

In this chapter the assessment is taken further by focusing on the more homogenous state of Sierra Leone. It is done at three levels as articulated in chapter 2 (analytical framework); national government, sub-regional and transnational levels. It is once more demonstrated that even in a more homogenous neo-patrimonial state, there is equally no established framework of security. Securitization of threats as suggested by the Copenhagen School of security analysis can be either ad hoc or institutionalised (Buzan et al, 1998; 27) and more often it is ad hoc in neo-patrimonial states such as Sierra Leone. What accounts for this is a lack of an institutionalised security architecture which, to a considerable extent, is a product of the blurred line between the personal security interests of a leader and the general security interests of the state. The processes of the securitization of threats are therefore defined by what the patron leaders perceive and construct as threats to their regime's security and business interests. The issues of security are narrowly and personally constructed; the circle of securitizing actors is also narrow – restricted to the patron leader. And his cronies and faithful friends are the audiences in the securitization process. Even the narrow issues of security are securitized differently because there is no uniformity in threat perception. The emergency measures of securitization processes are decided by the patron leaders and his cronies. These measures are often the personal security regimes contracted by the patron leader such as private security companies and local militias. Finally, the audience(s) who need to be persuaded may not be the larger population but a small segment of the society which does the biddings of the patron leader in a favour-for-support manner.

The chapter progresses in the following way. First, there is an overview of the political history of the neo-patrimonial state of Sierra Leone. This briefly looks at the establishment of the state, the build-up to its implosion and the connectedness to the crises that rocked Liberia. The second, third and fourth sections will discuss the manifestations of neo-patrimonialism and the implications for the securitization of threats at the national government, sub-regional and transnational levels. This is developed with particular focus on some of the key regimes especially during the Cold War and

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the events that unfolded immediately after the Cold War. Finally, an overall assessment will be made based on the evidence of the nexus between neo-patrimonial political culture and securitization processes in West Africa and Sierra Leone especially. Like in Liberia, evidence for this assessment is derived from information gathered during the research trip carried out in September 2011 in Sierra Leone, including texts and personal on-site experience through interactions and travels within Sierra Leone and across borders of some of the states in West Africa.

It is important to once again accentuate the significance of Sierra Leone and its analytical appropriateness for this study. What is very central in this study with regard to Liberia and Sierra Leone is the relationship in each of them between political activities directed towards controlling the coercive instruments of state security and the socio-economic characteristics of the polity upon which the state itself is built. It is this relationship that, to a considerable extent, defines the securitization pattern of not only Liberia and Sierra Leone but other underdeveloped countries in West Africa (Clapham, 1978). This relationship moreover is a product of the common history which the two countries share; both emerged from similar 'legacy of Creoledom, and the late nineteenth century expansion from the coastal settlements into a hinterland itself divided between numerous ethnic groups' (Clapham, 1978; 1). The sharp break however between the two states according to Clapham (1978; 2) 'comes in the political legacy of colonialism in Sierra Leone and of long independence in Liberia'. While Liberia split along the major line of Americo-Liberians and native Liberians and further into several ethnic groups, Sierra Leone was not so defined. The dividing line caused serious problems in Liberia including the crises that threatened its statehood in the 1990s. Sierra Leone's issues were neither ethnically nor religiously motivated, hence the supposed homogeneity applied to test the analytical framework (corroborated in interviews, with Police Intelligence Officer at Loguato, Liberia 2011 and staff of special court in Sierra Leone, Freetown, 2011).

Furthermore, the contiguity of borders between these two states and the simultaneous nature of their security crises which took place in them meant that they reinforced each other and helped in defining the securitization of these issues. This was deducible through the complex diplomacies among neo-patrimonial leaders and political actors both in the Mano River Basin and wider West African sub-region while trying to find solution to the security issues of the 1990s. For instances, consider the involvement of Nigeria military government in spearheading the intervention in Sierra Leone and the role played by Charles Taylor in a patron-client relationship manner in the whole crises. McGregor (1999; 482–485) put it this way:

> The motives for Nigerian interventions were twofold: there was a natural desire for regional security; but General Sani Abacha also wanted international legitimacy for his discredited military regime… As Sankoh began organizing his movement, Charles Taylor the Liberian guerrilla

> leader began to arm the Revolutionary United Front (RUF) in retaliation for two battalions of the Sierra Leonean Army which Sierra Leone provided to help the Nigerian-led ECOMOG forces in Liberia. The fighting strength of the early RUF depended heavily on Liberian and Burkinabe mercenaries, fighting mostly for plunder with little sense of responsibility to the Sierra Leoneans for whom they were putatively fighting.

Like in Liberia, the crises in Sierra Leone continued the process of the indigenisation of the security of the sub-region of West Africa. And like Liberia's issues, the Sierra Leone conflict and the eventual intervention was again a time to test the military capability of the states in the sub-region, the political mindset of the leaders and their threat perception and securitization. Issues of security were narrow according to the narrow interests of the actors who also securitized threats differently. The audiences rather than the wider population were the close and faithful friends of the leader. The Sierra Leone crises exposed the ragtag militaries for what they are: at worst, unprofessional and at best, mere instruments to achieve narrow patronage, political and ethnic ends. The reasons for this unprofessionalism include but are not limited to 'the desire of coup-fearing rulers to emasculate their forces, and the politicization of the military by using it for domestic partisan purposes' (Howe and Urel, 1998; 43). The appropriateness of these in assessing the relatedness between the political culture of neo-patrimonialism and securitization processes cannot therefore be over-emphasised. The solidarity or otherwise among the leaders and their clients revealed their different perceptions of security, interests and eventual securitization approach to threats in Sierra Leone and wider West Africa.

In the light of this narrow security agenda, the securitization concept is tested along its core themes of security threat(s), securitizing actor(s), the audience to be persuaded to complete the process of securitization according to the suggestions of the Copenhagen School. Suffice it here to note for example that the rule of exceptionality included going beyond normal bounds of political processes by Tejan Kabbah's government to involve private security companies: Executive Outcome, Sandline and the Kamajors (local militias). An appropriate way to start the assessment is to briefly look at the political history of Sierra Leone.

## The political history of Sierra Leone

This section provides a concise overview of the historical and political developments in Sierra Leone leading to the crises that erupted at the end of the Cold War. It also highlights the interconnectedness between events in Liberia and Sierra Leone, the patronage relations and the implications they had on the securitization processes. It must be remembered that when the Liberia wars started, Sierra Leone was a tinderbox waiting to be ignited:

> Unpaid military and security forces, a demoralized public service, armies of unemployed youths and an increasingly impoverished mass population became the elements of a flammable society. It took Charles Taylor and his collaborators and client Foday Sankoh and armed bands to strike the match.
>
> (Sawyer, 2004; 443)

These issues and the attendant civil war in Sierra Leone combined to considerably redefine the security pattern both in the Mano River Basin and the wider West African sub-region.

### *Historical overview*

By the mid-18th century, Europe and in particular Britain had benefited considerably from the slave enterprise. The services of the slaves as household servants and those shipped as workers to various plantations in America provided enormous wealth to Britain. The drive for the slave trade subsequently was replaced by the economic growth arising from the industrial revolution in Europe. Events in America such as the American Revolution also meant the dawn of freedom for slaves. They had been promised their manumission if they fought against the rebellious colonists. It must be noted that slavery continued even after the revolution but at least this among other things could be argued to have led to the eventual emancipation of slaves in America and England. In 1772, Lord Mansfield's judicial decision in the case of James Somerset declared it illegal for any slave to be forcibly sold by his master in the New World. This judicial victory meant freedom for hundreds of slaves. But there was no provision for settlement, no means of livelihood and they were largely uncared for. In 1783, this first set of freed slaves from Britain was joined by another influx of refugees from America after the war of independence.

The problem of settlements was solved in 1786 when some British 'humanitarians' formed the St. George's Bay Company whose chief aim was colonizing the 'Black Poor' of England in West Africa and then replacing the slave trade with legitimate items of commerce. Sierra Leone was chosen as the place for the settlement. On 14 May 1787, some 300 Negroes joined the first group of settlers that had arrived on the coast and negotiated for a site with the Temne rulers. The chief supporter of the project was the British humanitarian Granville Sharp and the settlement was named after him. Elaborate plans for the administration of the colony were mapped out and Richard Weaver – a man of African descent – was chosen as the Governor. By 1792 a new group sent by the Sierra Leone Company arrived. They were Negroes from Nova Scotia who settled there after fighting on the side of Britain during the American Revolution. In 1800, a group of maroons were added. These were runaway slaves who took part in the Jamaican revolt against the British colonial government. About 500 of them were deported

to Nova Scotia but after some discontent with the Nova Scotians, they chose to go to Sierra Leone where the Sierra Leone Company agreed to absorb them (Fife, 1979; 29).

These were the three major waves of settlers in Sierra Leone. 'The freed slaves who had been liberated or recaptured, by 1812 outnumbered the settlers. By 1870 they had merged in large enough numbers with older, westernized settler elite to form the Creole group' (Kup, 1975; 114) in what became known as Freetown. As would be expected, a quarrel broke out between the Temne and the settlers, and the neighbouring ruler King Jimmy torched the town and dispersed the settlers. The Temne posed a strong threat to this settlement by asking for rent when the original treaty stipulated full sovereignty for the colony's government which the Temne did not comprehend. In the resulting attack in 1808 the Temne were beaten and eventually driven off. On 1 January 1808 Sierra Leone became a Crown colony which the British government assumed direct control of from the Sierra Leone Company which was not commercially successful. It must be noted that in 1807 Britain banned slavery as Denmark had done in 1804 and Sierra Leone now became the centre from which the further suppression of the 'evil' trade in West Africa was carried out. It also became the point from which Britain projected western civilisation to other areas.

Like other West African societies, the original inhabitants of Sierra Leone were practising Africa's healthy symbiotic way of life. They had a ruler as an authority before the advent of colonialism which eventually turned the system upside down. The system of leadership during colonial days was not designed to benefit the indigenous people, but rather was a mechanism to facilitate easy exploitation and acquisition of local resources by the colonial masters. This was built upon a political system and culture of the people of Africa which thrived on recognition of the authority of the chief (in the manner of Weberian type of traditional authority discussed in chapter two). In Sierra Leone, the reins of government fell on the descendants of settled freed slaves who already saw themselves as superior to the indigenous people. They were called the Krio in Sierra Leone and they have become an ethnic group in Sierra Leone (Walker, 1976). This group inherited a system that was not in touch with the people; it was a system for a select few with a neo-patrimonial character which after independence snowballed into a security time bomb that was to explode immediately after the Cold War ended in 1991. From the Margai brothers (1961–1967), to Siaka Stevens (1968–1985) to Joseph Saidu Momoh (1985–1992), Sierra Leone evolved from high expectations at the time of independence but thereafter descended into a hotchpotch of political trickery, rivalry and cult of personality. The leadership pattern was of personal rule, the type common in neo-patrimonial arrangements, and it was to throw the country into chaos with the mindless killings that ensued. Endemic poverty and discontent among the population, clandestine mining operations, and multiplications of patron-client relations became the order of the day towards the end of the Cold

War. It was not long after Liberia was thrown into chaos, that Sierra Leone was thrown into a war. With a rag-tag government barely able to exert authority over the capital Freetown, on 23 March 1991, 'the Revolutionary United Front (RUF) entered eastern Sierra Leone at Bomaru in Kailahun District from Charles Taylor-controlled Liberian territory' (Boas, 2001; 709), (see also Hofman, 2006; 5).

This chapter therefore focuses on the securitization processes that each individual regime employed and how they were borne out of the neo-patrimonial character of the state. It is important to reiterate that when the institutions of government are politicised and personalised, the survival of individual regime and the security of a particular leader takes priority over the security and survival of the state. In a manner echoing the securitization concept, security becomes 'the move that takes politics beyond the established rules of the game and frames the issue either as a special kind of politics or as above politics'; securitization is thus 'seen as a more extreme version of politicization' (Buzan et al, 1998; 23). The striking issues in this chapter are: the weakening of state institutions such as the security architecture and the personalisation of the military, the police and other arms of government. It is also interesting to note how governments have resorted to informal measures to ensure security. Again, with the start of the civil war in Sierra Leone armed groups proliferated with sponsors across the boundaries of the Mano River Basin on the basis of patron-client relationships. These seriously affected the security of not just Sierra Leone but the entire region and beyond. The following section begins a systematic assessment of the relationship between the neo-patrimonial state of Sierra Leone and the processes of securitization of threats.

### *Crisis of the neo-patrimonial statehood in Sierra Leone*

The security challenges confronting the Mano river region are partly as a result of weak statehood. The institutions of the state including the processes of securitization served the 'big men' and their cronies. This is argued to be a reflection of policies put in place during the colonial years. As Kandeh (1992; 34) noted:

> The colonial state represents a classic instance of an apparatus that set out to dominate society even though the authority and leadership of its ruling class had no foundation in the colonized society. Given this inherited disjuncture in state-society relations, it is not surprising that most Africa states have been unable to establish durable legitimate institutions that are unwedded to the parochial, immediate, formative interests of contemporary ruling classes.

The history of Sierra Leone from independence to the point when the ten-year war erupted is a story of a state steeped in a culture of impunity and

total disregard for the legal and bureaucratic institutions as the foundation for the proper working of the state. Few observers of Sierra Leonean politics would contest that the state was exhibiting the characteristics of neo-patrimonialism. For instance, Smith (1997; 59) remarked that 'Sierra Leone under the tenure of Stevens and Momoh, was a country politically and economically arrested, with a political elite and military leadership steeped in morose decadence, indolence, and corruption'. The existence of a neo-patrimonial regime in Sierra Leone is therefore not disputed but the issue will rather be under which regime it was most pronounced and to what extent it influenced the security culture and securitization process the state (interviews with academic staff of Fourah Bay College, University of Sierra Leone, and Director of the Centre for Democracy, Security and Development, 2011). According to Kaplan (1994), Richards (1996) and Collier (1999) the social upheavals in Sierra Leone arose from the population boom or hunger for resources. However, Kande (1992), Reno (1995), Smith (1997), Boas (2001), Forna (2002), Gberie (2005) and Williams (2011) have all placed the blame for the security crisis in Sierra Leone and West Africa in general at the door step of the neo-patrimonial character of regimes in the sub-region. In the case of Sierra Leone, the two regimes immediately preceding the ten-year cataclysm are very central to the argument. Hence the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (henceforth TRC) was set up in 2000 to (among other things) investigate:

> the historical antecedents to the conflicts and other events that defined or shaped the evolution of the Sierra Leonean state; the causes of the conflict, with a particular focus on issues of government; the story of the conflict, including its military and political dynamics, its nature and characteristics, the role of external actors and factors that fuelled it, such as the exploitation of mineral resources.
>
> (Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Sierra Leone, 2004; Vol. 2; 4 paragraph 5)

And in the general findings, the TRC concluded thus:

> All the administrations of the post-independence period contributed to the structural and proximate contexts that led to the conflict in 1991. The duality of the country's administrative and judicial structures made them vulnerable to manipulations, which the regimes of Sir Milton Margai, Sir Albert Margai and Dr. Siaka Stevens duly utilized to their respective advantages …The successor to Stevens, President Joseph Saidu Momoh, attempted to decelerate the economic and political decline through the promulgation of an economic state of emergency and multi-party constitution. These measures were however managed in a dictatorial and abusive fashion, which rendered them too little and too late to salvage the situation. Against this backdrop, Sierra Leoneans

> became increasingly disgruntled and aggrieved with the malaise in governance and their inability to do anything to alleviate it. Many citizens, particularly the poor, marginalized youths of the provinces became open to radical means of effecting change; they would readily answer the call to arms when the so-called 'revolution' began to enter the country in 1991.
>
> (Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Sierra Leone, 2004; Vol. 2; 4; paragraph 19–20; 8)

This was corroborated during the research field trip in Sierra Leone (interview with the Director of the Centre for Democracy, Security and Development, Freetown, 2011). Opinion about the post-independence regimes and the security crises that engulfed Sierra Leone was sought and the respondent specifically mentioned Stevens as the beginning of the end of peace in the country. According to the interviewee, Stevens became so obsessed with his personal security that the usefulness of people and things was calculated according to the sole aim of the survival of his personal regime rather than the continued existence of the state. Clapham (1996) has also argued that governments in Africa are more interested in their regime's survival. In a subsequent communication via email (29 May 2012) with this author and in answer to the question of personal rule and patron-client power relations and security in Sierra Leone, the interviewee (interview with the Director of the Centre for Democracy, Security and Development, Freetown, 2011) said:

> Patron-client relations have to some extent contributed negatively to insecurity in most African countries including Sierra Leone. In the first place, appointments to key political offices in most cases reflected this rather than merit. As such, some qualified but unconnected individuals would feel dissatisfied if a job they applied for could not be attained fairly… Personal rule used to permeate the institutions you (the researcher) mentioned particularly during authoritarian military and single party rule.

The major defining trait of neo-patrimonial statehood is that the line separating the private from the public spheres is not clear. In other words, the patron who is at the top of the leadership structure stops at nothing in turning the state security institution and treasury to his own personal use and as a weapon to seek support from cronies and securitize opposition. In the process, this breeds political corruption and centralisation of power. Smith (1993; 58) posits that 'there are obvious relationships between regime types and the likelihood, nature, and extent of political corruption' (see also Bratton and Van De Walle, 1994; 453–489). It does not stop with corruption in high places. Neo-patrimonial regimes in Africa encourage marginalisation, deprivation, divisive politics, class exclusivity and ethnic

consciousness which may eventually ignite the fire of conflicts and security consciousness. Issues such as economic hardship, poverty, societal upheaval and individual safety are not what bother those in power. They are not considered to merit sufficient attention within the securitization processes. The major security concern is how the regime will remain in power to benefit the patron and his clients.

An in-depth study of the processes of securitization of threats not only in West Africa but Africa as a whole since the end of the Cold War will not be fully grasped without understanding the role played by the neo-patrimonial nature of statehood in the continent. As Buzan et al (1998; 32) suggest, 'to study securitization is to study the power politics of a concept' – who is more or less privileged in articulating security. Neo-patrimonial regimes are class regimes made up of 'top politicians, leading bureaucrats, key ministry officials, prominent traditional chieftains and professionals who either occupy important leadership positions or can directly access public offices and resources' (Kandeh,1992;33). These can be patrons or clients and it is the public resources that would be used to oil the machinery of this neo-patrimonial arrangement. In terms of the securitization processes, the patron leader and his cronies appropriate the security architecture in order to protect the regime. They are the securitizing actors that frame the security and the audiences are the members of the cabinet or close associate of the neo-patrimonial leaders (Buzan et al, 1998; 40; see also chapter two). Like every other state institution, the securitization processes are personal, indicating the failure of politics of securitization. And some other informal security outfits are also put in place in a manner reminiscent of the Copenhagen School's emergency security measures for the benefit of the leader.

This section is a brief account of the political process in Sierra Leone and how it has been dominated by a segment of society, namely the patron leaders and their cohorts in patron-client power relations. With neo-patrimonial politics of exclusivity, economic deprivation and marginalisation, the disfavoured associates of the regime and the opposition end up forming groups to destabilise the regime. With the ubiquity of small arms and light weapons, a certain level of security complex is created. The regimes and armed groups – again, like in Liberia – securitize threats their own way with all the attendant security effects to the state and the neighbourhood. In the case of Sierra Leone, the attention is now focused on the national level of the three-level structure proposition (see chapter two). This is followed by the sub-regional and transnational levels.

## Neo-patrimonial statehood and the securitization process at the national level in Sierra Leone

The preceding section was an overview of the political timeline of Sierra Leone. It brought out the salient issues upon which the political culture of neo-patrimonial statehood and its implications on the securitization of

security issues rested. In Chapter 3 on analytical framework, it was proposed that there is relationship between the political culture of neo-patrimonialism and securitization processes in West Africa using the Liberia and Sierra Leone as case studies. It was also postulated that this phenomenon could be assessed at national, sub-regional and transnational levels of patron-client power relations. This section now empirically demonstrates this proposition by looking at the three regimes that spanned the Cold War era. This corresponds with the first stage of the three stages of the history of security in West Africa (see chapter four). It will also factor in the core components of the securitization concept – threat, securitizing actor, audience and emergency measures outside the normal bounds of politics. It is demonstrated further that the securitization process in the strict Copenhagen School fashion does not fit in well with neo-patrimonial state of Sierra Leone.

### *Presidents Milton and Albert Magai: the neo-patrimonial state and securitization processes in Sierra Leone*

A detailed account of the administrations of Milton Magai and his brother Albert Magai is outside the scope of this book. However, insights into the inner workings of their regimes will be necessary to support the argument that regime type (neo-patrimonial in nature) impacted (and is still impacting) on the securitization processes in Sierra Leone and wider West African states. It is important to note that the neo-patrimonial practices of the post-independence regimes in Sierra Leone especially those of Magai and Stevens were a product of the bastardised mutual interrelationship among the people of the region before the advent of modernisation. For instance, the local chiefs in Sierra Leone were made very powerful and wealthy by the colonial administration in the indirect rule system which allowed them to benefit from corrupt practices such as levying excessive or bogus taxes (Allen, 1968; 305–307). The major referent object of security in a neo-patrimonial state is the regime's survival. Moreover, opposition is always seen as the main threat to that particular interest. The importance of co-opting the local chiefs and favouring them is to have their support and the support of their subordinates in the societies they administer. These people made up the audiences. Siaka Stevens was later to co-opt these chiefs in his quest to remain in power. 'For example, local courts and chieftaincy structures were used to clamp down on opposition activities and to entrench the authority of whichever traditional ruling houses were allied to the party in power' (Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Sierra Leone, 2004; 8, paragraph 19). These were some of the emergency measures put in place reminiscent of the securitization procedures. This practice however did not commence with Stevens.

Sir Milton Margai, a member of the educated elite from the Southern Province led Sierra Leone to independence in 1961 under the Sierra Leone People's Party (SLPP). This was a party that came to prominence and

relevance through the support of local chiefs and according to Allen (1968; 307), it comprised 'the educated relatives' chiefs, like the Margais… It also included some non-relatives and some Creoles. Co-operation was thus not only necessary, but also easy'. It is important to remember that the SLPP was dominated also by southerners, especially the Mendes, who were better educated and developed than the northerners – the Temnes. It could be seen that when an opposition party emerged it was from the north it brought crack that eventually polarised the country. The political class took advantage of the situation to introduce ethnic politics and securitize the opposition. By 1964 when Sir Milton Margai died, the favoured candidate to replace him was his stooge, John Karefa Smart, a northerner and External Affairs minister but Albert – as the rumour went – ended his brother Milton's life early to prevent him handing over to Karefa (Forna, 2002; 68; Allen, 1968; 309). It must be remembered that Siaka Stevens, a former minister in Margai's government, felt left out of the political power game as independence approached and consequently launched a new political party, the All People's Congress which soon gained status as the main opposition party (Gberie, 2005; 21). The party was regarded as a northern party and enjoyed support among the Temnes, Stevens' ethnic group. It also became a major security threat to the mainstream party.

### *The Margais: regime survival, securitization and personal security arrangements*

Considering that political power in Africa is a zero-sum game, the opposition's message is all about the incumbent relinquishing power for the opposition to step in. It is important to remember that national security was not a major concern for securitization since there was no fear of any external interference. In other words, there are no objective threats that can be securitized independent of the neo-patrimonial leader in power. It is not that there are no issues but they are only securitized when the leaders perceive them as needing attention according to their own security interests. The leaders of the neighbouring countries were in accord to avoid any interference in the internal affairs of other states. The focus was therefore to keep the state internally 'secure' from opposition or groups. Kalu and Kieh (2014; 15) suggested that:

> the relationship between national security interests intersects at that point where it meets human development to yield human security'. Unfortunately in Sierra Leone and wider West Africa, this is ignored 'at the risk of multiple non-state actors challenge to the sovereignty of the state and citizens.

The patron in power therefore securitizes threats to his regime and surrounds himself with faithful stooges who will help him retain political

power and these make up his audiences That was the situation in Sierra Leone after Albert Margai had taken over from Milton Margai. The Army, which was considered a major instrument of national security, was not independent or distinct from the person of the leader. Albert had to rely on chiefs, handing out inducements, appointments and other incentives to maintain their support and keep him and his regime secure. Albert defined what the threat was. He decided the securitization processes and emergency measures appropriate to tackle any given threat. There was no need for any concern for loss of legitimacy; the audience consisted of the people that did his biddings as opposed to the way one would expect in a securitization process in an advanced democracy such as those in Europe. For example, the 'Army had recently come under the authority of Brigadier David Lansana. He was the first native-born force commander, a Mende and popularly seen as a stooge to Albert Margai' (Forna, 2002; 70); (see also Gberie, 2005; 26).

Albert also sought to nip in the bud any possible opposition to his regime and thus came up with the idea of the one party system. Reno (1995, 79) argued that 'elections, at least multiparty ones and elite hegemony do not mix well'. Martin Carnoy (1984; 68–70) defined hegemony as 'the ideological predominance of the dominant classes in civil society over the subordinate'. Adapted from Gramsci's (1971; 12–13) concept of hegemony, it has two principal meanings. In the first instance, it means a process in civil society whereby a fraction of the dominant class exercises control through its moral and intellectual leadership over other allied fractions of the dominant class. In the second instance, it is a relationship between the dominant and dominated classes. This variant of hegemony involves the successful attempts of the dominant class to use its political, moral and intellectual leadership to establish its view of the world as all-inclusive and universal, and to shape the interests and needs of subordinate groups. In neo-patrimonial regimes it is usually the first instance that plays out, relegating the second instance of hegemony which should bring the people and the leading elite together (for further insights see Kandeh, 1992; 31–35).

The idea of a one-party system during Albert Magai's regime in Sierra Leone was to make sure that the patron leader was in firm control of his clients who would always ensure his continued stay in office for favour to continue flowing down to them. It is also strategic under the neo-patrimonial state for effective control over the coercive emergency measures of securitization processes and machineries of state security. It is easy to opposition against a ruling party. But the opposing party does not do any better when it has any chance of assuming the leadership. Such was the case with Albert who had earlier intoned thus: 'when the time comes in Sierra Leone that Government lacks opposition, that will be the time that some of us will pack up our bags and baggage and quit politics' (quoted in Reno, 1995; 78). The bane of post-independence states in Africa was that the reins of political leadership were bequeathed to opportunistic neo-patrimonial leaders who did not keep their word. All that mattered to them was the acquisition of

political power which could give them access to the resources of the state. Jackson and Rosberg (1982; 6) posited that:

> The new African statesman was personal ruler more than a constitutional and institutional one; he ruled by his ability and skill (as well as the abilities and skills of those he could convince to be his supporters), by his personal power and legitimacy, and not solely by the title granted to him by the office he occupied and the constitution that defined it. In so far as constitutions remained important feature of rule they were important less as constraints on the abuse of power and most as legal instruments that a personal ruler could amend or rewrite to suit his needs.

Like the Machiavellian patron and prince, the leader president destroys anything standing on his way out of paranoia. There was an accusation of a phantom coup to rid the system of opposition military leaders such as the arrest of Colonel Bangura, Brigadier David Lansana's subordinate. Remember David Lansana was in charge of the Army (Forna, 2002; 70, Gberie, 2005; 26 and Jackson, 2004; 115). According to Allen (1968; 315):

> The significance of the 'coup plot' lies in it being an attempt to brand the APC as a subversive party. It was a ploy to put in detention several Northern or Creole officers known to oppose Lansana. Other officer-opponents had already been forced out of the army, or were abroad, so that the senior officers were now almost all Southerners or Easterners.

The relevance of this foregoing account is obvious for a variety of reasons, not least for bringing out the total disregard for the legal bureaucratic process in the institutions of government. These seriously impact on the security pattern of the state and the processes of securitization of threats. The securitization processes were easily manipulated on behalf of the one person; the 'big man' or patron leader. The entire political landscape was showing every sign of personal rule and centralisation of authority which are the chief characteristics of a neo-patrimonial regime. In the case of Sierra Leone, the institutions of government; the judiciary, the police and the military had come under the authority of the leader of a particular regime and the national security arrangement was to keep the regime and the person of the leader safe and secure. These could also be used to intimidate the people and do the wishes of the leader. It equally presages the politicisation, incorporation and incursion of the military into the government in Sierra Leone.

### *Siaka Stevens: archetypal neo-patrimonial patron and securitization processes*

Under Siaka Stevens, the personal security mindset continued. The processes of securitization were not substantially different from the previous

regimes. National security was seen from the prism of the security of the Stevens' regime. It is interesting that Stevens, who had been the major figure in opposition on assumption of office, started doing those things he had campaigned against, such as the idea of a one party system rather than an equal and fair distribution of wealth.

> The Commission finds in particular that the term of government under the All People's Congress (APC), particularly during the reign of president Siaka Stevens (1969–1985), was one that suppressed any semblance of opposition. The creation of a one-party state effectively neutralizes all checks and balances on the executive power. The one-party state systematically closed down avenues for open debate and democratic activity.
>
> (Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Sierra Leone, 2004; vol. 2, ch.2, 31, Finding no. 54)

It could be argued with confidence that the line separating the mainstream government and opposition in African politics is not one based on policies, principles or party manifesto. It is rather of interest, personal gain and opportunities. Because it is also a politics of winner-takes-it-all, the leader marginalises the opposition or co-opts them into the mainstream for the mutual and smooth-running of the neo-patrimonial patron-client power relations. A popular African saying has it that the mouth that has been feeding should not be left dry. And another says that the cow feeds where it is tethered. To keep enjoying the paraphernalia and trappings of political offices, the patron prince at all the levels of the pyramidal structure ensures his or her security is guaranteed to perpetuate access to power resources for personal interest. The security arrangement is a personal using the state's security apparatus. At other times, security arrangements are articulated outside the normal state institutionalised system and processes. This was the path taken by Siaka Stevens on his ascension to the political throne of Sierra Leone. For instance, when Stevens eventually took over the government house in Freetown he wasted no time in replacing David Lansana with John Bangura as the head of the Army. When he later fell out with Bangura, he appointed Joseph Momoh. Stevens was even at one point accused of state terrorism against the population: 'In the wake of 1982 general elections, some citizens in Pujehun District formed a guerrilla movement, the Ndorgbowusi to protect themselves against what they called state-sponsored terrorism' (Ayissi and Poulton, 2006; 28). Aminatta Forna (2004; 160) noted:

> Siaka Stevens spent the money on the fleet of armoured cars, for his own personal protection, bought from a British company who willingly advanced the extra money that it would cost at an inflated rate. In time Stevens would eventually create his own personal army, adding two Internal Security Units and a Special Security Division loyal only to him.

This is reminiscent of the idea of emergency measures in the securitization processes as suggested by the Copenhagen School of security (Buzan et al, 1998). It could be postulated here that a patron becomes very security conscious once he falls out with his close aides and clients. He becomes paranoid and goes out to stop anything or anybody he securitizes as a threat to his regime. He surrounds himself further with more security. Some instances can be identified from other states in the sub-region of West Africa. The former Nigerian military leader, Sani Abacha (1993–1998) went as far as recruiting or hiring the services of 'marabouts' (Muslim fortune tellers or spiritual guides) from neighbouring Lomé and Cotonou who would advise, ensure and assure him of his safety. His personal security officer Hamza al-Mustapha wantonly killed of all enemies (real or imagined) of the regime. In the case of Siaka Stevens, Forna (2004; 245) further noted that Stevens' 'Internal Security Units One and Two were staffed by troops brought in from Guinea; later they were brought together and renamed the SSD, the State Security Division – more popularly known on the streets of Freetown as "Siaka Stevens Dogs"'. Stevens, the neo-patrimonial leader, did not need the support of the people of Sierra Leone to have his way. He used the different security apparatuses and the personnel were his audiences.

Under neo-patrimonial regimes, economic and political benefits which ordinarily should be for the political good of the population are distributed among the leaders and their subordinates. The bureaucratic institutions and natural and human resources are deployed for personal reasons and in the interests of the ruler. The idea of the one-party system here again fits well for neo-patrimonial regimes. It allows the patron leader to bring all the patron-client relationships under his umbrella. It also ensures continuity so that even when the incumbent leaves office, his successor still offers him some degree of relevance and a continued hand in the workings of the state. That could be seen from Sierra Leone's servitude under Siaka Stevens as long as he ruled and until he handed over to Joseph Momoh in 1985. Stevens had untrammelled access to the wealth of the nation which he used to court support and the subservience of the police, the military, traditional chiefs, businessmen, politicians and even multinational corporations interested in the state's resources. In a more democratic society the processes of securitization of threats follow debates and consider informed public opinion, even though the opinion may not always be influential in the final decision. In neo-patrimonial and autocratic regimes such as the ones in West Africa and Sierra Leone in particular, the general public who are supposed to be the audience and their interests and opinions are not relevant. The audiences in the securitization sense are the cronies of the leaders who are offered incentives from the state's resources.

It must be remembered that once diamond mining started in 1930s during the colonial years, it affected power relations within Sierra Leone. Post-independence regimes in Sierra Leone used the resources for their patronage politics and Siaka Stevens was no exception to this. He became blind to any

line separating the formal and informal or private and public. For Stevens, the state of Sierra Leone was his personal fiefdom. In an interview (with a former journalist in Sierra Leone and Coordinator and Finance Expert at UN Security Council Panel of Experts on Liberia), the respondent posited that the crisis in Sierra Leone started once the formal, legal bureaucratic machinery was eclipsed by the informal and personal manipulation of the institutions of the state by the Stevens regime. But it must be made clear that Stevens' excesses in power were a continuation from the previous regimes of the Margais. Bratton and Van de Walle (1994) have also drawn the conclusion that there is an obvious nexus between regime type (neo-patrimonial in Sierra Leone) and political corruption. The political landscape of Africa and West Africa particularly is strewn with larger-than-life political leaders that have held on to power in their respective countries. Consider for instances the cases of Mobutu in former Zaire who was touted to be richer than his country and milked the country to the last drop. Paul Biya of Cameroon has remained the president since 1982 with clear authoritarian, neo- patrimonial and exclusive characteristics. Specifically in West Africa, Gnassingbe Eyadema transformed from a military leader into a civilian president in Togo from 1967 until his death in 2005, at which point his son whom he had appointed a minister in his government took over, defying all constitutional restraints. This was made possible partly because of the enormous support from the army who were at the beck and call of his father during his personal rule (IRIN, 2003). Nigeria from 1984 to 1999 writhed under the jackboot of different military leaders who, in connivance with their civilian cronies and clients, left the country backward and to date has yet to get back on track. These are all states with numerous security challenges but they are not considered critical by their leaders for urgent and emergency securitization measures. What is uppermost in their security calculus is their regime security and sovereignty of states which will ensure continued existence of the state, a platform from which they operate.

Back to Stevens' Sierra Leone, the state suffered a freefall arising from his highhandedness, monumental corruption among the civil servants which the presidency overlooked (probably because it was a way to favour his supporters in the civil service). Stevens, as a quintessential neo-patrimonial patron co-opted unruly strongmen. That is one of his personal security measures to ensure his continued stay in office. In an interview with Amadu Sesay (ex-ECOWAS and an academic, Nigeria, 2011) believes that what has badly coloured the politics of small and weak states in West Africa and especially in Sierra Leone is the lack of institutionalised processes of both effective leadership and the failure of this in the securitization of threats. The state's political and securitization processes are tools in the hands of neo-patrimonial leaders. Particularly in Sierra Leone, consider for instance the corruption scandals during Siaka Stevens' tenure: '1982 voucher-gate, squander-gate in 1984 and in 1987 million-gate followed' (Smith, 1997; 58). 'Voucher-gate', 'squander-gate' and 'million-gate' were some of the rampant

corruption scandals recorded during Stevens' regime . They included the inflated budgets and vouchers used by civil servants and government ministers in a patronage style to favour their friends and favourites. The regime turned a blind eye to these scandalous corruption practices. The President was alleged to have responded to the allegations thus: 'usai yu tai kaw, na dae I dae it' (meaning a cow grazes where it is tethered). It more or less gave freedom to all those that have access to public treasury to dip their hands as they liked (see Ayissi and Poulton, 2006; 29).

According to Dumbuya (2008, 55–58):

> The crisis facing the nation deepened as reports of massive financial irregularities in various government departments and agencies began to surface in the early 1980s. Newspapers, magazines and ordinary citizens dubbed the scandal 'squander-gate' or 'voucher-gate' and it involved civil servants in almost every government department. For some inexplicable reasons cabinet ministers responsible for those departments were not implicated in the corruption scandal.

To further substantiate this, Dumbuya (2008) noted one particularly bizarre case involving Peter Kunyenbeh, who in his position as development secretary signed over to a phony transport contractor Santagie Kamara, a voucher for Le 6,000 to distribute 150 tonnes of rice in the Northern Province. The contractor's 'vehicle' turned out to be a Honda motor cycle registered in the name of Morlai Kamara (Dumbuya, 2008; 58). It is obvious that Peter could not have been alone in such a reckless and nefarious squandering of state resources.

Neo-patrimonial statehood thrives on a tripod of leaders, followers and goals (corruption and the personalisation of state wealth). In the same manner, its impact on the processes of securitization of threats follows the same pattern. The issues meriting securitization are determined by the patron leader and not through any normal political process. The patron leader is the securitizing actor and the followers and cronies are the audiences who will be executing the wishes of the leader and his security mindset. Some West African leaders are not interested in the security interest of their people, states or the sub-region in general. They do nto concern themselves with long-term security plans, but rather what will benefit them in the immediate future. Those issues mentioned, such as rural development, youth empowerment, individual security, human security, safety of the borders for easy access of legitimate items of commerce and services, are not perceived as serious to merit securitization.

Let us quickly consider what we can deduce from the foregoing analysis. Stevens' regime of was enmeshed in neo-patrimonial arrangements. It is also important to look at the fallout from that. Because there was no fear of an external invasion from either neighbouring countries who themselves were very weak, these small states in West Africa (in this instance Sierra Leone)

paid more attention to securitization of those internal security challenges. It is reiterated here that they are not considered national security issues in a strict sense; they are national in so far as they will affect the regimes in power whose security threats most often are no different from national security threats. The security institution – army, police or paramilitary units – were not necessary for the national security objective but for the personal security and survival of the leader. They were also the leader's audiences. By implication, as long as the regimes lasted, they displayed and manifested all the hallmarks of personal rule. They entrenched exclusivity and marginalisation, sired mistrust, paranoia and a sense of insecurity. Stevens and his cronies were the winners while others were the losers in the zero-sum game of African politics. Stevens systematically removed people he felt posed threats to his regime. In 1975 he executed 14 people including his former finance minister Mohammed Forna caught up in the phantom coup attempt (see Forna, 2002; Abdullah, 1998; 206, 2004; 43).

It is important to point out here that the politics of cronyism in Stevens' administration was a build-up to the eventual cataclysm that erupted in Sierra Leone (see Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Sierra Leone, 2004; vol. 2, chapter 2 for more details) and helped the already-chaotic Liberia to define the security ambience of both Mano River Basin and the wider West African sub-region. For instance Lansana Gberie (a former journalist in Sierra Leone and Coordinator and Finance Expert at UN Security Council Panel of Experts on Liberia, 2011) pointed out that 'some of the conditions that started and sustained the war still exist – corruption, youth unemployment, the failure to forge a real national community'. Amadu Sesay (ex-ECOWAS and an academic, Nigeria) on the subject of Sierra Leonean security politics – and West Africa's in general – came out forcefully to remark that there is endemic poverty among the people of West Africa. He argued that the major reason for politics of accumulation and accommodation is a need to extricate oneself and immediate cronies, friends and family from poverty. Yet poverty is not securitized because the neo-patrimonial leaders are in control of the resources of the state. Poverty therefore is not an issue to be securitized. Those basic needs that can cause security problems are not securitized at all. The major concern is access to the power resources to control the natural resources in the state.

Furthermore, for him the insecurity of the sub-region reflects the prevalence of poverty in the member states. Sesay (interview, 2011) suggested that a proper analysis of the regimes of Siaka Stevens and John Momoh will throw more light on the impact of neo-patrimonial regimes in the national and sub-regional securitization processes of West Africa. Towards the end of Stevens' regime there was already an increasing feeling of resentment and dissatisfaction among the population of Sierra Leone because of the poverty the people have been thrown into. It has been stated earlier in this chapter that neo-patrimonialism thrives and is sustained through continuity of the party in power or by installing a stooge of the former 'big man'. The whole

idea is to protect the interest of the members of the political family. The successor could come from the same family, ethnic group or the military. In Sierra Leone, it was from Milton Margai to his half-brother Albert Margai. At the end of Siaka Stevens' reign due to sickness he passed the baton to Joseph Saidu Momoh, his anointed stooge.

### *The Regime of Joseph Saidu Momoh: personal security and securitization process*

Because Stevens had already weakened the state security infrastructure by making them dependent on him as his personal instrument, his successor Joseph Momoh emerged at the point when the security architecture had been weakened and personalised by his predecessor. According to Reno (1998, 115–116):

> Stevens chose Momoh because the latter enjoyed some authority within the military, virtually the only institution that retained any significant organizational identity. But Momoh was politically weak, which was another virtue to the retiring president who explained that he wanted to enjoy his wealth in Sierra Leone. Stevens' strategy of limiting army recruitment to about 2,000 troops and relying instead on loyal paramilitaries left Momoh in a materially weak position vis-à-vis the former dictator and his associates. Momoh was thus incapable of ending the private control many of Stevens' associates enjoyed over the country's resources.

The appointment of Momoh was not just to protect the interest of his former boss (Siaka Stevens) but was also meant to preclude the bickering and intra-party rivalry that would have ensued over the question of succession at the end of Stevens' term. It would also ensure the control at the top of APC and continued patronage politics of Stevens taken to a new dimension. Momoh's so-called 'New Order' was not in any way new or different from the previous administration except in name. After all Momoh still retained some of the vestiges of the *ancien regime*. For instance, Joe Amara Bangalie was appointed as the head of a newly carved-out office for marketing diamonds and gold. He used his position to make solid financial contact with the Lebanese traders in Sierra Leone such as Jamil who was to become the adviser to the office. He (Jamil) had a stake in the economy and maintained a well-armed 500-strong personal security force, almost all of them Palestinians (see Kandeh, 1999; 351; Gberie, 2005; 35). Momoh, like his master, did not care about the security interests of Sierra Leoneans. He was more concerned with the survival of the regime and not the state. Issues which needed proper securitization were ignored. He turned to his closest friends and relatives for personal security and advice: the Binkolo mafia – Binkolo being his place of birth (see Smith, 1997; 60). Momoh was also engaged in the same practice of dipping his hands into

the state coffers and acquired assets such as the luxury cars and high-priced residences by illegal means. The Beccles-Davies Commission revealed Momoh's cash deposits in various banks in Freetown, the UK and the US; Le45 million, £128,478 / US$30,000 (Smith, 1997; 60).

In patronage politics, there is neither a permanent enemy nor friend. The alliance keeps changing according to only one permanent security concern – to keep maintain the ruler. As long as a client remains connected to the political power grid of the patron he or she will continually be favoured. But the alliance will cease the moment a client and patron diverge in their interests, and like the Machiavellian Prince, the patron can go as far as eliminating the client either physically or cut off the flow of favours in terms of business interests. It can also go the other way, by way of the client or cronies planning to unseat the patron. That is why the major security threat needing serious securitization in neo-patrimonial states is anything that attempts to rock the boat of the regime. Gberie (2005; 35) remarked:

> When he (Momoh) acted, he acted as gangsters would do; he announced in 1987, a failed coup plot, had some of Stevens left-over ministers arrested or sacked and then forced Jamil (see reference above) into exile. It was time to forge his own partnership, but he did not try to build one with his own people, and instead brought in Israeli businessmen to replace his former Lebanese clients. It was replacing one set of predators with another. The whole APC one-party state was rotten to the core; it was near-kleptocratic outfit serving only a few people, mostly foreigners, although it still maintained the trappings of state bureaucracy.

State bureaucracy in Sierra Leone under Momoh and his predecessor patron was only a smokescreen serving as a conduit for siphoning off state resources. This has appropriately earned it the sobriquet neo-patrimonial regime – a medley of formal and informal systems of gvoernment in a complimentary manner. The regimes in question were 'parasitic, consumptive and unproductive in its mode of accumulation. The activities of this class have severely eroded the relative autonomy and effectiveness of the state and nowhere, perhaps are the baleful consequences of ruling class formation more apparent than in Sierra Leone'(Kandeh, 1992; 36).

As in the case of Siaka Stevens, many details of the Momoh regime will be beyond the scope of this book. It is important nonetheless to note that Momoh inherited from Pa Sheik (as Stevens was called) a state already in tatters, an economy in complete shambles and a weak and malfunctioning state with a shadowy bureaucracy whose security was hinged on nothing but the interests and survival of the leader. Despite these obvious challenges, a much more daunting headache for Momoh was how to maintain the retinue of clients he had inherited from his predecessor. As Boaz (2001; 78) put it:

> Momoh's regime was caught between a rock and a hard place: between the need for international credit to fund neo-patrimonial demands from the army, police and other state organizations on the one hand, and the need of the shadow state leaders to have a pool of jobs and other opportunities and resources available to reward loyal clients on the other.

Much more important was the need to keep the state in a stable condition for a semblance of government to work; a government that lacked the capacity to broadcast sufficient power to maintain and secure its sovereign territory. It could only, but even that not certainly, claim control of the capital city where the seat of power was while far-flung cities and towns were seriously being contested for by non-state actors such as The Revolutionary United Front of Sierra Leone (RUF/SL) or Boko Haram in the case of Nigeria (Kalu and Kieh, 2014; 5, 69).

In this section, we have substantially assessed the relatedness between the political culture of neo-patrimonialism and the processes of securitization of threats at the national level in Sierra Leone. The critical regimes of the post-independence era of the Magai brothers and Siaka Stevens were used. Leading to the end of the Cold War and eventual catastrophe that erupted in Sierra Leone, the regime of Joseph Momoh was also investigated. From the available information certain conclusions were arrived at:

- Sierra Leone significantly displayed characteristics of neo-patrimonial patronage politics, cronyism and patron-client favour-for-support power relations.
- There was barely any established legal bureaucratic procedure for running the affairs of the state; instead, the patron was the state.
- There was centralisation of the whole apparatuses of security. They all came under the control of the patron leader who used it for the sole aim of projecting his power and securing his regime.
- The survival of the regime is the same thing as the national security of the state.
- The processes of securitization were ad hoc and rarely reflected the numerous perceived security issues that confronted the larger population. Buzan et al (1998; 27) suggested that 'securitization can be either ad hoc or institutionalized'.
- Threats (anything against the regime) were defined by the neo-patrimonial leader who is also the securitizing actor. His cronies were the audiences. Emergency measures were anything outside the normal bounds of politics that would serve that sole security interest of protecting the regime.

These features were not restricted to any particular regime. They ran through all the regimes to varying degrees. They may not be absolute but they are sufficiently significant to support that there is a nexus between the

phenomenon of neo-patrimonialism and the process of securitization. In the following section, the assessment is carried out at the sub-regional level. This is in tandem with the proposed three levels of analysis carried out in chapter two on analytical framework. The examination is developed by factoring the complex diplomacy, interpersonal relationships and political dynamics that defined Sierra Leone politics after the Cold War, particularly the subsequent wars of the 1990s and the interventions that followed.

## Neo-patrimonial statehood and the securitization process in Sierra Leone: an analysis of sub-regional dynamics

The need to use the region as a unit of analysis arose not from perspective of the regional security complex as articulated in chapter four but from the assumption – as Buzan et al (1998; 9) argued – that international relations in the post-Cold War world will take on a more regionalised configuration. This section looks at how these played out in relation to the securitization processes of the numerous threats in West Africa and more particularly how the issues that emerged from Sierra Leone helped to highlight them. It concludes that the processes of securitization of Sierra Leonean issues were a function of the way the political actors perceived the issues in their own security and economic interests. When the first war in Liberia in the early 1990s spilled into Sierra Leone with all its implications, it unearthed a lot of issues and presaged the security challenges the sub-region of West Africa was going to confront in the coming twenty-first century. This and subsequent wars exposed the limits of national and regional security calculations based on the protection of inherited colonial borders, regimes and the fallacy that the so-called economic development and integration (the remits of the regional community) could be realised without effective management of threats based on the careful and enlightened consideration of the general security interest of the people (Rashid, 2013; 1).

It was a time to confront the stark reality that states in the sub-region would have to manage their security crises themselves. In the process of doing this they were mired in the political culture of neo-patrimonial patron-client relationships among the political actors. It is important to recall once again the serious issue of the lack of established security mechanisms that would help in confronting security issues. The definition of what was a security issue in Sierra Leone from a sub-regional perspective remained a function of what the interest of the actors was. These actors included but were not limited to those from the Mano River Basin: Charles Taylor of Liberia, Cote d'Ivoire and Burkina Faso plus wider West Africa. The obvious significance of the crises of statehood witnessed in Sierra Leone, especially the war from 1991–2002, is the exposure of the deep-seated faultiness of postcolonial West African states. The conflict showed the lack, or weakness, of institutions of leadership and security in particular. There was a serious failure of political process as reflected in securitization

processes that neglected the issues that affected the people but rather focused on the interests of the sub-regional leaders and their audiences. According to Rashid (2013; 4):

> The conflicts showed the inability of postcolonial governments to forge meaningful social contracts with their populace and to develop commonwealths reflective of the collective interests and aspirations of all citizens within a fiercely competitive global system. They also highlighted the predatory nature of the ruling elite of these countries.

The political dynamics playing out at the sub-regional level is a reflection and a continuation of the nature of domestic politics. In the light of these, the state of Sierra Leone distanced itself from the people which resulted in the emergence of different armed factions sponsored from outside the country in a patron-client power relationship. In the same manner, since the security apparatus had collapsed, there was competition between the state and these armed groups over who would control the state resources. The state would securitize the armed groups as the major threat to its existence and the armed groups would see the state as the issue to be securitized. The Copenhagen scholars suggested that it does not imply that 'securitization always goes through the state… securitization can be enacted in other fora as well… it is possible for other social entities to raise an issue to the level of general consideration or even to the status of sanctioned urgency among themselves' (Buzan et al, 1998; 24).

The underlying issues giving rise to security threats are ignored. It is not argued that the sub-region of West Africa does not articulate its security: it does, as it has done in Liberia, Sierra Leone, Guinea and Mali (currently), especially since the end of the Cold War. But it is suggested that such securitization processes have always been influenced and hampered by primordial sentiments, group cronyism and personal interests of the neo-patrimonial leaders.

Berman and Sams (2000; 111) and Goldman (2005; 463) reported that the RUF/SL received significant support from Presidents Charles Taylor of Liberia and Compaore of Burkina Faso for their personal interests. Taylor's support for Sankoh's RUF/SL was a calculated move to undermine the Sierra Leonean Government's commitment to ECOMOG in Liberia and to distract the ECOMOG force (Berman and Sams, 2000; 111). It has already been noted in this chapter that Sierra Leone's government has offered the country's space to ECOWAS as a staging post for the ECOMOG mission into Liberia, thereby undermining Taylor's chances of becoming president in Liberia. Equally important is the support Foday Sankoh received from Libyan leader Colonel Gaddafi which also involved Liberia and Burkina Faso. The reason for the support was a way to retaliate at the government in Freetown for the opposition during Siaka Stevens's regime to Gaddafi's ambition of hosting a platform from which African leaders would oppose

'Western imperialism'. That of course was the United States strategy to cut Gaddafi down to size. When dissidents therefore emerged in Sierra Leone under RUF/SL, Gaddafi did not waste the opportunity to retaliate just as he had in Liberia under Samuel Doe (Abdullah, 2003; Gberie, 2005).

The point here is that the security interest of the people of Sierra Leone or wider West Africa was far from the minds of the actors . The occasion was an opportunity for them to pursue their security and economic interests in a patron-client manner in a pyramidal order from Gaddafi to Taylor and Sankoh and the 'small men' in RUF/SL or Westside Boys (corroborated in an interview with an ex-combatant in Freetown, 2011). The perception of security by the patron leaders was dictated by what they could gain and in the absence of effective government security machinery threats are securitized in the light of any hindrance to such selfish goals. Consider also that when Taylor was eventually arrested, the major issues he was tried for in The Hague were 'war crimes, crimes against humanity and other serious violations of international humanitarian law committed during the Sierra Leonean conflict since 1996' (Bigi, 2007; corroborated in interview with staff of special court in Sierra Leone, Freetown, 2011). It is also interesting to note that this was the same man who had been harboured and protected in Nigeria for three years (2003–2006) after he left Liberia. This was despite the atrocities he committed against Nigerians in Liberia during the war and despite the opposition that greeted such policy action from the Nigerian people. For instance:

> in Abuja,Nigeria, two Nigerian businessmen, David Anyaele and Emmanuel Egbuna – whose limbs were allegedly amputated by Taylor's forces in Liberia – challenged Taylor's asylum and sought to have him extradited to the Special Court for Sierra Leone to face justice.
>
> (International Justice Monitor, n.d.)

Rashidi (2013; 4–5) captured the whole dynamics and it is worth quoting his work at length:

> Just as the war exposed the political limits of the postcolonial West African state, it also exposed the fallacy of national and regional security calculations based on colonial borders. Even though the insurgencies in Liberia and Sierra Leone were driven by immediate national imperatives, they were built upon and depended on regional networks. In a perverse fashion, the NPFL and the RUF conceived of their greater 'revolutionary' enterprise as a pan-West African project that would extend from the Senegal River to the Niger Delta. The training, recruitment, and resource networks of the various factions in the Sierra Leone and Liberia conflicts stretched across Sierra Leone, Liberia, Cote d'Ivoire, Ghana, Burkina Faso, and Libya. The borders between these countries became frontiers of insurgencies rather than meaningful

protective boundaries. Insurgents, mercenaries, small arms and light weapons, and looted resources flowed easily across the different frontiers, albeit with the complicity of more stable governments of some of these countries.

The effects of these dynamics on the security politics in the sub-region are not imagined. These mercenaries, insurgents and child soldiers are willing recruits and clients in the hands of patron warlords and political actors. They are used to fight for and against governments, terrorise cities and villages and operate across state boundaries for a fee. William (2003) applied the Weberian idea of patrimonialism in analysing the patron-client relationships that exist between the warlords and their rebel recruits in Liberia and Sierra Leone. The researcher met with some of the ex-combatants in Freetown Sierra Leone to confirm this (2011). Emily Schmall (2011) of The Christian Science Monitor reported on former fighters in the Liberian wars who were recruited during the war in Cote d'Ivoire to fight for the then president-elect Alassane Ouattara or for the-then incumbent Laurent Gbagbo. Particularly of interest, Karmo Watson – a mercenary from Liberia – was recruited for a fee of US$1,500 to fight for Mr Ouattara. Watson, who fought as a soldier for the former Liberian president Charles Taylor, is just one out of thousands of war-hardened fighters in West Africa who contribute in no small measure to the instability in the sub-region. They were used in Liberia, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Sierra Leone and Cote d'Ivoire and presently in the terrorist activities going on in northern Nigeria and in Malian conflicts. These soldiers of fortune are very much ready for any new conflict. The heads of state in West Africa states fear the threat these professional fighters pose to their regimes' survival in the event of conflict. This is the primary aim in any articulation of securitization processes and not necessarily the havoc they wreak in the sub-region of West Africa. The measures for securitization of threats against regimes would be to create pro-government paramilitary groups (like the Kamajors used by the government of Ahmed Tejan Kabbah in Sierra Leone during the war in 1996).

### *ECOWAS neo-patrimonial relationships and securitization of security threats in Sierra Leone*

The successes of ECOMOG in Liberia encouraged the sub-regional leaders to try the same approach in Sierra Leone. Let it be reiterated here that the end of Cold War and its implications on global geopolitics helped to localise the security politics in the sub-region of West Africa. Starting from Liberia and extending to Sierra Leone, the sub-regional leaders faced a lack of adequate support from external patrons and this informed their security actions to manage the emerging security challenges. ECOWAS did not have any prior security mechanism to address security issues in Sierra Leone; just

as it did not have any before intervening in Liberia. It is argued that the processes of securitizing the security issues that emerged in Sierra Leone and the subsequent securitization processes put in place for future security threats were influenced by the neo-patrimonial dispositions and dynamics in the sub-region, rather than the larger security interests of the sub-region. It is important to bear in mind that the close-knit nature of the states in the sub-region means that what affects one state has spill-over effect on the other state. One cannot ignore security developments in one neighbouring state because they will cause ripples (Bah, 2005; 1). The sub-region has been identified as a regional security complex which according to Buzan et al (1998) is 'a set of states whose major security perceptions and concerns are so interlinked that their national security problems cannot reasonably be analysed or resolved apart from one another' (see also chapter four of this book). This is in principle the reasoning for securitizing the Sierra Leonean crises by the leaders.

A brief overview of the events leading to the ECOWAS intervention in Sierra Leone will suffice here. A group of RUF rebels sponsored by Charles Taylor in Liberia tried to overthrow the government of Joseph Momoh in Sierra Leone in March 1991, but did not succeed because of the assistance from external forces, including Nigeria, and a pro-government militia, the Kamajors. The government was eventually overthrown by Captain Valentine Strasser who eventually became president in 1992. Brigadier General Bio overthrew Valentine in 1996 and organised an election that brought in Ahmad Tejan Kabah as president. However, on 25 May 1997, Kabah himself was forced to flee to Guinea in a coup led by the Armed Forces Revolutionary Council (AFRC) with Major Johnny Paul Koroma at the head and supported by Sankoh and his RUF (McGregor, 1999; Berman and Sams, 2000; Bah, 2005; Gberie, 2005; Rashid, 2013). It was at this point that Nigeria intervened to rescue the situation. The Sierra Leonean crises were serious security problems in the Mano River Basin and beyond. But how these were securitized and perceived by different individual regimes in the sub-region was interesting. Let us consider that ECOWAS member states put in place some protocols such as the protocol on conflict prevention, management and resolution; the moratorium on small arms; and a protocol on democracy and good governance. There is also a protocol on free movement of persons in the sub-region. The ambition of the framers of these protocols and many more on other salient security issues was to transform ECOWAS from a security complex to a security community. A security community according to Karl Deutsch (1957, quoted in Bah, 2005, 82) is:

> a group which has become integrated, where integration is defined as the attainment of a sense of community, accompanied by formal or informal institutions or practices, sufficiently strong and widespread to assure peaceful change among members of a group with reasonable certainty over a long period of time.

These protocols may sound noble, but they did not command the unanimous support from the leaders of the member states that was needed. It is from this angle that we will view the intervention of ECOWAS in Sierra Leone. The intervention was fraught with much controversy as the ideals and interests of leaders clashed. First of all, the intervention spearheaded by Nigeria was a move by Nigerian leader General Sani Abacha to reinstate his friend President Kabbah who had been forced to flee to neighbouring Guinea (Gberie, 2005; 112). Sierra Leone and Nigeria had concluded a bilateral defence agreement in 1997 which would provide training to the Sierra Leonean Army and presidential guard. About 900 Nigerian troops, a military training team and a battalion attached to ECOMOG were present before the coup that removed Kabbah (Berman and Sams, 2000; 112–113). Nigeria did not have any legality or authorisation to intervene in Sierra Leone. The sub-region was just coming of from the Liberia crisis and had no institutionalised framework for action in Sierra Leone. Nigeria simply pursued another ad hoc securitization measure – acting first before asking for ECOWAS approval – reminiscent of ad hoc securitization processes. Also it is suggested within the securitization concept that:

> if by means of an argument about the priority and urgency of an existential threat the securitizing actor (in this context Nigerian leader) has managed to break free of procedures or rules he or she would otherwise be bound by, we are witnessing a case of securitization.
>
> (Buzan et al, 1998; 25)

It could only be interpersonal neo-patrimonial interests that guided the action. There were some sub-regional dynamics underpinning the for-and-against debate to get ECOWAS to approve the military action. The approval for intervention to reinstate Kabba did not come until about three months after Nigeria has already intervened and there were a lot of troubling issues. Experience in Liberia made Ghana and Cote d'Ivoire wary of another costly encounter in Sierra Leone. Also, considering that Liberia's Charles Taylor and Burkina Faso were arming the RUF rebels, other ECOWAS members were suspicious of their commitment to the ECOWAS threat securitization moves. What is also a very important issue is that the Anglophone-Francophone divide and suspicion was pulling the fabrics of the security mechanism in the sub-region apart. Though the old man of Cote d'Ivoire politics, Houphouët-Boigny, was dead at the time of the crisis, the colonial hangover was still an issue for the ECOWAS members. There was palpable fear of Nigerian domination.

Of much more interest to the sub-region and even the international community was the concern over the altruism of Nigerian leader in the intervention in Sierra Leone. Commentators (Olonisakin, 1998; McGregor, 1999; Berman and Sams, 2000; Rashid, 2013; Fawole, 2001, 2003) have queried the genuineness of the intentions of Nigerian leader, General Sani

Abacha. This is worth interrogating, considering that the Nigerian state was groaning under his military jackboot while he was making efforts to reinstate a democratically elected Tejan Kabbah in Sierra Leone. Nigeria was a pariah nation at that point and so Abacha's strategy could be argued to be a way of seeking legitimacy and approval from the West. It cannot be dismissed that Abacha, while trying to reinstate his friend to power, was also using that as a strategy to distract the military at home and engage them abroad to avoid the military trying to copy the situation in Sierra Leone. Furthermore, it is also suggested that Abacha had some commercial interests in Sierra Leonean mineral resources. Berman and Sams (2000; 117) noted that 'when Kabbah had first come to power, Abacha had reportedly approached the Sierra Leonean authorities for mineral concessions'. In this context, the securitizing actors were the neo-patrimonial leaders in West Africa. The threat was the issue that was disturbing one of their fellow leaders led by Nigerian Abacha. But the issue was perceived differently according to their personal interests. The audience was the heads of states that needed to be carried along before any military action could take place. It was not the society at home. That demonstrated the narrowness and failure in the securitization politics. There is no doubt that West African leaders have made some efforts to transform the sub-region into a Deutschian security community. The experiences of the Sierra Leonean and Liberian interventions however revealed the narrowness in their threat perception. There are certainly a lot of securitization processes going on but it is argued that they are heavily bogged down by neo-patrimonial sentiments and calculations by the leaders. The processes of securitization are at best personal, dependent on the interests of the patron leaders and at worst they do not consider the security interests of larger West African populace. The security architecture or processes of securitization are not independent of individual countries or leaders.

This section has discussed the relationship at the sub-regional level between the ideas of neo-patrimonial statehood and its influence on the processes of securitizing security threats. From the available evidence in relation to the Sierra Leonean experience it is concluded that:

- The institutions of security were lacking prior to the intervention in Sierra Leone. The securitization processes were a function of sub-regional leaders' geopolitical calculations.
- Even when some semblance of an institutionalised framework for security emerged, they were still not enjoying independence as would be the case in the European Union or other advanced democracies.
- The influence of interpersonal relationships and some primordial sentiments among the political actors influenced the securitization process.
- The leaders among themselves are both the securitizing actors and audiences in the securitization procedures.
- These challenges and some other problems in securitization processes keep ECOWAS a long way from a Deutschian security community.

Let us recollect the essential features of the theory of securitization, namely: the identification of a security threat against a particular referent object of security; the securitization of such threats by a securitizing actor; the deployment of extra-political measures to arrest the security situation; and finally a need for an 'audience who accept that something is an existential threat to a shared value' (Buzan et al, 1998; 31). Against this backdrop and in the case of Sierra Leone, the leaders especially at the sub-regional level are the securitizing actors; they are the audiences and they decide which emergency measure is appropriate according their interests. In the following section there is an analysis of this same relatedness between neo-patrimonialism and the securitization of security threats in Sierra Leone at extra-African level.

## Transnational patron-client relations and processes of securitization of security threats in Sierra Leone

> [The] UK remains committed to the people of Sierra Leone as they continue their journey from conflict to peace and stability and from poverty to prosperity. IMATT is a visible symbol of this commitment. IMATT's presence in Sierra Leone is evidence of a long-term partnership built on a mutual commitment to creating a better future for all Sierra Leoneans.
>
> (Interview with Derek Munroe, member of International Military Assistance Training Team (IMATT) in Freetown, 2011)

One of the revelations of post-Cold War international politics was that states would calculate maximum benefits and minimal losses in any engagement such as intervening in conflicts; more so when such interventions were in weak states in Africa. Such logic punctures the ethical, humanitarian or altruistic claims made by political actors. The security crises in Sierra Leone in the 1990s threw much light on this aspect of international politics. With the end of the Cold War and the crumbling of allegiances, favour-for-support neo-patrimonial relations between patron and client states in the wars in Sierra Leone highlighted the security calculus of patron states. Alao (1998) argued that security developments in Sierra Leone were a salutary lesson around the lack of concern about the fate of small nations in the post-Cold War era. But Williams (2001;140), citing Tony Blair's New Labour's manifesto which articulated an 'ethical dimension' to foreign policy, argued that Alao's (1998) position should be reassessed as it was Britain's role in the Sierra Leone crises that salvaged the situation. It is argued in this section that the intervention in Sierra Leone by Britain was belated. The reason behind this was that although Britain and Sierra Leone have some historical ties by implication of colonialism, at the point of the war in Sierra Leone Britain did not perceive the country as strategically important and thus did not securitize its security issues. Despite the ties, 'by and large Sierra Leone

was a "non-strategic country" to the UK since it had relatively few current investments or any other substantial domestic interests in the country' (Pickering, 2009; 23). The manner of the securitization carried some neo-patrimonial patron-client undertones rather than the security interests of Sierra Leone or the wider West African sub-region.

### *Britain and Sierra Leone: neo-patrimonial relationship and securitization processes of threats*

Unlike in Liberia where there was obvious support from America to some regimes that kowtowed to its bidding – Liberia offered some strategic importance to America – Sierra Leone did not enjoy such privileges. Williams (2001; 154) confirmed that 'Britain's geostrategic interests and investments in Sierra Leone are negligible'. This section looks at how the international political environment, the interest (or lack thereof) and political mindset of Britain as Sierra Leone's patron state in a neo-patrimonial power equation have influenced the securitization processes and the need for urgency in security development in Sierra Leone. Attention is specifically focused on the war period and post-reconstruction of the security sector in Sierra Leone. The focus is on the impact of colonial and big-power patron linkages made apparent by the choice of either intervening or not in Sierra Leone's wars. It is concluded that the interests of Britain seriously influenced the extent of securitization attached to the Sierra Leone crises in the 1990s. In May 2000 at the height of RUF savagery in Sierra Leone, several UK, EU and Commonwealth citizens were held hostage by Foday Sankoh and a group of armed rebels. Britain roused itself to rescue the hostages in 'Operation Palliser' (Ashlee and Haenlein, 2013; Pickering, 2009). Prior to that engagement, certain factors were considered:

> The British government's decision to intervene militarily in Sierra Leone in May 2000 can be understood as a combination of five imperatives: a concern to protect British citizens; the humanitarian impulse to 'do something' as Sierra Leone teetered on the brink of a crisis that could be averted by the use or threat of military force; the defence of democracy; the need to live up to the commitment it made about the 'ethical dimension' of foreign policy; and the perception that the future credibility of UN peacekeeping operations was at stake, particularly in Africa.
>
> (Williams 2001, 155)

These were summarized in Prime Minister Tony Blair's 1999 speech in Chicago. Though no mention was made of Sierra Leone specifically, the overriding question before such intervention was: did Britain have any national security interests to warrant securitization of the issues in Sierra Leone? It is argued that underneath every other motive is first of all seeing

Sierra Leone as its client state. It did not matter that Kofi Annan, the UN Secretary General, had asked France, the USA and Britain to intervene (see Connaughton, 2002; 83; and Robertson, 2007; 5). The critical question could be: could France have intervened in Sierra Leone or Liberia without Britain leading the operation? Or could Britain intrude in any French colony if not as a support to France? For instance, Britain offered to help train Malian soldiers as part of their contribution to fighting terrorists in the region (BBC News, 2013). The point is that France cannot stroll into Nigeria or Ghana (for example) and Britain cannot equally do so in Burkina Faso or Niger. If they do, it is as a backup to the colonial master whose sphere of influence a particular state falls under. Colonial days may have come and gone and the Cold War era may have long since passed, but West African states and Africa in general are still balkanised along colonial lines and former spheres of influence and to that effect, critical security decisions and arrangements in the sub-region suffer from that lack of uniformity or a common agenda.

The point here is that a combination of Britain's special interest in Sierra Leone – the lives, business and properties of its citizens and the fact of colonial heritage brought Britain into Sierra Leone at the height of the crisis and after. This book is not fully convinced that the securitization of the crises in Sierra Leone and the eventual intervention prioritised the security interests of the Sierra Leonean people. For instance consider that it could have been a move by Britain to clear the bad image resulting from the 1998 'Arms to Africa' affair, an embarrassing instance of incoherence in which a UK company (Sandline) shipped arms into Sierra Leone with FCO endorsement in circumvention of the UN sanctions (Pickering, 2009; 28). Also important could be a need to protect its credibility in the face of obvious and overwhelming defeat that the United Nations Mission in Sierra Leone (UNAMSIL) faced at the hands of rebel forces. This would be a serious blow to the image of both the United Nations and Britain. The UK played the card of protecting the citizens because of the reactions that would come from the populace back home. It is not convincing therefore that the Sierra Leonean issue was securitized bearing in mind the security of the weak and shadow government in Freetown. It is strongly argued that had Britain securitized the issue from the beginning, the crisis would not have gone out of control. This is also not playing down the fact that British intervention eventually acted as a catalyst that ended the stalemate. Consider that the distinguishing feature of securitization is a specific rhetorical structure (survival, priority of action 'because if the problem is not handled it will be too late, and we will not exist to remedy our failure' (Buzan et al, 1998; 26).

At the end of the war an International Military Assistance Training Team (IMATT) was established in 2002 when the rebels had been disarmed by the UN. This team of about 115 personnel is under the leadership of Britain and based in Freetown. On 8 October 2011 the researcher arrived at the IMATT office in Freetown, Sierra Leone to meet with the team representative Derek

Munroe, Chief Warrant Officer. The intention was to ascertain, among other things, the UK government's involvement in IMATT, the aims and the relationship with the security and securitization processes in Sierra Leone and wider West Africa. Munroe's answers to the questions further reinforce the role of colonial heritage in the security of West Africa and particularly Sierra Leone where Britain has taken it upon itself to rebuild, consolidate and ensure its role is not usurped by any other external political actor.

According to Munroe, IMATT is being funded by the UK government even though there are other partners – the USA, Canada, Ghana and Nigeria. Because Sierra Leone does not have the military capability to be autonomous security-wise, IMATT is useful to help the Republic of Sierra Leone Armed Forces (RSLAF) develop their own professional military capability. Remember that UN mission in Sierra Leone was the biggest ever UN peacekeeping mission. But by 2011, there were few UN peacekeepers in Sierra Leone: the role had been taken over by the UK. The aim here is to point out the selective, possessive and exclusive involvement of former colonial masters in the continent of Africa and particularly in West Africa with regard to securitization of issues of security. If the client country is Francophone, Anglophone or Lusophone, the patron helper or supporter will be France, Britain or Portugal thereby leaving the security and securitization of threats in the states at the whims and caprices of the external patrons.

It is doubtful whether Britain could have this manner of military engagement in any French-speaking country without courting a face-off with France and neither can France freely and easily do so in an Anglophone client state. This does not detract from the two sometimes embarking upon joint military engagements, such as the one currently happening in Mali where France is leading the operations but Britain is offering to help train Mali's army. It must be stated that both of them, as well as the European Union, have common interests in securitizing the security situation in the Sahel – efforts to stop terrorist networks from using the Sahel region as a safe haven for their operations. This could have serious security implications for Europe and the commercial interests of these patron states. The security of Sierra Leone in the case of this chapter or wider West Africa in the case of the whole study come second as an afterthought of how it will affect international security where the interests of the patron powers are.

To conclude this section, certain vital conclusions can be made: global geopolitics highlight the idea that the interests of nations come first before other considerations in relation to other actors. In the context of Britain and Sierra Leone, their neo-patrimonial relations and securitization of threats flow from some established facts:

- Sierra Leone as a weak and shadow state lacked any institutionalised framework for security. Whatever securitization was witnessed was only ad hoc and reflected the need and interests of the neo-patrimonial leaders and equally showed failure of politics of securitization.

- The post-Cold War crises only highlighted that and Sierra Leone had to depend on external actors for rescue.
- Being a client state of Britain by virtue of colonial connectedness but lacking in strategic benefits, Britain was reluctant to give it securitization urgency.
- It was only when Britain's vital interests were compromised that it decided to help a client state by intervening to rescue British citizens trapped in Freetown, to protect the credibility of the United Nations and eventually the establishment of IMATT to help train Sierra Leone's Army.

Threat definition was a function of what the interests of the political actors (in this case the patron state, Britain) are. They are the securitizing actors and they chose the measures to adopt. The audience in this context is not the Sierra Leone people or West Africa but the electorates in England or other European partners who require explanations for every emergency action taken. The following section concludes the chapter with an overall evaluation, taking into account the major ideas of securitization theory and the relationship with neo-patrimonial statehood in relation to Sierra Leone.

## Conclusion and overall evaluation

According to the Copenhagen School of security analysis:

> based on a clear idea of the nature of security, securitization studies aims to gain an increasingly precise understanding of who securitizes, on what issues (threats), for whom (referent objects), why, with what results, and, not least, under what conditions (i.e., what explains when securitization is successful).
>
> (Buzan et al, 1998; 32)

This sums up the kernel of this study with regard to Africa's security analysis. It is suggested that approaching Africa's security studies taking into account all the above elements will provide a richer understanding of Africa's security dynamics. The securitization concept can further be simplified into these steps: there is a threat; someone identifies the threat and constructs requiring serious attention; this calls for emergency action and this process of action can have effects because it operates outside the rules of normal politics (Buzan, et al, 1998; 26). It is also suggested that securitization can be ad hoc thus just dealing with an urgent issue, or institutionalised to take care of persistent threats. Securitizing actors include political actors, bureaucracies, governments, lobbyists and pressure groups. Traditionally, the referent object of security is the state but has widened to include other sectors. Moreover, the idea of securitization has made it possible that the state can also be securitized as a threat to other referent objects such as sub-

state actors. Very important to this study also is the idea that the process of securitization is only complete when it has been accepted by an audience. The definition of this audience has become problematic in applying the idea of securitization but this has been usefully re-conceptualised recently in the literature by Leonard and Kaunert (2011). In the context of West Africa, and Liberia and Sierra Leone in particular, one is confronted with not just who the audiences is but also what the threats are, who constructs these threats and decides the emergency actions to be taken and the appropriateness of such steps. It is therefore argued that these are a function of the nature of statehood or the political culture that operates in the sub-region – in this chapter it has been established that neo-patrimonialism characterises the nature of the state in Sierra Leone and other states in West Africa (see chapter two). It is a system where the leader defines, controls and dominates the institutions of the state security and does so for his or her security interests; the survival of the regime (Clapham, 1995). In other words, the regime is the referent object needing security. The processes of securitizing threats which are more ad hoc than institutionalised are decided by the patron leaders. He decides what the threats are and he does so from the perspective of the regime as the referent object of security. An assessment has been done of this relatedness between the processes of securitization and the political culture of neo-patrimonialism at three levels, first in Liberia and in this chapter, Sierra Leone. The three levels are national, sub-regional and transnational. Securitization's Eurocentric origins and application follows an established pattern that recognises common issues of threat to states or members of the European Union, for instance, immigration, terrorism, illegal drugs or energy security. The securitizing actors could be states through their representatives who also have the means to employ emergency measures outside the normal bounds of politics. For Leonard and Kaunert (2011), the audience is the members of the government who need to be persuaded every step of the way before securitization is considered complete. It may also include the public whose opinions are very much sought after especially during election years even if they are not always respected after the elections.

In the context of evidence from Sierra Leone, relating them to wider West Africa and following strictly the Copenhagen School's concept of securitization, it is overwhelmingly evident that it needs proper reconceptualisation to fit well into the political culture of neo-patrimonialism in the sub-region. Whereas in the European Union or other more advanced democratic states in the West, the rules of the game are well laid out, constituted political process; in Sierra Leone, Liberia and wider West Africa, the reverse is the case. Through the regimes examined in Sierra Leone at the three stages of the history of security in West Africa (see chapter four) and at the three levels of analysis (national, regional and transnational – see chapter two) certain findings were made. The security threats were found not to be what the general population considered a threat to their individual

or general security. The regimes at different stages were the referent object of security needing to be provided with security by whatever measures. The patron leaders were the securitizing actors who constructed these security threats. The emergency securitization measure outside the bounds of normal politics included personal security measures, local militias and in some cases private security companies. The audiences are usually the clients, friends, and families of the patron leaders who do the biddings of the patron leaders in a favour-for-support manner reminiscent of neo-patrimonial arrangement but do not include the larger population.

At the sub-regional level, it was discovered that what happens at the national level is just a microcosm of larger West African sub-region. At this level, what defines the threats is what the leaders construct as a security issue. It is usually constructed from the perspective of the neo-patrimonial interrelationships among the political actors, their security and economic interests. There is no commonality of interests among the leaders as to what the security threats are or the securitization measures. The security interests of the people of West Africa as such are neglected. Audiences are the leaders who only need one another to be persuaded to complete the process of securitization. Finally, the transnational neo-patrimonial relations between the patron and client states also influenced the securitization processes of Sierra Leone, Liberia and wider West Africa. It was found that following from colonial connectedness, Cold War dynamics and post-Cold War international security environment, the interests of the transnational patron state (Britain) determined whether a threat situation would be securitized. Such was the case in Sierra Leone, especially during the civil war when Britain failed to act until its interests – the lives and properties of its citizens in Sierra Leone and the credibility of United Nations – were seriously compromised. It was neither the security of Sierra Leone nor the sub-region that was given priority in the securitization process. The audiences were the British public and the members of some elite clubs with some interests in Sierra Leone. This reflects the inconsistency noticed in policy actions of extra-African patrons towards West African issues. It is not argued that securitization cannot be applied to West African states but the issues of threat, securitizing actor, emergency measures and audiences will need to be identified via understanding the neo-patrimonial arrangements.

These security issues are securitized according to the interests of the patrons at each stage of the ebb and flow of international geopolitics. During the Cold War, security threats in West Africa were securitized according to how it would matter in the Cold War equation. The table below illustrates the identities of the threats, securitizing actors and audiences in Sierra Leone at the three analytical levels proposed in chapter two. For example, at the national level, threats are identified as anything that works against the stability and survival of regimes or authority of rebel groups. The securitizing actors are the regimes which could be military or civilian or rebel group leaders. The audiences are the cronies, rebels, supporters and clients of the

*Table 5.1* Securitization processes in Sierra Leone

| *Securitization process in Sierra Leone* | *National level* | *Sub-regional level* | *Extra-African level* |
|---|---|---|---|
| Securitizing actor | Civilian, military or rebel group leaders; RUF/SL, Foday Sankow | Leaders of the ECOWAS body (Nigeria) | International patrons (Britain) |
| Audience | Clients, cronies, rebels and supporters of the leaders | The leaders in solidarity with one another | Their public, media or other interested international partners |
| Threats | Any threat or opposition to the regimes or the rebel groups' interest | Threats to security, peace, interpersonal relationships, and regimes of the community | National security and economic interests of the patron nations. |

leaders. The picture is replicated also at both sub-regional and extra-African levels.

In the immediate post-Cold War era, the emerging issues were almost not securitized as the patrons faced a more important region – East Europe. Immediately after the 9/11 terrorist attacks, West Africa's security issues started being securitized not because of the security interests of the people of the sub-region but because of the security and economic interests of the patrons from the West. These issues concerning processes of securitization in West Africa and its relatedness to the political culture of neo-patrimonialism will be further discussed in the concluding chapter of this book, where they will be compared together with the findings of the previous chapter on the manifestations of influence of neo-patrimonial culture on securitization in Liberia. From this, an overall assessment of the extent of the relatedness of the two issues in West Africa will be considered.

# 6 Health security in West Africa
## From HIV/AIDS, EDV/Ebola to COVID-19

This chapter analyses how the emergence of the global health security norm of the COVID-19 pandemic has played out as a threat to African security – the appearance of the foreign virus. The chapter provides a framework for understanding the securitization of the COVID-19 epidemic as an international norm defined and promoted by the World Health Organisation, and cascaded down to the level of African member states. However, at an African level, it encounters resistance as a 'foreign virus'. This is in line with previous epidemics, such as Ebola (Kamradt-Scott et al, 2015). The predominant reported weakness in West African national responses was a pervasive lack of trust in government institutions and mistrust up to the highest level of government in Liberia and Sierra Leone. This chapter aims to assess the impact of the new global heath security norm on Africa's own identity, and, as a consequence, how this identity plays out in its security understanding vis-à-vis Europe and the international community. As was the case with Ebola, with COVID-19 several communities initially refused to believe that the virus outbreak was real, judging it to be part of a conspiracy by Europe and the international community. Such beliefs can be explained through two factors: (1) Africa's relationship with Europe which developed from colonialism, has followed a master-servant relationship; and (2) Africa's neo-patrimonial governance structures, derived from the aforementioned factor. The global health crisis brought about by the Corona virus has seriously impacted on these strands of relationships and Africa's security understanding.

Foreign actors have primarily driven the securitization agenda in Africa with most of its security architecture derived from the immediate post-independence period. African security during the Cold War was dictated by the geo-political interests, manipulations and manoeuvres of the great powers, whereby countries on the continent of Africa, just like other Third World countries, were mere pawns. Regimes were protected no matter how bad they were as long as they supported either of the great powers. Every other source of insecurity, such as internal or intrastate conflict, was unconstitutionally and draconically quelled and subdued. Because of this external involvement in the internal politics of African states, they became

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the battleground for proxy wars as conflicts and armed opposition to the incumbent regimes escalated.

This chapter will analyse why a globally accepted health security norm, such as fighting a communicable disease during a pandemic, such as the COVID-19 pandemic, was perceived in Africa as a security threat emanating from external – foreign – actors, bringing a 'foreign virus' into Africa. This fear was derived from West Africa's ontological security fears, ultimately based on its colonial past and a relationship of exploitation by the West, notably European colonial powers. The chapter makes this argument is three stages: firstly, it establishes the fact that health security has, in fact, become a globally accepted security norm, from which the COVID-19 security norm is derived; secondly, it outlines the concept of ontological security, as developed in recent international relations scholarship and, subsequently, investigates the precise ontological security fears in West Africa based on its colonial and post-colonial history; finally, it investigates the case empirically by juxtaposing the AIDS, Ebola and COVID-19 pandemics in West Africa, where it demonstrates that the same reaction to the 'foreign virus' can be observed.

## Global health security, securitization and the World Health Organization

Health issues have become of significant importance to securitization scholars (Balzacq, Léonard & Ruzicka, 2016), often due to global mobility, which can be affected by global pandemics (McLean, 2008) such as COVID-19. In this debate, questions about the normative and methodological dimensions of securitization of global health have been at the forefront, for instance: should health problems be securitized? have securitizing moves in relation to health issues been successful? (Balzacq, Léonard & Ruzicka, 2016). We can identify three important contributions: firstly, Elbe's work on the normative dilemma in relation to the securitization of HIV/AIDS (Elbe, 2006), whereby he contends the fact that securitization leads to raising awareness, and, thus, a wider recognition of the negative effects followed by a stronger allocation of resources to curb the pandemic. However, he warns of the massive state involvement at the expense of other actors, leading 'toward military and intelligence organizations with the power to override the civil liberties of persons with HIV/AIDS' and the 'threat-defence logic' (Elbe, 2006, p.119). Building on this, secondly, Youde (2008) agrees with Elbe about the disadvantages of securitizing health issues, identifying three main costs of the securitization of avian flu: (1) inappropriate responses with traditional security means, (2) increased vulnerability to other threats as a result of disproportionate resources being allocated to the securitized threat, and (3) an increased gap between Western states and the rest of the world. Thirdly, Sjöstedt (2008) explains the securitization process of HIV/AIDS in Russia in the face of policy-makers who did not believe the threat narrative

and dismissed it as a Western construction. In her contribution, she utilises Finnemore and Sikkink's account of 'norm cascade' (Finnemore and Sikkink, 1998). This chapter follows Sjöstedt (2008) and Vieira (2007), who provides a framework for analysing the securitization of the HIV/AIDS epidemic as an international norm defined and promoted by multilateral bodies. The chapter agrees with Enemark (2017) that posit that the UNSC, as an important actor in establishing the global health security norm, framed health issue in security terms, but also aimed at replacing one kind of security logic with another as a basis for remedial action.

Kamradt-Scott (2010) analysed the World Health Organization (WHO) Secretariat as a norm entrepreneur in establishing a new norm in global communicable disease control. In his work, he utilised Finnemore and Sikkink's (1998) 'norm life cycle' theory and analysed how the new practice of using 'unofficial sources of information to verify disease outbreaks' was progressively advanced under the guise of revising the International Health Regulations (IHR). Notably, Kamradt-Scott (2010) contends that a new practice was established as a norm in the WHO: the use of nongovernmental sources of information. According to Kamradt-Scott (2016), the WHO secretariat has promoted its ability to manage global health security. This has been subsequently defined as 'the activities required, both proactive and reactive, to minimize vulnerability to acute public health events that endanger the collective health of populations living across geographical regions and international boundaries'. According to Davies, Kamradt-Scott, and Rushton (2015), global health governance underwent a significant set of reforms in 2005, which resulted in the revision of the International Health Regulations (IHR), and focused on disease surveillance and reporting mechanisms. Thus, it constituted a broader consideration of issues that could potentially entail health risks globally. It also opened the way for the intervention of nonstate actors in disease notification. Davies, Kamradt-Scott and Rushton (2015, p.143) demonstrated convincingly how states were able to 'reconceptualize their interests in ways that favoured cooperation over isolationism'. External shocks (such as the 2002–2004 SARS outbreak) were interpreted in a broad ideational context whereby states' preferences were shaped by concerns about what constitutes responsible international behaviour. Despite instances of noncompliance, states often adjust their behaviour to meet new expectations. In their view, the IHR revision process constituted the 'codification of a new set of expectations' (Davies, Kamradt-Scott and Rushton, 2015, p. 3). Security vocabulary and rationality were fundamental in the process leading to the implementation of the IHR and helped to convince states that it was in their interest to cooperate more closely towards a more effective and proportionate international response.

The WHO was established in 1948 with the express objective of improving the health of populations worldwide (Kamradt-Scott, 2016, p.402). The WHO constitution states its main objective as ensuring 'the attainment by all peoples of the highest possible level of health' (WHO, 2005). Its

headquarters are in Geneva, Switzerland, with six semi-autonomous regional offices and 150 field offices worldwide (Davies et al, 2015). Within the mandate of its objective, the containment and eradication of infectious diseases was considered to be the WHO's primary task, for which it was given considerable authority and autonomy in order to achieve this as a precondition for peace and security. Infectious diseases would adversely affect not only the health of populations, but also the global economy, by disrupting international trade (Kamradt-Scott, 2016, p.402). Thus, the WHO was given the objective of eliminating infectious diseases wherever they arose, and given several specific powers to: (1) adopt regulations pertaining to sanitary and quarantine measures that, subject to two-thirds of member states approval, would be automatically binding on all governments; (2) designate disease and public health-related nomenclatures; and (3) pass emergency powers that, once enacted, would allow the director-general to use every available resource at the organisation's disposal to respond to any event requiring 'immediate action' (WHO Constitution, 2005; articles 21 and 28). The WHO has played a significant role in several public health achievements, most notably the eradication of smallpox, the near-eradication of polio, and the development of an Ebola vaccine (Kamradt-Scott, 2020). In stark contrast, however, the organisation's response to several pandemics has been questioned (Kamradt-Scott, 2016): (1) the response to the 2003 Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS) outbreak was seen as efficient, competent and effective; (2) the response to the 2009 H1N1 pandemic and the 2014 outbreak of Ebola Virus Disease (EVD) in West Africa has been severely criticized as inept, dysfunctional, even shambolic. This has led to several independent external reviews of the organisation's performance. McInnes (2015) suggests that criticisms of the WHO's performance, including the subsequent 2014 Ebola crisis, but also those earlier epidemics, reflected also tensions between different forms of authority.

## Ontological security and health security in West Africa

The use of ontological security has proved to be of help to better understand the emotional reasons behind the fears of African citizens (Steele, 2008). Steele's (2008) book builds on previous work on ontological security, such as Mitzen (2006a), Kinnvall (2004) and Huysmans (1998). The concept is based on Anthony Giddens' definition of ontological security as 'sense of continuity and order in events'. Steele (2008) operationalises ontological security through the motivation of states. Firstly, for a state 'to be ontologically secure' it must 'possess answers to fundamental existential questions which all human life in some way addresses (Steele, 2008; 50–51). Secondly, agents turn actions into 'routines which contribute to their sense of 'continuity and order' that is so important to their sense of self' (Steele 2008). Ontological security is thus 'predictability in relationships to the world, which creates a desire for stable social identities' (ibid). Ontological Security

presents a specific type of challenge –a 'critical situation' – and can undermine a state's identity (Steele, 2008; 2–3). It can cause anxiety and shame. Thus, unlike the Copenhagen School definition of security as survival, ontological security is 'security as being', a concept borrowed from the field of social psychology. The concept of ontological security is primarily driven by emotion; 'the primary role of emotion in humans is to alert the individual experiencing the emotion that action in some situation is necessary' (Steele, 2008; 12–13). Thus, emotions help coordination actions by prioritising a selection of information.

Despite the fact that physical and ontological security are theoretically different, they are nonetheless intrinsically related. Traumatic events such as being the victim of violent crime, being a victim of terrorist attacks or subject to harsh physical traumas, may transform negatively personal and collective identities and unleash the feeling of ontological insecurity (Steele, 2008). Allied to the analysis of the discourses and practices, ontological security emerges as an auspicious theoretical and empirical input not only to this particular project within West African security studies arena, but similarly opens the door to novel theoretical and methodological approaches with the security studies in general acknowledging providing a more holistic approach to answer research questions. Issues related to the emergence of ontological (in) security are mainly related to the search for a self-identity that can emotionally structure the individual within its community. It turns out that when all that is socially known and inherently acquired, and when routines are disrupted, there is a destabilisation and a shudder of all that gives the individual and the society where he is inserted a sense of solidity and confidence, paving the way for ontological insecurity. The next part of this chapter will establish first Liberia's, and then Sierra Leone's, ontological security, its 'sense of continuity and order in events' (Steele, 2008), whereby it provides for the 'predictability in relationships to the world, which creates a desire for stable social identities' (Steele, 2008). This is very significant because a 'critical situation' or 'crisis', such as the health security crisis (AIDS, Ebola and COVID-19 pandemics) can undermine a state's identity (Steele, 2008; 2–3). Ontological security serves as 'security as being' and is primarily driven by emotion. Thus, emotions help coordination actions by prioritising a selection of information. The roots of West African ontological security are in its colonial past, as discussed in chapter two. They still cast a very large shadow over its present – as the next section will demonstrate.

## Infectious diseases, conspiracies and ontological security – the case of AIDS, Ebola and COVID-19

Historically, infectious diseases have brought about significant human death tolls (Bavel et al, 2020). In the previous section, we established Liberia's and Sierra Leone's ontological security, its 'sense of continuity and order in

events' (Steele, 2008). As will be shown in this section, this provides for the 'predictability in relationships to the world, which creates a desire for stable social identities' (Steele, 2008). In this section, we discuss how three infectious disease crisis were perceived and how threats were responded to during each of the pandemics in West Africa (albeit the section on HIV/AIDS will focus more on South Africa). This is crucial due to the fact that a 'critical situation' or 'crisis', such as the infectious disease crisis (AIDS, Ebola and COVID-19 pandemics) can undermine a state's identity. Ontological security here is primarily driven by emotions, which help by prioritising a selection of information that fits in the interpretive frame of individuals. According to Bavel et al. (2020), the primary emotional response during a pandemic is fear, which can make threats appear more urgent. Psychologically, fears can change people's behaviour if they feel capable of dealing with the threat, but leads to 'defensive reactions when they feel helpless to act' (Bavel et al, 2020). Moreover, people often display an 'optimism bias' (Bavel et al, 2020); they believe that bad things are more likely to happen to others than oneself, which leads people to underestimate their likelihood of contracting a disease. The emotional reaction to fear and threat also affects how people feel about and react to others, notably out-groups, which leads to higher levels of ethnocentrism, greater intolerance, less empathy and negative attitudes toward out-groups (Bavel et al, 2020). A crucial consequence of these emotional reactions is political polarisation (Bavel et al, 2020): (1) attitudinal polarisation through taking extreme opposing issue positions, and (2) affective polarisation, involving disliking and distrusting views from the opposing parties. The latter has political consequences, such as believing false information. This can lead to politically motivated reasoning and inaccurate beliefs, such as fake news, conspiracy theories and misinformation, which can flourish during existential crises. People have a psychological need to explain large events with proportionally large causes, leading them to believe in conspiracy theories about events in times of crisis (Bavel et al, 2020). Conspiracy beliefs may also fuel hostility towards out-groups.

### *HIV/AIDS*

Heart-breaking images of Africans and children orphaned by HIV/AIDS have dominated global media reporting, contributing to negative visions of Africa (Mulwo et al, 2012) reminiscent of Edward Said's (1978) analysis in *Orientalism* applied to Africa. The discussion about HIV/AIDS has become very divisive, especially in relation to the political debate in South Africa, where it has become known as the HIV/AIDS denialism, linked very closely to former South African President Mbeki (Said, 1978). While not intending to exonerate Mbeki, this section aims to provide a broader interpretation of this controversial position linked to ontological security fears derived from colonial and post-colonial times in Africa. In fact, even though this debate is

primarily linked to South Africa in relation to HIV/AIDS, it provides identical arguments, as advanced in West Africa during the Ebola and COVID-19 pandemics. This is the reason why it is worth looking at HIV/AIDS denialism in more detail.

Ostergard (2002) analysed the HIV/AIDS virus as a security threat in Africa. In Africa, the earliest known cases of infection were in western equatorial Africa, in southeast Cameroon. There are two known genetically distinct AIDS viruses: human immunodeficiency virus-1 (hiv-1) and human immunodeficiency virus-2 (hiv-2), both of which are of primate origin, the sooty mangabey associated as the source for the latter virus strain, with the chimpanzee as the source of the former strain. The method of transmission of the virus is thought to be derived from the butchering of monkeys for human consumption (Hahn, 2005). Colonial medical practices of the twentieth century are thought to have helped HIV/AIDS become established in human populations by 1930, notably colonial forced labour and medical campaigns. The working hypothesis of medical researchers is that fleeing forced workers might have escaped from boats into forests, having to feed themselves with monkeys. The colonial use of unsterilised syringes is also thought to have contributed to the spread of the disease (Van Niekerk and Kopelman, 2005). The virus subsequently spread by river travel from the Sangha River in Cameroon, joining the Congo River past Kinshasa in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. The first epidemic of HIV/AIDS is believed to have occurred in Kinshasa in the 1970s, spreading in the 1980s across the globe until it became a global pandemic. Acquired immunodeficiency syndrome (AIDS) is a fatal disease caused by the slow-acting human immunodeficiency virus (HIV). The virus causes immune system damage, leading to the AIDS syndrome.

In South Africa, the response from the government in the early days of the pandemic was very limited (Mulwo et al, 2012). One of the main subjects of contestation in the HIV/AIDS debate, especially in South Africa, was its African origin. The precise origin of HIV/AIDS was hotly disputed by a number of African academics and opinion leaders. Richard and Rosalind Chirimuuta's book *AIDS, Africa and Racism* queried how the origins of a 'homosexual' disease from the US came to be associated with Africa, which they perceived as racism:

> The depth to which racist ideology has penetrated the western psyche remains profound. […] When a new and deadly sexually transmitted disease, the Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome, emerged in the United States this decade [1980s], it was almost inevitable that black people would be associated with its origin and transmission…. […] Africa is responsible for infecting the world…. […] How is it possible that this predominately American disease has become attributed to [the] African continent?
>
> (Chirimuuta, 1987; 3)

Others suggested that HIV/AIDS did not originate in Africa, but was imported to Africa from the West (Mulwo et al, 2012). More extreme voices even claimed that the disease was part of a 'western' project of 'African genocide' with the intention of annihilating specifically people of African (black) descent (Mulwo et al, 2012; 6). HIV/AIDS thus continued atrocities 'engineered by the West, which include slavery, colonialism and neo-colonialism, and globalization' (Mulwo et al, 2012). One Kenyan journalist suggested that 'foreigners infected with HIV were deliberately being sent to Africa as part of a global conspiracy of multinational drug companies to produce African "guinea pigs" for Western AIDS research' (cited in Mulwo et al, 2012). Former South African President Thabo Mbeki subsequently became the face of denialism in Africa due to his controversial statements where he questioned the causal relationship between HIV and AIDS on various occasions between 1997 and 2003 (Mulwo et al, 2012). This is very much in line with the theoretical framework of this chapter. A 'crisis', such as the infectious disease crisis (here Aids, but subsequent section will demonstrate similar arguments related to the Ebola and COVID-19 pandemics) can undermine the ontological security of a state's identity, primarily driven by emotions linked to the interpretive frame of mind of individuals – here linked to colonialism, neo-colonialism and foreign exploitation. In line with Bavel et al (2020), the emotional response during a pandemic is fear, which can lead to 'defensive reactions when [they] feel helpless to act'. This argument can be further substantiated regarding the Ebola and the COVID-19 pandemics.

### *Ebola*

The Western African Ebola virus epidemic (2013–2016) was the most significant pandemic of Ebola virus disease (EVD) in history, concentrated primarily in Guinea, Liberia and Sierra Leone. Initially recorded in Guinea in December 2013, EVD spread to neighbouring Liberia and Sierra Leone, causing significant mortality. McInnes (2015) investigated the outbreak of Ebola in West Africa in 2015. According to WHO estimates, by June 2015, there had been 27,181 cases and 11,162 deaths, which totalled more than in all of the previous outbreaks of the disease combined. The cases were significantly located mostly in the three West African states of Guinea, Liberia and Sierra Leone. The initial virus infection is thought to occur when an Ebola virus is transmitted to a human by contact with an infected animal's body fluids, normally with bats as the hosts for ebolaviruses. It had hitherto been believed that human-to-human transmission occurred only via direct contact with blood or bodily fluids from an infected person, by contact with the body of a person who had died of Ebola, or by contact with objects recently contaminated with the body fluids of an infected person. However, the Ebola virus can also be transmitted sexually. The major challenge African countries face in the area of health is poor health care systems. The

national budget on health by African countries is low. This results in insufficient and dilapidated infrastructures due to a lack of resources. African countries do not have an adequate number of trained health workers or the standby capacity to deal with any domestic surge in health crisis. Health workers are leaving in large numbers to other countries for better pay and conditions of service. There is a continuous surge in medical tourism by the rich and privileged while local health services suffer. These were evident in Liberia and Sierra Leone during the Ebola crisis. There was no way the governments in Freetown and Monrovia could manage the crisis. They had to depend on assistance from external entities. But they also had to grapple with the impression from the population that they were receiving orders from foreign government. Foreign military assistance came majorly from the United States of America and Britain.

According to Adam Kamradt-Scott et al (2015), one reported weakness in national responses across both countries was a pervasive lack of trust in government institutions. Mistrust extended to the highest levels of government in Liberia and Sierra Leone, and it was often remarked that the only trustworthy part of government was the military. In general, mistrust impeded the Ebola response and coordination efforts in a number of important ways. Several communities in Sierra Leone and Liberia initially refused to believe that the Ebola outbreak was real, judging it to be part of a government conspiracy to secure new funding from Western donors. As the epidemic progressed, suspicion turned to the international community. Conspiracy theories soon emerged; for example, that Ebola had been intentionally introduced to depopulate West Africa for its mineral resources, with some suggesting the national governments were in league with this plan. As a result of these beliefs spreading, Liberia and Sierra Leone reportedly experienced isolated incidents of violence against government health workers and/or INGO representatives.

Omidian et al (2014) provided an anthropological study of the fears created by the EVA in Liberia and Sierra Leone, which provides us with an excellent picture of the ontological security of West African state's identity, which is driven by these fears and emotions – and linked to colonialism, neo-colonialism and foreign exploitation. The outbreak in West Africa (Guinea Conakry, Liberia and Sierra Leone) caused significant anxiety, fear and panic in these three countries. Their study was carried out to better understand the local beliefs and practices likely to enhance or hinder efforts to respond to the outbreak in Liberia. Focus group discussions produced information on perceptions regarding Ebola, notably regarding rumours or stories participants had heard. This was followed by a discussions of the accuracy of information. Over the two weeks of this study, Omidian et al (2014) witnessed people's perceptions shift toward greater acceptance of the reality of Ebola and deeper frustration with the lack of health services. Initially, few participants admitted knowing a person with Ebola. Christian participants in the study believed the outbreak to be a curse from God due

related to various 'evil practices by the leadership of the country'. Traditionalist participants reported that Ebola (EVD) was imported to Liberia by the 'White people from the West', believing that doctors and nurses were 'extracting the body parts of their loved ones who were taken to the hospital'. A common conspiracy found in every interview conducted was that 'people were getting Ebola because the wells have been poisoned with formaldehyde' (Omidian et al, 2014). Urban educated participants did not believe Ebola to be real. In their view, the 'Liberian government created the situation in order to generate income for themselves'. They further elaborated that 'the reason we have had two waves of the outbreak is that the government got 1 million US dollars during the first wave and decided they wanted more money. By making a much larger outbreak they have managed to get promises for US $5 million' (Omidian et al, 2014). Some participants suggested that 'EVD is viral terrorism by the West' (Omidian et al, 2014). Thus, as suggested before, anxieties and fears created by the EVA in Liberia and Sierra Leone, driven by ontological security concerns, provided frames of interpretation of events linked to colonialism, neo-colonialism and foreign exploitation. This confirms the findings of the case of HIV/AIDS and can be further substantiated by the case of COVID-19 below.

### *COVID-19*

As analysed with Ebola in the previous section, pandemics and their responses are social and political phenomena that evoke broader, historically embedded, anxieties linked to foreign intervention, conflict and control. As discussed before, some West African populations interpreted Ebola as fabrications of foreign or governmental agencies seeking political power, genocide or land dispossession (Fairhead, 2016). These fears reflected lived local histories and local memories. From the outside, they were framed, problematically, in terms of local ignorance, rumour and misinformation to be corrected (Fairhead, 2016; Abramowitz, 2017). COVID-19 also evoked broader anxieties, as previously seen with HIV/AIDS and EDV. The devastating 2014–2016 Ebola Virus Epidemic in West Africa showed how badly prepared the respective countries were to the crisis. Thus, the COVID-19 pandemic caused considerable fear in West Africa.

The 2019–21/22 pandemic is an ongoing pandemic of coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) caused by severe acute respiratory syndrome coronavirus-2 (SARS-CoV-2). Medically, this is a related virus to SARS. It was first identified in Wuhan, China, in December 2019, subsequently declared as a Public Health Emergency of International Concern on 30 January 2020, and acknowledged as a pandemic by the World Health Organization (WHO) on 11 March 2020. On 11 February 2020, the WHO established COVID-19 as the name of the disease, while UN Secretary-General António Guterres had agreed to provide the support of the entire UN system in the response. A UN Crisis Management Team was activated as a result. On 25 February

2020, the WHO urged the world to do more to prepare for a possible coronavirus pandemic. On 11 March 2020, the WHO declared the coronavirus outbreak a pandemic (*The Guardian*, 14 April 2020). This declaration officially institutionalised the securitization of COVID-19 as a global security norm.

There is a strong similarity between the approach adopted in managing Ebola and the current COVID-19 pandemic. In early January 2020, the African Centre for Disease Control and Prevention raised concern over reported cases of pneumonia coming from Wuhan (Massinga et al, 2020; 996). The Emergency Operations Centre for the pandemic was immediately put in place as four countries in Asia confirmed cases of COVID-19. Experience from 2014 Ebola issues was enough to spur African leaders to consider COVID-19 a serious security threat to the continent. They were fully aware that failing to handle the pandemic would negatively impact on the health, economy and security of the continent. The approaches in handling the crisis showed some commonality among the countries in Africa (Massinga et al, 2020; 999). Towards the end of March 2020, a few African countries were beginning to record cases of the pandemic (Cameroon, Algeria, Egypt, Nigeria, Togo, South Africa, and Senegal). Most of the initial cases in these countries could be traced to Europe which had become the epicentre of the disease by this period. For example, the index case in Nigeria happened to be an Italian citizen returning from Italy to work in Nigeria (Alagbaso and Abubakar, 2020). A second case was also a Nigerian citizen who had contact with the Italian citizen. Coming from the history of disease outbreaks in the continent African leaders needed to be serious in managing the issue of COVID-19. It took priority over all other issues. Tourism, trade, sporting activities, social events and holidays had to be suspended. Bill Gates warned that Africa could record as high as 10 million deaths from the disease (Knapton, 2020). Containment and mitigation measures were put in place reflecting the global health environment. Since the outbreak of the disease in China, several countries became seriously affected by huge numbers of cases of infection and death tolls. Countries were beginning to shut their borders to foreigners to avoid further spikes in cases. African countries had to follow the same line of action as countries in the West and in Asia. They instituted travel bans on most affected Asian and European countries including the United Kingdom, Italy, Germany, China, Iran, Japan, Norway, South Korea, the Netherlands, Spain and the United States. There was also closure of borders except for cargos and freight (Kazeem, 2020). Considering that Africa is a destination point for most of these countries for business and many other exchanges, the benefits from such interactions were no longer considered important enough. Health security was now given serious attention.

The disease was beginning to appear to be a foreign disease. Suspicion arose among Africans that COVID-19, like Ebola, was a grand design by the West to depopulate the African continent (Noko, 2020). There was uproar against the remark by Bill Gates that there would be a high death toll from

Africa arising from the pandemic. News reports of high rise in cases were greeted with nonchalance and disbelief. Leaders were thought to be complicit in such an unproven conspiracy. Directives to get people to abide by the rules of social distancing were not adhered to because COVID-19 was not accepted as 'real'. For instance, in the Kano area of Nigeria, the governor made an argument that the cases of deaths recorded were as a result of 'mysterious circumstances' such as hypertension, diabetes, meningitis and acute malaria (Onuah, 2020). Citizens were suspicious as people from heavily infected areas were not allowed to go into other areas. COVID-19 also caused serious social dislocation as people were no longer able to interact and socialise freely for fear of contacting the disease. Social events were discontinued; churches, mosques, markets and restaurants were all shut. Considering the nature of the local economies, it was not easy to abide by those rules of social distancing.

It was only a matter of time until the disease started having a serious devastating impact on African countries and the deficiencies in the health services were exposed. Rising cases and deaths were recorded across African countries. Makeshift quarantine facilities started springing up in different countries. Some foreign assistance were recorded; 'in early February 2020, the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation committed US$20 million to help strengthen emergency operations centres, effective surveillance and contact tracing and isolation on the continent' (Massinga et al, 2020, 996). Each of the 55 countries in Africa also received some medical supplies, such as diagnostics and equipment from the Jack Ma Foundation (Africa CDC, 2020). However, African countries did their best in trying to provide some support to the citizens. Citizens resorted to helping themselves by producing masks for instance from local fabrics; hand sanitizers were made available in public places like markets. Senegal developed a COVID-19 testing kit that would in ten minutes detect a positive case, current or previous, through antigens in the saliva. The country did not record too many deaths. The same applies to Ghana with its extensive system of contact tracing, utilising a large number of community health workers and volunteers, and other innovative techniques such as pool testing in which multiple blood samples are tested and then followed up as individual tests only if a positive results is found. This approach is appreciated by the World Bank. Madagascar had to go the way of traditional herbal remedies such as Artemisia annua which claimed to have provided a cure to the country and is being exported to other African countries for trial. This was beneficial as African countries cannot afford expensive pharmaceutical products.

In conclusion, the African response to COVID-19 became a self-help approach with the whole world engulfed in the pandemic. At the same time, suspicion that the pandemic was not originally an African disease – but rather a foreign disease – resulted in the positive reception of conspiracies, as with HIV/AIDS and Ebola. Again, as with Ebola, these conspiracy theories have very clear links to ontological fears of colonial and post-colonial

times in West Africa where foreigners were bringing in misery, pain and hardship. The ontological security of Africa clearly shaped their perceptions of the pandemic as a foreign virus. This is very much in line with the theoretical framework of this chapter. This 'crisis', such as other infectious disease crises like AIV/AIDS or Ebola, can undermine the ontological security of a state's identity, primarily driven by emotions linked to the interpretive frame of mind of individuals – here linked to colonialism, neo-colonialism and foreign exploitation. In line with Bavel et al (2020), the emotional response during a pandemic is fear, which can lead to 'defensive reactions when [they] feel helpless to act'.

## Conclusion

This chapter analysed how the emergence of the global health security norm of the COVID-19 pandemic has played out as a threat to African security – it appeared in the form of a foreign virus. While the WHO rang the alarm bells globally to prevent the spread of the disease, and while the global health security norm of COVID-19 was generally accepted, it arrived in Africa as a foreign – Western – disease, despite its origin in China. This is a continuation of fears from previous epidemics, such as Ebola (Kamradt-Scott et al, 2015). This chapter suggested that ontological security fears in Africa were driving this process, fears derived from its colonial past and its past relationship with Europe and the West. As was the case with Ebola, with COVID-19, African citizens refused to believe that the virus outbreak was real. The use of ontological security, as conceptualised in this chapter, has proved to be of help to better understand the emotional reasons behind the apprehensions and fears of African citizens (Steele, 2008; 50–51). Ontological security has been defined here as the 'sense of continuity and order in events' (Steele, 2008). Ontological security thus achieves 'predictability in relationships to the world, which creates a desire for stable social identities' (Steele, 2008). The concept of ontological security is primarily driven by emotion; emotions help coordination actions by prioritising a selection of information. In the case of the COVID-19 pandemic, the predictable relationship between Africa and the West has been one of exploitation, as evidenced by colonial times. Western colonists would acquire African territory and resources to enrich Europe and the West. The net losers of this geopolitical game were Africans. Consequently, it is only understandable that the information from the COVID-19 pandemics, as was the case with Ebola, is one of Western exploitation of Africa. It is only too understandable that COVID-19 would be perceived as a foreign disease – perhaps to acquire African material resources. Conspiracy theories that use existing ontological security fears are likely to be accepted, against all medical evidence. Ontological security needs to provide a sense of continuity and order in events – and this is the established accepted relationship between Africa and the West, as seen from an Africa viewpoint.

# Conclusion

## West Africa and securitization

At the height of the Cold War, West African states and the continent at large were simply pawns in the political chessboard of East-West camps in their struggle for global hegemony. The intensity of the war configured the security relations of the Cold War antagonists with African states. In a continent bedevilled with despotic regimes, the interests of the superpowers were uppermost in 'establishing asymmetrical, neo-colonial, paternalistic relationships with some of Africa's most repressive regimes – for example Samuel Doe in Liberia' (Kieh and Kieh, 2014; 191). These states and the strategic advantage they offered were craved by the powers in order to advance their own security interests; relegating to the background the long-term interests of Africans such as regional security as a foundation for future stability, societal coherence and economic development. The end of the Cold War with all its security implications for West Africa, and the emerging security challenges starting from the crises of statehood in Liberia and Sierra Leone, jolted the sub-region into a new era in international politics. This was the era of finding African solutions to African security problems, having been divorced from the 'marriage of convenience' by the erstwhile Cold War partners. It also introduced an ambition by the sub-region to translate from being a security complex to a security community – taking upon itself the responsibility of crafting out its security direction and managing its security challenges. This book has shown how this ambition has lacked a clearly articulated, coordinated structure in defining the security direction of the sub-region. From Liberia and Sierra Leone to wider West Africa's security environment, it has demonstrated that the path to the securitization process of security issues has been seriously influenced by personal interests of the neo-patrimonial leaders as the securitizing actors.

This book has argued that a more analytically coordinated approach is required in the literature on West Africa's securitization analysis. This will go beyond large volumes produced which focus on the crises of statehood that hit the sub-region in the immediate post-Cold War era starting from the Liberia and Sierra Leone. For example, authors have provided several

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accounts of the wars, conflicts and the processes of intervention by the West Africa's community ECOWAS (Adeleke, 1995; Sesay 1995, 1999; Howe, 1996; Mortimer, 1996; Kandeh, 1996; Adibe, 1997; Boas, 1997, 2005; Bundu, 2000; Adebajo, 2002; Gershoni, 1997; Ellis, 1995, 1999; Kieh, 1992, 2008; Khobe, 2000; Sawyer, 2004; Kromah, 2008; Olanisakin, 2008; and Obi, 2009). There is also a body of work on security sector reform, emerging security issues in Africa or West Africa in the post-Cold War epoch and very recently, the USA-African security relationship (Oyebade and Alao, 1998; Adebajo and Rashidi, 2004; Bryden et al., 2006; and Kalu and Kieh, 2014). On the other hand, analysts in light of numerous issues of state failure have sought to provide some explanations of the character of neo-patrimonial statehood in Africa (Bayart, 1993; Clapham, 1993; Reno, 1995, 1996; Chabal and Daloz, 1999; Chabal, 2009; and Taylor and Williams, 2008). It is not completely convincing that all these valuable works can stand as representing a picture of proper analysis of West Africa's security since the end of the Cold War. In light of several new innovations in security studies it is wondered why West African security studies should not benefit from them, especially the innovation of the Copenhagen School of security on securitization processes which has essentially benefited security analysis of more advanced countries in Europe and the European Union (Huysmans, 1998, 2000; Balzacq, 2008; Leonard, 2010). This book has built on these disparate academic endeavours to address what is lacking in the literature before we will have a coordinated and comprehensive security analysis for West Africa's security environment.

It was argued that instead of a wider consideration for constructing threats the patronage politics characteristic of neo-patrimonial statehood influences the processes of securitization. Therefore: (a) for the sub-region's security analysis to merit comprehensiveness, it is necessary to include a good understanding of the processes of threat securitization. (b) Some clarity is needed to throw more light on who securitizes what threats and the conditioning factors in the securitization processes. (c) To fully understand the security dynamics of the sub-region of West Africa, it is suggested that the nature of politics and statehood in West Africa must be adequately focused on. Proper integration of these issues will offer us a better perspective on West Africa's security analysis. This project aimed to build an analytical structure based on an interface between securitization framework and the neo-patrimonial character of political regimes in Liberia, Sierra Leone and wider West Africa. The main aim therefore is to demonstrate from empirical findings the extent and in what ways the political cultures of neo-patrimonialism influence the processes of threat securitization. This, it is argued, may not have been possible if the research had just focussed on disparate subjects in the literature.

As pointed out in the introduction the book has made contributions to the literature in three main areas. In the first place, it has offered a new analytical framework for looking into the issues of securitization; what

threatens, who is threatened, who securitizes, the audiences and the emergency actions outside the bounds of normal politics. The framework helps in explaining how these processes in the context of Liberia, Sierra Leone and wider West Africa have been influenced by the political culture of neo-patrimonialism. This analytical framework finds an intersection between processes of threat securitization and neo-patrimonialism.

This framework came about by carefully bringing together literature on speech-act process which formed the basis for securitization theory (Austin, 1975; Buzan, 1991; Waever, 1995; Buzan et al, 1998; and Buzan and Waever, 2003) and works on the patrimonialism-neo-patrimonialism continuum (Talcott Parson, 1947; 304–350; Guenther, 1968; 194–206; Le Vine, 1980; and Clapham, 1996). The idea was that a proper understanding of the whole process of threat construction in West Africa would benefit from a robust analysis on the nature of statehood in the sub-region. Considering some blurred issues within the securitization concept – such as the issues of audience, securitizing actor – the concept of securitization would be recast for clarity.

Leonard and Kaunert's (2011) reconceptualisation of the idea of audience was utilised and adapted to the West African context, which entailed moving away from the overtly Eurocentric character of securitization. The product of all these is a new way of analysing the security dynamics of West African states which could not have been done if the two major concepts are used separately as a prism for security analysis. This framework helps us to understand how, for instance, the security and economic interests of patron leaders in a neo-patrimonial Liberia, Sierra Leone or other West African states will define how threats are perceived as existential threat to these interests, the audience(s) and the priority of action. There was no claim of absoluteness or linearity but the evidence of interactions was convincing. The framework offers substantial potential for future work on diverse issues of security, governance in the Mano River Basin, West Africa or even the African continent more generally.

From another angle, the book has contributed to the literature in terms of the new empirical information which provided the basis for a series of important insights into the cases examined. Evidence used in the research was derived from the interviews with relevant persons in the case study states and wider West Africa. Information also came from other sources such as documentary and textual materials and secondary sources. Very importantly, the book has contributed to the literature on the study of West African security and African security generally; on the idea of neo-patrimonialism and equally on the literature on securitization. The book has extended the analysis on African and West African security. In chapter 4, for instance, it suggested the three major timelines of African security trajectory from Cold War, post-Cold War and in the aftermath of September 9/11 terrorist attacks on the United States. The book extended the literature on the security dynamics of the sub-region and the continent in general and

the failure of politics embedded in the securitization process to manage the security environment. Secondly, on neo-patrimonialism: this is a concept that has divided scholars on African studies with some arguing that it suits very well in the analysis of Africa's political culture and others rejecting it as an inappropriate paradigm. This book offers further way of looking at neo-patrimonialism as a concept worthy of close study not just for African politics but in wider contexts. But particularly in Africa the book reinforces the literature on politics of neo-patrimonialism and how it influences the security politics of securitization.

Thirdly on securitization, it is recognised that it is a concept worthy of studying. The book throws more light on the securitization process as a failure of politics. It is an instrument in the hands of political elite to frame issues as security threats according to their narrow interests. The book has provided strong arguments to students of securitization that the concept can also be adapted to security environments outside Europe to analyse the security dynamics of the political class. This has been demonstrated in the book through careful study of the interaction between the political culture of neo-patrimonialism and processes of securitization in West Africa.

It has been argued that most works on West Africa relied heavily on interviews with the elite, which are not bad in themselves. This book followed the same tradition having significant number of interviews with some notable people in West Africa supported by an extensive journey through the borders of seven West African states. This was done in order to have first-hand information of the security situation in the sub-region. The main aim of this was to try to contrast the views of the leaders with those of the general population on security issues in Liberia, Sierra Leone and the West African sub-region. The security perception of ECOWAS as sub-regional securitizing actor and individual national governments come from what elites in government say the threats are. ECOWAS has been widely acknowledged as one of the regional bodies post-Cold War to have crafted a regional security architecture to take care of the security challenges of the sub-region. This is in light of the states in the sub-region as well as others in the larger continent of Africa being deserted by erstwhile Cold War patrons. The two cases in this book, Liberia and Sierra Leone, were therefore selected on the grounds that partly they showcased the success or failure of ECOWAS in building the security community of West Africa. The intervention efforts of the states in the sub-region during the crises in the Mano River Basin gave insights into the neo-patrimonial influence on the whole processes of securitization. Pieces of information from these were illuminating and would also enrich the literature on West Africa's security dynamics.

Analytically, this book has also contributed to the literature. Apart from introducing an integration of securitization and neo-patrimonialism as a framework for analysing West Africa's security, it was proposed also that an assessment of the interactions in Liberia, Sierra Leone and wider West

Africa could be done at national, sub-regional and trans-national levels. It was argued that the influence of neo-patrimonial political culture over the securitization processes of threats was evident. At the national level, the major referent object of security was found to be the individual regimes and threats were constructed as issues that threaten the continued tenure of the regime in power. The audiences were the clients and faithful friends who did the biddings of the neo-patrimonial leader. The interpersonal relationships among the political elite have got a lot to contribute to how they perceive and construct security threats at the sub-regional level. The leaders in the sub-region were divided over the interventions in Liberia and Sierra Leone, for example on the basis of their security and economic interests rather than larger security interests of West Africans.

The lack of a rational legal bureaucratic security institution at both national level and at the level of ECOWAS has left the sub-region needing to take whatever they could get from extra-African patrons in terms of security assistance. Threats were securitized at this transnational level according to what mattered most to the outside patrons. Examples of these will be discussed further in this chapter but suffice it here to say that such an analytical approach is not evident in the literature available prior to this book. In summary, the perception of security threats at all the three levels were according to narrow interest of securitizing actors; the circle of securitizing actors and audiences were equally narrow, i.e. the patron leaders and their selected friends and close associates according to the patron-client relationship. And finally the threats were constructed differently according to economic and security interests of the political actors rather than wider security interests of the larger population.

## General and specific lessons of Liberia, Sierra Leone and West Africa

In general terms, Liberia, Sierra Leone and wider West Africa have been shown to be steeped in neo-patrimonial political culture since gaining independence. This is a political culture whose major referent object of security has been the sovereignty of the state and the survival of regimes in individual states and in solidarity with other member states both at the sub-regional level and also in the African continent in general. It is shown from the case studies that this political culture securitizes threats to regime survival security needs of the larger population. It is acknowledged that in recent years, ECOWAS has had to introduce several conventions and protocols that seem to securitize threats to democratic principles and individual citizens' security concerns, but when critically viewed against real practices it was shown that regime survival tops the agenda of the ruling elite both at state and sub-regional levels. The neo-patrimonial political culture of exclusivity, clientelism, favouristism, 'big men-small men' power equations and favour-for-support has had a serious impact both on the processes of securitization and the general security

environment in West Africa. For instance McGowan (2006; 234–235) noted that 'from independence through 2004, the sixteen West African states have experienced forty-four successful military-led coups, forty-three often bloody failed coups, at least eighty-two coup plots, seven civil wars, and many other forms of political conflicts' (these figures have certainly increased since 2006, with newer coups, civil wars and sundry political conflicts – Guinea Bissau, Cote d'Ivoire, Niger, Mauritania, Guinea and currently in Mali and Nigeria). The zero-sum game of neo-patrimonialism has paid more attention to the security and economic interests of a select few but neglected many other issues which are not perceived as real threats. This has stoked the wars in Liberia and Sierra Leone. The case studies have also shown that from the Cold War years to the most recent post 9/11 era, security issues in West Africa have been securitized according to how external patrons perceived them to align with their own national security and economic interests rather than how they mattered to West Africans. In short, the general findings will be put this way: the security threats in Liberia, Sierra Leone and wider West Africa are narrowly defined; this is because the circle of securitizing actors is also narrow comprising just the patron leaders and their clients; and finally these same threats are differently securitized which means that threats mean different things to different securitizing actors. For instance, free movement by West Africans with the sub-region is securitized like Nigeria as a threat to their national security but not so for ECOWAS and its protocol on free movement of persons. Free movement is only free on paper as movement through French-speaking states is not all that free. The ECOWAS Mechanism for Conflict Prevention, Management and Resolution, Peace-Keeping and Security has a:

> mandate to intervene politically and militarily in member countries where a humanitarian disaster is imminent, where a serious threat to sub-regional peace and security is posed, and where democratically elected governments have been overthrown or an attempt has been made. ECOWAS also has the right to intervene in situations where the human rights of its citizens have been violated or are being threatened.
>
> (Toure and Okae, 2008)

This is however viewed differently by member states and used for purposes of political allegiance in conflict situations. Findings from Liberia and Sierra Leone have illustrated these allegiances and their implications on securitization of threats. This book has discussed and emphasised the need for the literature to focus on this interaction between the political culture of neo-patrimonialism and securitization processes instead of piecemeal approaches to security in the sub-region. This section will now highlight the results of the case studies by focussing on the individual case of Liberia at the national government, sub-regional and transnational levels in relations to the securitization-neo-patrimonialism continuum.

***Neo-patrimonial political culture influencing securitization process in Liberia***

Liberia was selected to investigate how the processes of securitization have been influenced by the neo-patrimonial regimes. Apart from its historical significance, it was also selected on the basis that it represented the turning point in the security direction of West Africa with the crises that enveloped the state at the end of the Cold War. The intervention that followed was the beginning of the home-grown security architecture in the sub-region and attendant political dynamics of interpersonal relationships among the leaders and the influence this had on the processes of threat securitization. It was investigated further to find out its manifestations on the domestic scene in Liberia. It was demonstrated through the examination of some very critical regimes leading to the crises of the 1990s that the security of the state was defined in terms of protecting the regimes in power. For instance, the Truth and Reconciliation Commission in Liberia noted that during the regime of William Tubman there was:

> partisan use of democratic institutions, the political control of the military, the culture of extermination of political opposition, invidious destruction of lives and property, and more importantly the rise of authoritarianism and political brutality. All these vices festooned during this period and set into motion a political culture that would birth future wars.
> (Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Liberia, 2008; vol. 1; 52–53)

Tubman perceived and securitized anything that posed a threat to his continued stay in power. His personal security measures included the Special Security Service, the National Bureau of Investigation, the Executive Action Bureau and the National Intelligence and Security Service. In addition to these agencies, there were networks of informants jostling for favour from the presidency who reported to the Executive Mansion (Government House in Monrovia). These were the audiences he needed rather than the Liberian people. All these security measures were outside the formal security architecture of the Liberian state. During Samuel Doe's regime there was the notorious Special Anti-Terrorist Unit (SATU) used by Doe to terrorise his opponents while surrounding himself with 'faithful' audience mostly from his Krahn ethnic group that did his biddings. They were his audience. Samuel and his men in the military government of the Peoples Redemption Council (PRC) were dominated by fear and suspicion of possible attempts to recapture the Executive Mansion from them. They were also driven by opportunism to have access to the state's already empty coffers. To counter the fear and suspicion, Doe the patron and his men securitized every trace of threat to their stay in office. They embarked on brutality, tyrannical and liberal use of fear, force and machine guns. Their opportunities to loot were not limited to the state treasury but also included intimidating and unlawfully taking from the people. Within the military, Doe the patron leader was

still not comfortable; he became suspicious and paranoid and had to kill the Vice Chairman of the ruling Redemption Council in 1981 and Thomas Quiwonkpa, a Gio from Nimba county and former commander of the Armed Forces of Liberia who had fallen out with Doe.

Under Charles Taylor, there were also several personal security measures he put in place to secure his regime. When he eventually became president in Liberia, he securitized not just the opposition inside Liberia. Taylor also securitized individuals and regimes outside the country that opposed his determination to occupy the government house as President and those that supported ECOWAS' sub-regional efforts that might mean protecting Samuel Doe. His militia groups were many and included the Special Security Unit, Security Operations Division, Joint Security Forces, National Bureau of Investigation, Anti-Terrorist Brigade and Anti-Terrorist Unit, along with irregular armed groups such as the Navy Rangers, Marine Division, Wild Geese, Man Moving Man Dropping, Lofa Defence Forces, Delta Force and earlier, his all-female 'Charles' Angels' (Reno, 2005; 134). These were all unconstitutional and served only the security and economic interests of the patron leader. These people were Taylor's audience in the securitization processes. Buzan et al (1998; 28) have noted that 'in well-developed states, armed forces and intelligence services are carefully separated from normal political life, and their use is subject to elaborate procedures of authorization'. But it is not so for many weak states in West Africa (Liberia and Sierra Leone) where issues are securitized once they are perceived as threat to the personal regimes of patron leaders.

The case study demonstrated also the sub-regional dimension of this interaction between the concepts of securitization and neo-patrimonialism. When the wars started in the 1990s in Liberia, West African leaders struggled to arrive at a unanimous position which would have allowed the securitization of the issue and how it could threaten the sub-region. There were manifestations of personal allegiances characteristic of neo-patrimonialism in crafting out emergency measures needed to arrest the situation reminiscent of securitization process. This was because the West African sub-region did not have an established framework for security because the Liberian conflict was the first post-Cold War conflict that they had confronted. Nigeria, as a sub-regional hegemon, stepped in to lead but the personal interests of the Nigerian leader clashed with those of other West African leaders. The differences resulted, as the case study revealed, from neo-patrimonial primordial cleavages and allegiances. It has been stated before that the same patron-client power relations existed between the Nigerian Head of State Ibrahim Babangida and Samuel Doe in Liberia. The Nigerian leader intervened when widespread violence broke out in Liberia in order to prop up Doe. Adeleke (1995; 578) argued thus:

> There is no doubt that relations between their administrations were very strong. Nigeria paid US$20 million to establish the Ibrahim

> Babangida School of Political Science and Strategic Studies in Monrovia and during the NPFL rapid advance on Monrovia, the only country visited by Doe was Nigeria, with a request for arms.

It is indisputable that there could be other political and strategic motives on the part of Nigeria, but the special neo-patrimonial conviviality between the two leaders played a prominent role in securitizing the crises and defined the emergency measures in that first collective intervention in West Africa. Mortimer (1996; 295), Adebajo (2002; 31–32) and Obi (2009; 123) were of the opinion that the invasion of Liberia by Charles Taylor and his men from Cote d'Ivoire in December 1989 was possible because they had huge support from within Ivorian government. Long before the start of the wars in Liberia in 1990, Charles Taylor had a strong 'father-son' relationship with the President of Cote d'Ivoire. Secondly, Sergeant Samuel Doe came to power in 1980 by assassinating William Tolbert in Liberia. Doe's actions caused a serious diplomatic rift between Monrovia and Abidjan. The reason was because of the interpersonal relationship between and among the political actors. Tolbert's son Alphonsus was Houphouet Boigny's son-in-law. He was married to Boigny's adopted daughter, Daise Delafosse. It was not clear if Taylor cashed in on that or on the personal relationship with the Old Man of Cote d'Ivoire politics. But what was important is that a special client-patron relationship evolved between them and extended further to Burkina Faso and Libya. The same Daise Delafosse daughter of Houphouet Boigny later remarried to Blaise Compaore the patron leader in Burkina Faso (see also Khobe (2000). It was therefore expected that when Charles Taylor and his National Patriotic Front of Liberia appeared in Cote d'Ivoire, Boigny offered them every support they needed to get rid of his enemy in the Executive Mansion in Monrovia – Samuel Doe. Both Boigny and his in-law Compaore gave Taylor and his men the necessary support to contact Muammar Gaddafi in Libya where they were trained and prepared for the eventual assault on Liberia. Gaddafi also had issues with Doe for closing the Libyan embassy in Monrovia and supporting the United States of America (Obi, 2009; 123). These cleavages and affiliations made the leaders perceive the crises in Liberia differently and confirmed the narrowness in their securitization processes; narrow threat perceptions, narrow range of securitizing actors and different ways of viewing threats according to their interests. Here the audiences were those leaders within the ECOWAS organisation who supported either side of the camp, Nigeria or Cote d'Ivoire.

At the transnational level, the crises in Liberia came at the point in the international system when the Cold War power calculus which defined the relationship between the superpowers and the post-colonial states was no longer an issue. If the crises in Liberia had happened during the Cold War, they would been perceived differently and prompt intervention would have resulted. But the end of the Cold War changed the direction of interests of

the external patrons which resulted in them not securitizing the issues emerging from Liberia and wider West Africa. The case demonstrated that the patron-client relationship between America as the patron and Liberia as the client with regard to Liberian national security vacillated in line with changing nature of state interests. During the Cold War Liberia was of considerable importance to the US both economically and strategically. Regimes – especially that of Doe – were offered the assistance they needed. Doe's authoritarianism was tolerated by the US, the excesses of his regime were not perceived by the patron state as posing any existential threat to its national security interests. However, once the Cold War ended, there was a change in threat perception and significance. The crisis in Liberia was not securitized by the US as it would have been during the Cold War. While the Liberians hoped that the US would intervene, that was not to be as the US only got involved by evacuating its citizens in 1990. It also encouraged the intervention by the Economic Community of West Africa States (ECOWAS). This was despite the so-called special relationship between the US and Liberia. The Liberian case therefore demonstrates that threats in Liberia, Sierra Leone and West Africa are perceived and securitized by their external patrons only when the patrons' interests and the regime survival of the client states are seriously threatened and not about the security of the larger populations. Again at this level the audiences were not necessarily the Liberian people but probably the home government of the external patron, the parliament or their enlightened public who might question any action of their government.

### *Securitization processes in Sierra Leone and neo-patrimonial influence*

Sierra Leone was selected for this project on almost the same criteria as Liberia, except for its key distinguishing variable – a more homogenous configuration in its demographics. This was found useful in order to test the hypothesis against a different background. The wars in Liberia and Sierra Leone reinforced each other. Let us again consider that the first Liberian civil war started before the war in Sierra Leone in 1991. The regime of Brigadier General Joseph Momoh proved incapable of redressing the inequality and patronage politics that have eaten deep into the neo-patrimonial regimes.

> Unpaid military and security forces, a demoralized public service, armies of unemployed youths and an increasingly impoverished mass population became the elements of a flammable society. It took Charles Taylor and his collaborators and client Foday Sankoh and armed bands to strike the match.
>
> (Sawyer, 2004; 443)

The political allegiances and solidarity among the leaders in West Africa witnessed during the intervention in Liberia also continued in Sierra Leone

in the same way that neo-patrimonial affiliations influence the processes of securitizing threats in the sub-region. What happened at the sub-regional level was only a reflection of the situation at the national level and further extended to extra-African level.

The case demonstrates that there was an obsession with power and continued stay in office among the regimes examined with regard to the interaction between neo-patrimonialism and the securitization processes in Sierra Leone. The Truth and Reconciliation Commission set up at the end of the crises in Sierra Leone blamed the regimes of the Magai brothers, Siaka Stevens and his successor John Momoh for the excesses of power and for plunging the state of Sierra Leone into chaos with their patronage politics which largely distorted the security pattern of the country. Any threats to their regimes were immediately securitized as an attempted coup. For instance, there was an accusation of a coup in order to rid the system of opposition military leaders such as the arrest of Colonel Bangura, Brigadier David Lansana's subordinate. Remember David Lansana was in charge of the Army (Forna, 2002; 70; Gberie, 2005; 26; and Jackson, 2004; 115). According to Allen (1968; 315), 'the significance of the "coup plot" lies in it being an attempt to brand the APC the opposition party as a subversive party'. This was under Albert Magai's regime. There were coups and counter-coups by the political leaders and their client stooges in the military which has already been politicised as an instrument of repression under neo-patrimonial leaders. Here the audience were the military stooges and civilian members of the cabinet who supported and did the biddings of the leader.

When Siaka Stevens ascended to the political throne in Sierra Leone, the first thing he did was to get rid of all the military officers that were loyal to his predecessor. At some point he became uncomfortable even with those he fought in the preceding regime and who were also members of his own cabinet; this was analogous to Samuel Doe's behaviour in Liberia. Stevens related with the opposition with suspicion and securitized them. He was later to accuse them of a coup that never was, in order to get rid of threats to his regime from the opposition. It was also shown how Siaka Stevens expended enormous public wealth on a fleet of armoured cars for his own personal protection. These cars were bought from a British company who willingly advanced the extra money that it would cost at an inflated rate. In time, Stevens would eventually create his own personal army by creating two Internal Security Units and a Special Security Division loyal only to him. They were his audiences in the securitization processes. Forna (2004; 245) noted that Stevens 'Internal Security Units One and Two were staffed by troops brought in from Guinea; later they were brought together and renamed the SSD, the State Security Division – more popularly known on the streets of Freetown as "Siaka Stevens Dogs".' It was shown that, similar to the situation in Liberia, there was no institutionalised security architecture independent of the patron leader. All the institutions were instruments in his hands. The only threat perception was that of the threat against

the regime and as such was securitized and tackled with all extra political measures created by the patron leader and staffed with his loyal clients and stooges as his audiences. There was also no concern about the security needs of the people of Sierra Leone.

This influence of neo-patrimonialism over securitization processes in Sierra Leone was shown to extend to the sub-regional level when the crises in Sierra Leone erupted. As the Mano River Basin crisis that started in Liberia spilled into Sierra Leone, again the dynamics of neo-patrimonial political culture was manifested in the manner the crises were perceived and eventually securitized; and measures adopted to restore peace in the country. The findings showed again that similar to the Liberian case, there was still no security architecture to build upon. The leaders once more had to adopt ad hoc measures which were not defined according to the security interests of the people of Sierra Leone or West Africans but rather personal interests based on allegiances and solidarity among the leaders. It was shown that the Nigerian leader Sani Abacha was interested in saving his friend Tejan Kabbah (president of Sierra Leone) who had been removed from office by a group of soldiers in a coup. It was also demonstrated that Abacha had some business interests in Sierra Leone. The same was the case at the extra-African level where it was shown that as in the case of Liberia, the external patron did not intervene. It was only when the lives and interests of British citizens were threatened that Britain intervened. The processes of securitization in Sierra Leone, Liberia and West Africa are therefore contended to be hugely influenced by the narrow interests of the patron leaders and their special clients. The threats again are narrowly defined by narrow circle of securitizing actors who equally perceive the threats differently. And most importantly the audiences were not necessarily the population but the fellow leaders who were in solidarity with the leading country's leader (in this case Nigeria). When compared, it can be found that the findings are the same in the Liberia, Sierra Leone and wider West Africa under different regimes, military or civilian, and under different configurations of the their societies. The findings may not be absolute but are sufficiently compelling to justify the claim of a serious interaction between neo-patrimonialism and securitization processes in West Africa.

## Research implications for wider global affairs

This project has focused on a security analysis of the sub-region of West Africa with specific attention to Liberia and Sierra Leone with regard to how the processes of threat securitization are influenced by the political culture of neo-patrimonialism. The book did not focus only on the national or sub-regional character of the processes. It has also considered the extra-African dimension of the process of securitizing threats in the sub-region of West Africa. In this way, it is shown that the research project has a wider global dimension and this can be deduced from various instances offered by the findings of this book and how this project has highlighted connections with

the wider literature on regional and international security with potential for future research on the basis of issues raised. The connectedness of this book to wider global issues starts from the literature. Classical works on the ideas of neo-patrimonialism and securitization made little or no mention of Liberia, Sierra Leone or West Africa. Patrimonialism was a Webberian construct that focused more on Asia and old Europe (Talcott Parson, 1947; 304–350; Guenther, 1968; 194–206; Levine, 1980; Clapham, 1996). It has however been remodelled and adapted over the years with a 'neo' prefix to study regimes in Africa, West Africa and particularly Liberia and Sierra Leone (Reno, 1995, 1996; Bayart, 1996; Boaz, 2001; and Taylor and Williams, 2008). In the same way, securitization – as has been argued throughout – was a Eurocentric academic innovation which has also been remodelled and reconceptualised in several ways by authors to catch emerging issues of security concerns in Europe. But it has been gaining ground in its application to other less democratic regions of the world, not least West Africa. This book has therefore sought to give it even greater focus in relation to West African security analysis. Through this approach, security studies of the sub-region connect to and benefit from wider security concepts. Moreover, one of the central themes of the securitization theory is the idea of employing measures outside the normal bounds of political processes to deal with threats to values or interests. Along this line of thought is the phenomenon of private security measures employed by states and non-state actors in securitizing threats to their interests. This was witnessed in Liberia and Sierra Leone regarding the activities of Executive Outcome, Sandline International, the Kamajors and many others. These have received much attention in this book and the global relevance has also gained attention in the literature especially in relation to Sierra Leone (Harding, 1997; Howe, 1998; Abrahamsen and Williams, 2011).

The book also connects to the wider global picture by presenting ECOWAS as a major security actor whose contributions have been widely acknowledged, especially in taking control of issues that external patrons would not have intervened in ostensibly due to fear of casualties (at least, with respect to their own forces). The end of the Cold War with all the security issues it threw up for West Africa has made ECOWAS as a community transform from its original economic remit to also focus on security issues. That has made the sub-regional body a serious security actor. It has been acknowledged that ECOWAS has evolved into one of the most defined examples of regional security architecture in the post-Cold War era, pooling whatever resources it could from the member states. This is in acknowledgment that state-centric approach to regional and international security efforts has become outmoded. This research in this regard has built upon Buzan et al (1998) and Buzan (2003) who have argued that international relations and international security in the post-Cold War period was going to take a regional form with regional bodies emerging as security complexes or proto-complexes in the case of West Africa. The activities and efforts of

ECOWAS with regard to sub-regional, regional and global security could be seen from the interventions in Liberia, Sierra Leone, Cote d'Ivoire, Guinea and Mali. The states in the sub-region have also contributed to peacekeeping missions of the African Union and the United Nations. For instance, Liberia sent 50 troops to Mali in 2013, the first since the end of the 14-year war and the second in history (VOA, 2013). Sierra Leone also contributed fifty troops to UN efforts in Somalia in 2014 (Laing-Fenton, 2014).

Another very important aspect of the nexus of this work to global picture is regarding the global dimension and linkages of international security issues. Writing about the post-Cold War world order, Robert Cooper (2004: 55) suggested that 'there is a zone of safety in Europe (or the West in general) and outside it a zone of danger and chaos. What makes this a particularly difficult and dangerous world is that through globalization, the three zones are interconnected'. Exploring the interface between securitization and the political culture of neo-patrimonialism in Liberia, Sierra Leone and West Africa is studying the priority of interests by patron states in client states. It is about how issues emanating from the sub-region considered posing existential threats to their mutual interests are securitized. Central to Cooper's (2004) argument and indicative of an intersection this book has with global picture will be appreciated from a few instances: the impact of the illegal drugs business from West African to European regional security interests; the danger an ungovernable stretch of West Africa's Sahel region poses to global security as a safe haven and breeding ground for illegal drugs traffickers, illegal weapons and recruits into terrorist networks; the challenge to the economic and national security interests of Britain, France and the US of a volatile West Africa which is a gateway to the Gulf of Guinea rich in hydrocarbons. These interests and the patron-client power relations define how these security issues are securitized. To conclude this section, it is worth quoting Abrahamsen and Williams, (2011: iii):

> Across the globe, from mega-cities to isolated resource enclaves, the provision and governance of security takes place within assemblages that are de-territorialized in terms of actors, technologies, norms and discourses. They are embedded in a complex transnational architecture, defying conventional distinctions between public and private, global and local.

This section has highlighted the connectedness of this study to the wider global picture and how its major themes tie in with the wider academic literature. The strategic significance of ECOWAS as a security actor both sub-regionally and regionally on issues with wider global dimension has also been noted, along with careful consideration of the security study of Liberia, Sierra Leone and wider West Africa and how sub-regional threats securitized by external patrons are considered of global significance. Next, we turn to reflect upon the limitations of the research project before moving

on to the final section of this conclusion which considers the possibility of future research built on some of these areas explored in the book.

## Limitations of the research project

No aspect of this research project (or any other) can be considered absolutely immune from limitations of some form. In particular, the first challenge to the project arose from the question of case studies. Considering the geographical and political configuration of the West African sub-region which is seriously divided along colonial linkages, language and history, there was serious attention to why Liberia and Sierra Leone would be selected when both of them are English-speaking countries. It was thought that they may not represent the wider diversity of the sub-region. There were other alternatives to the way the case studies were chosen. One could have selected for instance Guinea and Cote d'Ivoire, after all both had post-Cold War crises too. One could also have chosen Nigeria which clearly played a significant role in the security dynamics that played out in the sub-region and continues to have preponderance of power over the other states. These were all potential case studies for this project. However, there was a language barrier which would have prevented the researcher from obtaining relevant information from Francophone countries. This was considered a significant limitation to the choice of case studies. There is also a limitation arising from travelling to just seven out of 16 countries in West Africa. One could have gone further to more countries. However, this project has set a pace that could be followed by future researchers in the sub-region.

Much as these issues were recognised, there is still an overwhelming level of tenability in the choice of case studies. Liberia and Sierra Leone still epitomise the security dynamics of the sub-region of West Africa since the end of the Cold War. The interpersonal neo-patrimonial relationships that played out in the run-up to the securitization and interventions in the two states were convincing of the relationship between the political culture of neo-patrimonialism and processes of securitizing security threats. Studying the security evolution of the sub-region must seriously factor in this period. We must also not forget the similarity and dissimilarity of the two in terms of the configuration of their societies. This helped to test the hypothesis of the book against different backgrounds. Future research may however pick other combinations such as Anglophone and Francophone or big and small states in terms of populations and wider diversity. On the issue of leaving out Nigeria as a potential case study, this rested on the basis of neutrality and to eliminate potential bias: the researcher happens to be a national of Nigeria and there is a possibility of this impacting on the analysis. This contributed to the reliability of the project findings and analysis. Further on the suggestion of considering wider travels through West Africa, this was not considered feasible because of resources and time. It was also not considered safe at most of the volatile borders of West African states. Finally,

on the issue of access to high profile interviewees, there were still substantial interviews obtained. This was also augmented by relying on earlier research and textual analysis which can be conveniently obtained in archives, libraries and online. For instance, the activities of ECOWAS as a sub-regional securitizing actor are easily accessible through its website and analysis of them could be obtained from very recent academic publications. In fact, when juxtaposed against earlier works it was considered that first-hand information from the journey and the grassroots people such as the locals were more revealing, compelling and representative of the security situation of the sub-region than some official statements from the so-called high-profile interviewees. The perceived limitations of the project and several other issues it raised can be built upon for future research.

## Final comments

The security dynamics of Liberia, Sierra Leone and wider West Africa have been substantially explored. The book has looked at the issues of threat and security perceptions of the neo-patrimonial political actors in the sub-region. The central question is: to what extent and in which ways has neo-patrimonialism influenced the securitization processes in West Africa's sub-region? The answer to this important question from available evidences is that the securitization of threats in West Africa is a function of the security mind-set of the political elite – their economic and security interests pursued through their neo-patrimonial patron-client relationships. This may be at national government, sub-regional and transnational levels. This book has made contributions to the literature in three major ways. Theoretically it has presented a unique framework for analysing the security of the sub-region. This is done by offering a medley of the two ideas of securitization and neo-patrimonialism. Methodologically, it has relied not only on already published materials but further information were derived from actual trip through borders of seven West African states including the case study states (Liberia and Sierra Leone). This offered original information and knowledge of the area and its security situation. Finally, the book, in order to properly analyse the security dynamics of Liberia, Sierra Leone and West Africa, proposed a three-tier analytical approach, namely, national government, sub-regional and transnational levels. This is another significant contribution to the literature on West African security discourse. All these can further be built upon by future researchers in the area.

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