

ETHNO-RELIGIOUS CONFLICT, POLITICAL INSTABILITY AND AFRICA'S DILEMMA IN SUSTAINING DEMOCRACY

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Abstract

Ethno-religious conflict is a perennial challenge most post-colonial African countries are encountering since their independence. African leaders, through intractable conflicts, mismanaged the human and material resources; and ironically fanned ethno-religious conflicts to sustain violence, control political power and manage resources. Conflict brews political instability and ethnic groups compete to capture state power. The military has been the veritable ethnic-tool to capture political power. Therefore, African states had been under military siege for decades. This truncated democracy and stunted human capital development. Although democratic tenets were misapplied by political leaders, the army is not a viable alternative to democracy. In spite of its abundant resources, Africa is cursed with bad leaders. The objective of the study was to investigate the nexus between ethno-religious conflicts and political development in Africa by analyzing the cases of Rwanda and Kenya. Ex-post facto research design was adopted for the study. The study x-rayed factors undermining African development. It revealed that African conflicts have depopulated the continent's workforce, destroyed developmental infrastructures, increased crime rate, and high mortality rate. Implications are political instability, currency devaluation, lack of internal investors, and low inflow of direct foreign investment, bad governance, economic recession, high poverty rate, and increased unemployment rate.

Keywords: Ethno-Religious Conflict, Political Instability, Military Incursion, Sustainable Democracy, Good Governance.

Introduction

Ethnic identity and religion are the two major social binding forces amongst a people, who jealously protect, respect and preserve cultural, political and religious heritage for posterity. Historical sources of inter-ethnic conflicts and religious upheavals in Africa anchored on religious intolerance, ethnic chauvinism, and lopsided distribution of society benefits, cultural and political domination or exclusionism. These social viruses breed conflicts in Africa. The tribal hostilities are often stemmed by tyrannical reigns of the military or suppressive nature of monarchical regimes, or repressive oligarchy to avert confrontations. For fear of brutality, citizens bury their grudges, and issues pertaining to perceived political marginalization and economic deprivations are subtly expressed. Monarchy, oligarchy and military reigns abhor opposition. Liberal democracy embraces opposition and flourishes well under healthy competition, as viably formidable and

constructive opposition gives credence to the entire process as alternative choice in governance. Unguarded expression of political views ignites ethnic-driven conflicts as citizens feel free to agitate for their rights, most often in unlawful manner.

Although the military has made tremendous contributions to African coherence, but its effort has unfortunately distorted and stunted political and economic development of Africa. Military rule is unviable alternative to democracy, as it is overtly partisan with ethno-religious coloration. The military does not adhere to the principles of due process, transparency and accountability. Its undemocratic approach to issues of national interest validated the hypothesis that “the worst democratic government is better than the best military regime”. Africa’s experience on military coup d’état is enormous, and it is the worst strategy adapted to underdevelop the continent. Instances abound, like Field Marshal Idi-Amin Dada of Uganda, a dictator for eight bloody-years with rumours of cannibalism, frightening human rights abuses, political repression, extrajudicial killings, and gross economic mismanagement; a typical African woe. According to Keatley (2003), late Julius Nyerere, former President of Tanzania, saw Idi-Amin as a vanguard of tribalism, a murderer, a liar and a savage, who damaged the course of African nationalism. The death toll during Amin’s cold-blooded reign would never be accurately known. The estimate from the International Commission of Jurists in Geneva is that it was not less than 80,000 and more likely around 300,000. Another estimate compiled by exile organizations with the help of Amnesty International, put the number of casualties at 500,000.

Similarly, Muammar Gaddafi of Libya came into power in 1969 through coup d’état and ruled Libya undemocratically for 42 years as absolute chauvinistic dictator. Libya is the first developing country to own a majority share of the revenues from its oil production under his reign; and Gaddafi provided his people access to society benefits, including free education to tertiary institutions which translated to dramatic rise in literacy rates; but he quashed opposition, and was responsible for the death of thousands of Libyans through extrajudicial killings. Also, Gaafar Nimeiri ruled Sudan for 16 horrible years and ruined the economy; its currency lost almost 90% of the value against the major international currencies. He imposed Islamic sharia law in 1983; this led to two-decade religious war between Muslims and Christians. Omar Hassan Ahmad al-Bashir led-government in Khartoum awfully nurtured ethnic-backed conflicts against Christians, politically marginalized and economically deprived them of society benefits. He was indicted by International Criminal Court of Justice as the first sitting African President to direct mass killings, rape and torture in Darfur in 2009. *The Economist* (2005) cited in Adetula (2006) observed that:

Sudan is where atrocious campaign of ethnic cleansing in the western region of Darfur threatened to tear apart Africa’s largest country. The order is that, even in the countries now at peace, the underlying causes of war have often not been addressed. Studies show that civil wars are more likely to occur in countries with bad governments, stagnant economies

and lots of valuable minerals. Tyranny gives people cause to rebel. Poverty makes soldering seem an attractive career option. Mineral wealth makes power lucrative to those who struggle to seize it.

Southern Sudan eventually gained independence but the hangover of political instability and tribal rift inherited from Sudan are haunting the new state since her nationhood in 2011. As at August 2011, 2,058 people were killed, 1,132 injured. Fighting in the region had ethnic undertone. Up to 300,000 people were estimated to have been killed in the war, including notable atrocities such as the 2014 Bentiu massacre. More than 3.5 million people were displaced in a country of about 12 million, with more than 2.1 million internally displaced, and more than 1.5 million fled to neighbouring countries. More than 17,000 children with 1,300 recruited in 2016 were used as child soldiers in the conflict. Incidents of sexual violence rose to 60% in 2016; and a United Nation survey revealed that 70% of women were raped in camps by the police and soldiers, and many of the internally displaced persons were being starved to death (https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/South_Sudanese_Civil_War).

Similarly, Kenya has witnessed ethno-religious dichotomy and feud between tribes across regions. For example, President Arap Moi deliberately sponsored and fanned series of ethnic violence in the Rift Valley Region between 1992 and 1993. It was estimated that within the short period, about 1,500 people were killed, and approximately 300,000 were internally displaced (Human Rights Watch 1995 cited in Egwu 2006). The emergence of multi-party politics and competitive elections in Kenya, coupled with the internal and external pressure for political reforms, generated much political heat. The Kenya Africa National Union, on which platform President Arap Moi ruled Kenya since her independence in 1963, could not deliver the country from the ruins of ethno-religious conflicts. President Moi was confronted by mounting pressures for political reform. For fear of losing power, he resorted to sponsoring rival ethnic groups for conflict related activities to lay credence to his political belief in closed political space which stated that “multiparty politics breeds antagonistic ethnicity and violence”. Kenya is enmeshed in post-election violence till present (http://en.wa.org/w/2007-2008_Kenyan_crisis).

The central point of ethno-religious conflicts that affects their intensity, level of violence and duration is the involvement of the government. The government exhibits ethnic-coloration in the feud without pretences of neutrality. In many cases, the drastic application of the coercive apparatuses of the state escalates the level of violence and records toll of casualties, and internally displace millions of vulnerable population (Nnoli 2003). The Rwanda’s experience in 1994 is a sorry-case, where participation of the state made genocide possible. Although Paul Kagame led Rwanda to economic prosperity as his government was adjudged by the United Nations and several international leaders as the model of good governance in Africa, the regime was marked by accusations of human right abuses, oppression of political opponents and the press.

In Nigeria, the federal military government involved itself in Zango-Kataf ethno-religious conflict in Kaduna State in 1990/91. The federal military government

had sympathy for Muslims. The 1966 pogrom against the Igbo ethnic-group was sponsored and escalated by the federal military government. The level of violence caused by government involvement heightened the physical insecurity of the population and their migration away from the areas of conflict with its attendant social problems. Currently, the Fulani herdsmen are ravaging farm lands, killing vulnerable farmers, creating food insecurity, attacking and killing people in various communities under the watch of the government. Besides, Boko Haram insurgency has been leasing mayhem and catastrophe to the north-east and Nigeria government is cosmetically addressing the heinous crime. The country has recorded six successful coup d'état, two aborted, and two alleged. Similarly, the post-election violence experienced in Cote d'Ivoire in 2010/11 in which UN officials reported that over 1000 civilians were killed, 500,000 were internally displaced, and 94,000 fled to Liberia for safety due to Laurent Gbagbo's refusal to honour the legitimate election results that declared his presidential opponent, Alassane Quattara the winner (<http://www.responsibilitytoprotect.org/index.php/crises/crisis-in-ivory-coast>); in the same vein, President Yahya Jammeh's resistance in Gambia to relinquish power to Adama Barrow as the winner of 2016 election, were as a result of African leaders' insatiable lust for political power.

Conflict is essentially an integral part of social existence because it emerges mainly where clear contradictions exist or is perceived to exist between the parties who believe that the result of such conflict is extremely vital to their individual and collective existence. Violence can be traced to historical events, long-held grievances, economic hardship, attitudes of pride and honour, grand formulations of national interest, and related decisions by leaders or groups inclined to pursue their objectives by violence. Ethnic cleavages, competition for power and resource control are recurrent features of African conflicts. The circumstances that led to the 1994 Rwanda genocide provided extraordinary and tragic example of the failure of the world community to take effective preventive action in a deadly situation. With well over half a million people killed in three months, this has been one of the most horrifying scenes in human history. Deadly conflict is not inevitable because war or mass violence usually results from initial deliberate political calculations and poor decisions (Carnegie Commission on Preventing Deadly Conflict 1997). Baldwin et al (1997:251) observed that:

In several African countries, religion and tribal hostilities have had tragic consequences. In some cases, a dominant tribe has assumed political control over a country and then slaughtered fellow citizens who are members of a targeted tribe. Tribal massacres have claimed the lives of hundreds of thousands of victims, and some countries have fallen into anarchy and chaos; Eritrea, Liberia, Burundi and Rwanda are some examples. Elsewhere, bitter civil war has been fought, such as those in Nigeria and Zaire. In the Republic of South Africa, democracy is threatened by the potential for civil war between two major tribes, the Zulus and the Bantus, who have been enemies for centuries.

According to Nnoli (1989), African politics is commonly interpreted in tribal terms. Tribalism is most often used to explain a change of any African government irrespective of whether the change is brought about by a military coup d'état or through legitimate electoral processes. Public policy is being presumed to be understood only in terms of the distribution of resources alongside tribal lines, the result of the hegemony of one tribe or consequences of balancing tribal forces are disastrous. The dynamics of African societies is being dominated by tribalism. In the analysis of ethnic politics in Africa, tribalism is fostered as a springboard to capturing power. In some respects, the demands of these national movements accommodate the interest of some minority language groups; these include campaign against the oppression of one communal group by another, desire of the group to take political charge of its own affairs, and the intention to use the political instrument to end the group's subjugation and relative backwardness.

Against the above backdrop, the objective of this study is to investigate the nexus between ethno-religious conflicts and political development in Africa. The study x-rayed political instability and ethnocentrism as factors undermining political and economic development efforts of Africa.

1. Concept Clarification: *Ethnicity* is that which the parties are distinct ethnic groups which primary identity prevails. Members of the unique groups acquire their status by ascription, share common history, culture and tradition, language, and locate within an area. Ethnic identity has a symbolic capability to explain for the individual the totality of his or her existence, including incorporating the hopes, fears and sense of the future of the individual. Therefore, individuals are very sensitive to matters of ethnic symbolism. Any attempt to threaten or undermine ethnic group identity ignites violence. Ethnic identity abhors such actions as those that diminish group status, worth, legitimacy in the eyes of its members. It is so critical that an individual's self esteem is determined by the status, worth and legitimacy of the ethnic group to which the person belongs. An ethnic group is perceived by its members as a pseudo-family to the extent that any action that undermines the group interest, hits at the very existence of its entire members even though the action may not be directed at the people individually (Nnoli 2003). Ethnic solidarity and bloc-loyalty marginalized national patriotism and enthrone subversive activities that serve the interest of ethnicity.

2. Methodology: The researcher adopted ex-post facto research design. Qualitative method of data collection was applied to generate information from documentary evidence of secondary source. This method is considered appropriate tool to collect data because the events had taken place before the study, and the elements cannot be changed or influenced by the researcher. Umar (2016) notes that a qualitative approach emphasizes the qualities of entities, processes and meanings that are not experimentally examined or measured in terms of quantity, amount, intensity or frequency. Nworgu (2006) observes that in ex-post facto design, the researcher attempts to link some already existing effects or observation to some variables as

causative agents. At the commencement of the study, the researcher finds that the subjects are already assigned to or classified into various levels of the variables whose effects are being investigated and cannot be manipulated. Ali (2006) observes that casual comparative studies describe how an event that is not manipulated has probable impact on another event. The research design is adopted on this premise, while content analysis method was applied.

3. Conflicts in Democratic Africa

Democracy is tolerant of opposition, by means of dialogue, hence parliamentary democracy appealed to all African states. We need to go back to essentials by seeking the real meaning of parliament and to discover the concept. Africans must re-engineer their perception of democracy, and must realize that the suspension of constitutional rights to personal liberty and other basic freedoms is always a reflection of incompetence on the part of civilian rulers (Azikiwe cited in Ofoegbu 1989). Violence is inevitable in human societies. Its relevance in human existence buttresses the stance of some social scientists who favoured the views of the desirability and even necessity of violence in order to negotiate for enduring peace. In a situation where unbearable conditions or overwhelming threats are obvious, such line of action may make such opinions understandable. It is painful where all the avenues for peaceful negotiation were utilized to resolve the conflict without success, prior to the initiation of the war. However, too often, the results of war negate the very hope for a better future that might initially have motivated the war (Wallensteen 2012). The emergence of democracy across the continent has engendered insurgency, religious-based conflicts and ethnic rivalries; indigenes and settlers question, and election related crises in Africa. The strong optimism that the enthronement of democracy across Africa would avert or contain ethnic and religious conflicts has proved unrealistic; the continent has witnessed high level ethnic and religious violence with devastating consequences. Considering the fact that states have increasingly become less responsive to the security needs of their citizens, the weakness of some African states has negatively impacted significantly on the management of ethnic and religious conflicts (Kwaja 2009).

Wallensteen (2012:301) argues that:

There is a challenge to the arguments of democracy as a long term preventive strategy. It has been noted that democratization means that more conflicts will emerge than would otherwise have been the case. It means a weakening of the centre and, thus, opens a number of otherwise dormant conflicts. The transition from authoritarian rule to democracy is troublesome because it opens the gateway for politically motivated ethno-religious conflicts. For many, keeping order becomes preferable, popular and good for the economy. It is argued that strong powers maintain order in their regions' frontiers and perhaps also globally. This might induce fright and prevents a number of concerns from being articulated, and thus fewer conflicts will arise.

Incompatibility of political classes drawn alongside ethnic fronts, the uncompromising tussle for political leadership with the fear of ethnic domination, marginalization and deprivation of society benefits, portray African democracy in bad light. African politics is characterized by mistrust, suspicion, crude manoeuvres, and post-election litigations. Fundamentally, each political party has ethnic base and draws its main supporters from such home foundation. This trend hampers democracy and stunts its growth and development in developing countries. Most elections in Africa ends up with post-election violence that results in destruction of lives and properties, like Zimbabwe 2008; Kenya 1992, 2008, 2013; Cote d'Ivoire 2010, 2011; Nigeria 1965, 1983, 2011. Ethnic partisan influences patterns of corruption in public offices. From 1982 to 2010, Nigeria experienced over 8,206 deaths, and 120 persons injured (Owutu 2013). Liberia had experienced multifaceted ethnic-based civil war that almost ruined the country. Burundi was enmeshed in post-election crisis in 2015 which claimed over 200 lives and inestimable properties; and engendered extra-judiciary killings and hate speeches.

Democracy is a form of governance building on shared values. A viable democracy is one which has the ability to use the conflict resolution strategies to stem internal conflicts. It requires that the public at large, as well as various special interest groups, be in agreement on the rules of the society. It builds on an attitude where the democratic machinery is important in itself and worth the protection of the population and their assets. The most effective way in which democracy can lose its legitimacy is from corruption. African leaders and top government functionaries are culprits of misappropriation of public funds. However, in any social system whose leadership is mostly concerned with its own enrichment, the state institutions are adversely affected. Enduring democratic institutions built on local conditions is the panacea. It is imperative that democracy is connected to cultural values, local beliefs, and mores.

4. Causes of Ethno-Religious Conflicts

One of the central challenges of Africa is ethno-religious conflicts which engulfed the continent since its decolonization. In a radical departure from the inter-state conflicts of the old era, the current issue is characterized by internal conflicts, horizontally between different socio-ethnic and cultural aggregates within a national territory, and vertically between groups who feel excluded and marginalized from existing power structures on the one hand, and the central authority on the other. These conflicts are characterized by genocide, ethnic cleansing, and unprecedented humanitarian tragedies in the form of internally displaced persons. Sordidly, Africa accounts for about 4.5 million refugees, many of whom are women, children and vulnerable groups like the elderly (Ngandu and Swai 2003 quoted in Egwu 2006).

Although the root causes of ethno-religious conflicts have been linked to colonialism and cold war, conservative scholars argue that ethnic and religious conflicts are most rooted in bad governance, politicization of ethnic and religious identities, and the unhealthy competition for power by those whose self-centered course is rooted in parochial ideologies. Takaya (1992) identified factors that politicized ethnicity and religion in developing countries to include:

- a. The existence of two or more ethnic and religious groups with numerical strengths that can significantly affect the outcome and direction of a democratic political process;
- b. The instrumentalization of ethnicity and religion as legitimizing tool of hegemony in instances when the interest of the political class is under threat;
- c. When there is an ascendant radical thinking within a politically significant ethnic or religious group capable of upstaging hegemony; and
- d. When the society is characterized by political, social or economic hardships that can cause alliances along ethnic and religious fault-lines.

Fragility of the state institutions in terms of their ability and capacity to manage diversity, corruption, rising inequality, gross violation of human rights, environmental degradation, boundary disputes and other conflict related issues have also been identified as some of the underlying causes of violent-conflicts in Africa. The situation is further compounded due to the failure of the state to be responsive to its primary responsibility of providing security for lives and properties. Howbeit, the state is embroiled in internal intractable conflicts, subjecting its credibility and legitimacy to question (Rotberg 2004). African democracy, with its feeble institutional framework, seems to have failed to guarantee peaceful resolution or positive and effective management of ethnic and religious conflicts as the state is enmeshed in the entire mess. Where ethno-religious identities are so strong and national identity so weak, the population would pay strong allegiance to their ethnic authority or religion. Such adherents would be willing tools to engage the state authority in battle in defense of their ethnic and religious interests. Francis (2006) cited in Kwaja (2009:9), stressed that:

... Contested identities along ethnic and religious fault-lines have dominated the literature on the analysis of conflict and have come to represent the stereotypical images of Africa. Identity constitutes, but is not limited to the following – race, ethnicity, religion, language, nationalism, and cultural heritage. Political ethnicity, religious fundamentalism and virulent nationalism have led to the emergence of assertive identity politics with the capacity to mobilize public support for its cause ... as well as the capacity to instigate violent conflicts as witnessed in Nigeria and most African countries.

Egwu (2006) notes that “although ethnicity had been critical in the politics of Kenyan state and was central to the development of the clashes, it was not the motor force behind the 1992 outbreak of clashes; the clashes were deliberately instigated and manipulated by Arap Moi led- government and KANU politicians who were anxious to retain their hold on political power in the face of mounting internal and external pressure for change”. Also, ungodly electoral irregularities had caused ethnic-based post-election violence and its consequences and trauma are unimaginable in the political history of Africa. African leadership entanglement in

ethno-religious violence and mismanagement of state resources often heightens tension and escalates crisis that debase human dignity. Dr Nnamdi Azikiwe's belief and demands for good government were highlighted in Ofoegbu (1989:331) as he notes that:

Until African states accept the challenge to build a nation whose political foundations are based on respect for individuals freedom under the law, and whose economic policy guarantees the citizen a national minimum wage above subsistence level – to enable him to obtain food, shelter, clothing and the amenities of life without distress – and whose social goals are hitched towards a free national health service, a free and compulsory national contributory social security plan, then they have yet to demonstrate their capacity for good government.

5. Incidence of Ethno-Religious Conflicts in Africa

Incidents of ethno-religious conflicts were analyzed in two African countries – Rwanda and Kenya - to illustrate the colossal waste of human and material resources in a continent itching for development.

5.1. Rwanda witnessed large scale killing of Tutsi tribe on the grounds of ethnicity in 1994. The Hutu ethnic majority murdered over 800,000 to 1,000,000 people, mostly the Tutsi minority tribe. The extreme Hutu nationalists began the violent conflict in Kigali, the capital of Rwanda. The genocide swiftly spread like wild fire throughout the country with staggering and incredible speed and brutality, as common citizens were incited by local officials and the Hutu-led-government to take up arms against Tutsis, their neighbours. Similarly, a Hutu revolution in 1959 forced about 300,000 Tutsis to flee Rwanda, reducing their minority strength. The victims of the genocide include the Prime Minister Agathe Uwilingiyimana and her 10 Belgian bodyguards. Howbeit, before Tutsi-led Rwandese Patriotic Front (RPF) gained control of the country through a military offensive in early July 1994, thousands of Rwandans had been killed, and millions were internally displaced. The victory of RPF put more than two million Hutu-participants in the genocide on their heels to Zaire, Burundi, Tanzania, Uganda and Democratic Republic of Congo as refugees. In a full-blown humanitarian crisis, thousands of them died of disease epidemics common to the squalor of refugee camps (<http://www.history.com/topics/rwandan-genocide>).

Rwanda's Tutsi-led-army also committed genocide against the Hutus in Zaire. The most well known atrocity by RPF forces was the Kibeho massacre on 22 April, 1995. The genocide had enduring and profound impact on Rwanda and its neighbours. For instance, the presence of two million refugees in eastern Zaire helped destabilized the already weak country, as Mobutu Sese Seko allowed Hutu extremists among the refugees to operate with impunity. In October 1996, Mobutu's continued support of the Hutu-militants led to an uprising by the ethnic Tutsi, Banyamulenge people in eastern Zaire (supported politically and militarily by Rwanda), which marked the beginning of the first Congo war, and led to a return of more than 600,000 Hutu refugees to Rwanda. This massive repatriation was followed by the return of

500,000 more refugees from Tanzania (<http://www.history.com/topics/rwandan-genocide>).

The pervasive occurrence of war-rape caused a spike of HIV infection, including babies born of rape to newly infected mothers; many households were headed by orphaned children or widows. The destruction of infrastructures and the severe depopulation of the workforce of the country crippled the economy, created insurmountable challenges for the government to have skilled manpower to achieve rapid economic growth and stabilization, and political stability, as most able-bodied Rwandans who survived the massacre were living in refugees' camps in neighbouring countries while the key Hutu-led government functionaries were living in self-exile. The major problems facing Rwanda is the reintegration of more than two million refugees and prison-population of about 100,000. Rwanda was facing serious social problems resulting from the civil war. The long-term effects of war-rape include social isolation (social stigma attached to rape meant some husbands left their wives who were victims of war-rape, or that the victims were rendered unsuitable for marriage), unwanted pregnancies and babies (some women resorted to self-induced abortions), and sexually transmitted diseases. It was estimated that between 2,000 and 5,000 pregnancies resulted from war-rape. (<http://www.history.com/topics/rwandan-genocide>).

5.2. Kenya: A country with over 70 distinct ethnic groups, its elections since her independence in 1963 has been dominated by ethnic affiliation, resulting in exclusionism and discrimination of those affiliated with opposition. The Orange Democratic Movement (ODM) was supported by Luo, Luhya and Kalenjin tribes in Nyanza, Western Provinces and Rift Valley; while the Party of National Unity (PNU) was backed by Kikuyu tribe in Central, Eastern Provinces, Nairobi, the Coast Province and Rift Valley. Kenya had presidential post-election violence as President Mwai Kibaki of PNU, (a Kikuyu), was declared the winner of disputed election in 2007. Supporters of Raila Odinga of ODM alleged irregularities and international observers corroborated the allegation. Kibaki was secretly sworn-in at night amidst protest. Supporters of ODM resorted to rampaging, killing Kikuyus in several parts of the country. The police intervention and the shooting of hundreds of the protesters heightened ethnic-based killings and attacks against Kikuyus living outside their traditional settlement areas, especially in the Rift Valley Province. In an incident, over 50 unarmed Kikuyu women and children were burnt alive. The violence recorded 1,500 casualties, while 600,000 people were allegedly displaced. It was alleged the police action was government-driven against supporters of ODM. (http://en.wa.org/w/2012-13_Tana_River_District_Clashes).

In earlier clashes between the Orma and Pokomo tribes of Kenya's Tana River District of Coast Province in 2012/2013, 118 people were killed and 13,500 were internally displaced. Pokomo's are farmers, while Ormas are cattle-herding. The unfriendly climate to nomadic people subjects Orma tribe to vulnerability. The climate change, a major cause to communal conflicts in Africa, has sparked numerous

clashes between farmers and nomads over access to water and farming zone (Tana River District Clashes n.d.).

Conflicts possess the capacity to severely constrain development efforts of African states by destroying infrastructures, interrupting the production processes, as well as depleting the workforce and diverting scarce resources away from productive utilizations to conflict management. Adetula (2006) notes that civil wars in the Horn of Africa in the 1980s and 1990s hindered development by affecting not only state structures but also other sectors. Within three decades, life expectancy went down by 10-20 years; per capita income decreased by 50 percent; famine became endemic; and other welfare indicators such as health, education and social services were worsened. A World Bank report showed that resources diverted by conflict away from development utilization were estimated at \$1 billion a year in Central Africa and more than \$800 million in West Africa. Incessant conflicts have caused development assistance projects to suffer in many African countries. Most worrisome is that the resources that are originally meant for the funding of development projects are diverted to conflict management and peace-keeping activities.

6. Military in Politics and Development of Democracy in Africa

Military in politics aimed at unseating civilian governments and replacing them with ruling councils drawn largely from the army, emerged after African countries were “decolonized” by Europe. It seemed as though the new countries would escape the dreary round of coups and counter-coups typical of Latin America, the Middle East and Southeast Asia. Such was the assumption until Sudanese army led by General Ibrahim Abboud struck and seized control of Sudan government in 1958. No further supplanting of civilian authority by a military junta occurred until 1965 in Algeria (Welch 1970). Thereafter, the military besieged Africa to unseat democratic governments, and degenerated to incessant counter coup d'état against military governments. Africa recorded 99 successful coup d'état, 14 unsuccessful and 2 alleged in 30 countries as illustrated hereunder.

Table 1: Military Intervention in Politics in Some African Countries

S/No	Country	Successful Coup	Aborted Coup	Alleged Coup
1.	Sudan	4	1	0
2.	Algeria	3	0	0
3.	Congo Kinshasa	3	0	0
4.	Congo Brazzaville	4	0	0
5.	Benin	4	1	0
6.	Central African Rep	5	0	0
7.	Burkina Faso	6	3	0
8.	Nigeria	6	2	2
9.	Ghana	5	1	0
10.	Burundi	5	1	0

11.	Togo	2	0	0
12.	Sierra Leone	5	0	0
13.	Mali	3	0	0
14.	Uganda	6	0	0
15.	Guinea Bissau	4	0	0
16.	Chad	3	2	0
17.	Libya	1	0	0
18.	Liberia	2	0	0
19.	Egypt	4	0	0
20.	Rwanda	2	0	0
21.	Niger	4	0	0
22.	Equatorial Guinea	1	1	0
22.	Ethiopia	4	0	0
23.	Gambia	1	0	0
24.	Guinea	2	0	0
25.	Tunisia	3	0	0
26.	Algeria	3	0	0
27.	Sao Tome & Principe	0	2	0
28.	Somalia	2	0	0
29.	South Africa	1	0	0
30.	Cote V'ivoire	1	0	0
Total		99	14	2

Source: Welch, C.E. (1970). *The Roots and Implications of Military Intervention*. In C.E. Welch (ed.) *Soldier and State in Africa*. Evanston: Northwestern Univ. Press.

With predominant presence of the army in government in virtually all African country, coupled with the high rate of counter-coup d'état, and sit-tight syndrome in leadership, democracy was suffocated and sustainable development was truncated. Baldwin et al (1997:251) observe that:

Most African countries continued to be dominated by military or one-party dictatorship. An alarming trend in Africa is the revival of tribal hostilities. European colonization of Africa resulted in the formation of countries that contained in variety of ethnic groups. When Western imperialist countries left or were forced out of Africa after World War II, the former colonies attempted to create either Western-style capitalist or Marxist-states. More recently, many of these attempts have been crumbling under the weight of tribal-hatred. The underlying causes of this situation are historical, psychological, and sociological.

Azikiwe (cited in Ofoegbu 1989) argues that under normalcy, no man should impose his rule on any people unless he has been duly elected to do so at a free, fair, and

credible election. Military in politics is viewed with regret as inherently detrimental to Africa. Scholars of African political change almost totally neglected the role of the military until the uprisings noted earlier made the omission distressingly obvious. Writings on African armies were practically nonexistent. The armed forces were not considered to have the potential to become a meaningful independent political force. Rather, major emphasis rested upon charismatic leadership, institutional political transfer, mass parties, and similar slogans used by political scientists. Africa was the continent of “political kingdom” or “primacy of politics”, not the continent of the army caudillo and frequent coup d’état. Patterns of political change in Africa made knowledge of the military seem irrelevant. Two factors accounted for the lack of attention – the manner in which colonial territories gained independence, and the historical heritage of African armies. Most African countries gained political independence through constitutional negotiation, through pressure exerted by party leaders against colonial powers who were relatively willing to withdraw. Self-government did not come through military action, rather through nationalist movements (Welch 1970:3). From onset, military in politics is absolute aberration in governance, and the rate of coup d’état in Africa was frightening. The military averted African zeal for sustainable democracy, and leadership question resulted in development crisis.

Besides, African leaders lack political etiquette as they suffocate intra-party politics. Some leaders made uncivilized attempt to amend subsisting Constitution in order to elongate tenure. For example, the Presidents of Rwanda, Burundi, Democratic Republic of Congo, Nigeria, and Burkina Faso made fruitlessly attempts to extend their tenure. Most African presidents enjoy limitless tenure as Africa’s longest serving leaders.

Table 2: Eleven Africa’s Longest Serving Presidents: 2017

President	Country	Year Assumed Office	No of years served
Maummar Gaddafi.	Libya - 1969-2011.	1969 – 2011, killed in 2011	42 years
Omar al-Bashir	Sudan	1978 – 2017	39 years
Teodoro Obiang Nguema Mbasogo	Equatorial Guinea	1979- 2017	38 years
Jose Eduardo dos Santos	Angola	1979 – 2017	38 years
Robert Mugabe	Zimbabwe	1980-87 Prime Minister; 1987-2017 President	37 years
Paul Biya – 06/11/1982	Cameroon	1982 – 2017	35 years
Yoweri Museveni	Uganda	1986 – 2017	31 years
Idriss Deby	Chad	1990 – 2017	27 years

Isaias Afwerki	Eritrea	1993 – 2017	24 years
Yahya Jammeh	Gambia	1994 – 2016	22 years
Denis Sassou Nguesso	Republic of Congo	1997 – 2017	20 years

Source: Mjamba, K. O. (2014). 10 of Africa’s longest serving presidents
<http://thisisafrica.me/10-africas-longest-serving-leaders/>

7. Result: The study revealed politicization of ethnicity and religion as veritable tools to weep ethno-religious sentiment for political support, which adversely truncated African political development. Africa has experienced total breakdown of social cohesion and disruption of local governance systems due to political instability. The study recorded political repression and extrajudicial killings as development impediments. The loss of resilience is linked to diminished access to public services, which results in increased incidence of ill-health, contraction in formal employment opportunities, the destruction of subsistence livelihoods, and other entitlement failures, which affect consumption and nutrition, as well as weakening of social cohesion and heightening insecurity.

8. Implications

Armed conflict has adverse, multiple, long and short-term effects on environment, human wellbeing, and socio-economic development; it scares foreign investors, reduces business friendly environment, and exalts gross economic mismanagement. Armed conflict destroys environment, physical, social infrastructures, and human capital development, diminishes available opportunities for sustainable development. Africa generates huge-income from tourism, but conflict scares tourists. Its impacts on society is devastating, like reducing quality of life, the capabilities of people to live good lives, loss of lives, zero means of livelihoods. Human dignity and fundamental human rights are frighteningly abused. The people’s livelihoods are directly affected through decreased access to land, and inadequate access to natural resources due to exclusion, displacement, and the loss of biodiversity (<http://www.unep.org/dewa/Africa/publications/AEO-2/content/203.htm>

Conflict obstructs economic growth and development as resources meant for development are being channeled to conflict management with attendant challenges of rehabilitating internally displaced persons, reconstruction of infrastructures and perpetual increase in Africans foreign debts.

9. Conclusion

The problems besieging Africa are substantially created by African leaders through poor governance, lust for political power, and lack of synergy on issues of national interest. Ethno-religious intolerance is being fanned by leaders to hold on political power. Political instability sprouts from the ruins of ethnic domination and marginalization of one interest group by the other. Political corruption and zero-sum game heighten tribal tension, heats up the polity and easily ignites the flammable environment. The military is partisan and profoundly enmeshed in ethno-religious

politics. Its presence in governance is one major attribute of African underdevelopment. Africa is polluted with ethno-religious sentiments to garner support, and the military overture is not the anti-dot to African problems. There is need for African leaders' re-orientation to embrace synergy, tolerance and genuine desire to serve the people.

Ethnic diversity, multicultural and linguistic identities are resources to be harnessed for development. The issue of distribution of society benefits, which is one of the major root causes of conflict, should be broad-based. Lopsided distribution of political spoils degenerates lawlessness. Independent legal system and strong institutional framework to superintend electoral processes would be a panacea to curb post-election upheavals.

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