

Conflict Resolution,
Identity Crisis and
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Conflict Resolution, Identity Crisis and Development in Africa

Edited by

**Professor Celestine Oyom Bassey
&
Dr Oshita O. Oshita**

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E-mail: malthouse_press@yahoo.com
malthouse_lagos@yahoo.co.uk
Tel: +234 (01) -773 53 44; 0802 364 2402

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Dedication

Dedicated to Chief Olusegun Obasanjo, GCFR, President and Commander-in-Chief of the Armed Forces of the Federal Republic of Nigeria (1999 - 2007) and all those who played key roles in the process leading to the establishment of the Institute for Peace and Conflict Resolution (IPCR) in February 2000.

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The challenges encountered in editing this volume of essays have indebted us to a number of individuals and Institutions. First, our gratitude goes to Dr. Sunday A. Ochoche, FWC, former Director-General of the Institute for Peace and Conflict Resolution (IPCR) who wasted no time in acceding to the suggestion by the Department of Research and Policy Analysis to have publish this volume as a platform for exchange of cross-cutting ideas by experts and practitioners in peace and conflict studies. In an era of scarce resources, the Institute was challenged by the state of its finances, hence the need for creative options for funding the publication.

The editors are also grateful to Dr. Joseph Golwa, the Director-General of the Institute for Peace and Conflict Resolution (IPCR) for his moral support. Since the present volume is only one in the series, it is hoped that subsequent endeavours would also receive the full and unalloyed support of the leadership of the Institute.

The editors have enjoyed the understanding and cooperation of the publishers who were kind enough to publish this volume at terms that were not totally commerce-friendly.

Finally, the editors are grateful to the contributors to this volume and would like to thank them for their courage and commitment in sharing their ideas on the various themes with the research community. The views contained in the chapters are exclusively those of the authors and in no way represent the position of the Institute for Peace and Conflict Resolution.

Celestine Bassey & Oshita O. Oshita

Preface

The publication of this volume by the Institute for Peace and Conflict Resolution (IPCR) fulfils one of the key mandates of the IPCR, which is to research and disseminate the outcomes of its studies and activities to the public. The idea is to provide adequate and proper information on the thematic issues with which the IPCR is pre-occupied in its effort to prevent conflict, build peace, encourage dialogue and strengthen synergies among the diverse stakeholders of peace, security and development. The IPCR is glad to be able to bring together the views and perspectives contained in each of the chapters in this collection as a basis for understanding and encouraging the new security debate on the emerging nexus of peace, conflict and development in Africa.

It is my belief that the contributions in this volume will provide the reading public with the insights that would be useful for the understanding of the character and psychology of violent conflict and the social forces that predispose acts to violence and social systems to conflict disorders. The contributions come from some of those who have been involved in different aspects of research and practice in the various thematic areas in the field in Nigeria and Africa. This collection is no doubt an essential reading for every student of society in Africa.

Dr. Joseph Golwa
Director-General and General Editor

Foreword

The global efforts towards conflict prevention, management and resolution cannot be sustained without the critical input of peace practitioners, security and policy analysts from different parts of the world. It is in this context that this publication by the Institute for Peace and Conflict Resolution (IPCR) fills an essential gap in the extant literature in this important area. Apart from focusing on local approaches to conflict resolution in Africa, this volume also brings rigorous and in-depth analysis to bear on the traditional understanding of the concepts and themes like conflict prevention, conflict management and resolution.

As Africa emerged from the conflicts precipitated by colonialism, the realities of state-making and governance at independence challenged leaders to provide innovative ways of preventing, managing and resolving those conflicts disorders, resulting in weak and even “failed states”. The ideas presented in this volume of essays constitute a firm basis for exploring alternatives to the western-dominated approaches to conflict prevention, management and resolution in Africa today.

I am therefore glad to do this foreword for a highly academic and practice-oriented contribution to the subject area that is by all standards an important addition to the existing materials in the field. The IPCR as an Institute engaged in basic and applied research and intervention has clearly risen to the practical challenges and *raison d’etre* for its establishment by the Federal Government of Nigeria in February 2000. The Institute is also blazing a trail that is no doubt of pedagogic significance to similar policy research Institutions in the public and private sectors in Africa. In a world that is driven by knowledge systems, this publication provides an importance and strategic opportunity for the sharing of experiences and the promotion of dialogue among scholars and practitioners.

*Senator Lawan G. Guba,
Honourable Minister,
Ministry of Cooperation and Integration in Africa*

Contents

<i>Dedication</i>	<i>v</i>
<i>Acknowledgements</i>	<i>vi</i>
<i>Preface</i>	<i>vii</i>
<i>Foreword</i>	<i>viii</i>
<i>Abbreviations and acronyms</i>	<i>xi</i>
<i>Contributors</i>	<i>xiii</i>

Introduction: The nexus of conflict and development crisis in Africa - <i>Celestine O. Bassey</i>	xv
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PART I: CONFLICT RESOLUTION: THEMATIC OVERVIEW

1 Concepts and methods of peace and conflict studies - <i>Isaac O. Albert</i>	3
2 Methodological issues in peace and conflict studies - <i>J. M. Amoda</i>	19
3 Humanitarian intervention and protracted social conflict - <i>Joseph P. Ochogwu</i>	33
4 Language and communication in peace and conflict resolution - <i>Edde M. Iji</i>	47
5 Structure of communication in peace and conflict resolution - <i>J. E. Gyong</i>	61

PART II: IDENTITY CRISIS

6 Theories and concepts of ethnicity - <i>Okwudiba Nnoli</i>	75
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7	Power sharing, political stability and ethnicity in Africa - <i>Samuel Egwu</i>	97
8	Conflict, equity and resource capture in Africa: the Nigerian experience - <i>Bob Osaze and Oshita O. Oshita</i>	111
9	Culture and conflict - <i>Judith Burdin Asuni</i>	121
10	Ethnicity, gender and peace - <i>D. A. Goubadi</i>	131
11	Epidemiology of conflict and violence in Nigeria - <i>Celestine O. Bassey</i>	141
PART III: CONFLICT RESOLUTION AND DEVELOPMENT IN AFRICA		
12	Violence as a feature of inter-ethnic compensations: implication for stability and development - <i>Mark Anikpo</i>	161
13	Federalism and the management of ethnicity in Nigeria: 1999 Constitution in focus - <i>Eghosa E. Osaghae</i>	171
14	Ethnicity, political stability and economic development in Africa - <i>Ayo Dumoye</i>	191
15	The place of ethnicity in the struggle for self-determination of South-South Zone of Nigeria - <i>Peter Okoh</i>	205
16	Resources and conflict: a case analysis of Niger Delta - <i>Oshita Oshita</i>	243
17	Conclusion	253
	<i>Index</i>	269

Abbreviations and acronyms

AAPW	Academic Association Peace Works
AIDS	Acquire Immune Deficiency Syndrome
ASEAN	Association of South East Asian Nations
AT&P	African Timber and Plywood
AU	African Union
BBC	British Broadcasting Commission
CBO	Community-Based Organization
CRC	Convention on the Rights of the Child
CRESNET	Conflict Resolution Stakeholders' Network
DFID	Department for International Development
DIFFRI	Directorate for Food, Roads and Rural Infrastructure
DRC	Democratic Republic of Congo
ECA	Economic Commission for Africa
ECOMOG	ECOWAS Monitoring Group
ECOWAS	Economic Community of West African States
FEAP	Family Economic Advancement Programme
GSM	Global System of Mobile Communication
HIV	Human Immune-Deficiency Virus
IPCR	Institute for Peace and Conflict Resolution
MDGs	Millennium Development Goals
MNOC	Multi-National Oil Company
MOSOP	Movement for the Survival of the Ogoni People
NAOC	Nigeria Agip Oil Company
NAP	National Action Plan
NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organization
ND	Niger Delta
NDDC	Niger Delta Development Commission
NEEDS	National Economic Empowerment and Development Strategy
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
NNPC	Nigerian National Petroleum Corporation
OAS	Organization of American States

OFN	Operation Feed the Nation
OMPADEC	Oil Mineral Producing Area Development Commission
OPC	Odua Peoples' Congress
OPEC	Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries
OTI	Office of Transition Initiatives
RPF	Rwandan Patriotic Front
SAP	Structural Adjustment Programme
SCA	Strategic Conflict Assessment
UN	United Nations
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
USA	United States of America
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
USSR	Union of Soviet Socialist Republic
VOA	Voice of America

Contributors

- Adekanye, Bayo, is a professor of political science at the University of Ibadan.
- Albert, Isaac O., is a senior research fellow with the Institute of African Studies, Peace Studies Programme, University of Ibadan.
- Amoda, J. M., is of the political science department at the Igbinedion University.
- Anikpo, Mark, is professor of sociology, editor-in-chief and director of Centre for Ethnic and Conflict Studies (CENTECS) at the University of Port Harcourt.
- Asuni, Judith Burdin is the chief executive officer of Academic Associates Peace Works, Asokoro, Abuja.
- Bakut, Bakut T., is acting director, department of defence and security studies at the Institute for Peace and Conflict Resolution, The Presidency, Abuja.
- Bassey, Celestine, is a professor of political science at the University of Calabar and currently the Commissioner for Education, Cross River State, Calabar.
- Dumoye, Ayo, is a professor of political science at the Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria.
- Egwu, Samuel is an associate professor of political science at the University of Jos.
- Goubadi, D.A., is the director-general of the Nigeria Institute of Advanced Legal Studies, Abuja.
- Gyong, J.E., is with the Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria.
- Iji, Edde M., is an associate professor in the Department of Theatre Arts, University of Calabar.
- Nnoli, Okwudiba was a professor of political science and the co-ordinator of Pan African Centre for Research on Peace and Conflict Resolution, Port Harcourt.
- Ochogwu, Joseph P., is a principal research officer at the Institute for Peace and Conflict Resolution, The Presidency, Abuja.
- Okoh, Peter is a former senior research fellow at the Nigerian Institute of International Affairs. He has been the director of the Centre on Conflict Resolution.

Okwunwa, Victor is project officer, monitoring and evaluation, UNICEF, Abuja.

Osaghae, Eghosa E., is a professor of political science and vice chancellor, Igbinedion University, Okada.

Osaze, Bob, is a professor at the University of Benin.

Oshita, Oshita O., is the director of research and policy analysis at the Institute for Peace and Conflict Resolution, The Presidency, Abuja.

Introduction: ***the nexus of conflict and development crisis in Africa***

- *Celestine Oyom Bassey*

Conflict is very often the result of the interaction of political, economic and social instability, frequently stemming from bad governance, failed economic policies and inappropriate development programmes which have exacerbated ethnic or religious difference (EC, 1996:4).

This volume represents a critical collection of contributions by eminent Nigerian scholars to the theme of conflict manifestations and development crisis in Africa. It addresses the ontological linkage between the prevalent crisis of under-development and political instability in the continent, resulting from mass poverty, stagflation uneven development, alienation, mounting external debts and periodic outbreak of violence and military coup d'état. The multiple and unabated economic crisis in the African continent has been generally linked in recent times to the unsettled condition of widespread civil disorder and the accelerated syndrome of failed states in Africa. In existential terms, the immanent linkage between conflict and underdevelopment crisis is non-linear, but dialectical. Underdevelopment crisis breeds conflict and conflict in turn sustains the quagmire of economic crisis in Africa. In this regard, any strategy for economic development which fails to integrate the broader social conditions of Africa is to say the least emasculated.

On this view, economic problems should now be thought of as political issues set in a wider context of social relations between societies. It follows, therefore, that the setting of social relationships - including conflict interaction, technology, and human geography - shapes the terms and

parameters of the operation of states economic strategies. Thus, a DFID report of 1997 has noted that:

Violent conflict generates social division, reverses economic progress, impedes sustainable development and frequently results in human rights violations. Large population movements triggered by conflict threaten the security and livelihood of whole region. (DFID 1997:16)

The destructive interface between violent social conflict and underdevelopment crisis has been the focus of a recent appreciation of the African condition by the *Journal of African Economics* engendered by imageries of the "hopeless continent". In one of the lead contribution, Ibrahim Elbadawi and Nicholas Sambanis (2006:244) of the World Bank, using a random probity model of overall incidence of civil wars in 161 countries between 1960 and 1990, concluded in relation to Africa, that "the relatively higher incidence of war in Africa is not due to the ethno-linguistic fragmentation of its countries, but rather to high levels of poverty, failed political institutions and economic dependence on natural resources." In other words, that utilizing the analytical matrix of "concomitant variation", it is established that "deep political and economic failures - not tribalism or ethnic hatred - are the root causes of Africa's problems." In line with this re-problematisation of development - security interface, Mark Duffield in *Global Governance and the New Wars* (2001:38) has argued persuasively that:

There is a compelling and mutual reinforcement within this imagery. Underdevelopment is dangerous since it can lead to violence; at the same time, conflict entrenches and deepens that danger. Societies are left not only worse off, but even more prone to outbreaks of instability. Such commonly held sentiments have provided the rationale for the widespread incorporation into official aid policy during the mid-1990s of a commitment to conflict prevention and conflict resolution activities.

Thus, it is now the collective wisdom of proponents of regionalism that the successful implementation of plans relating to collective self-reliance in isolation from the prevailing political environment in Africa is quite doubtful. It has to be recognized that 'basic choices of economic strategy and the foci of development programmes are always political as well as economic,' they cannot be productively implemented in isolation from the transnational and political fabric of the given milieu.

In terms of causes and general classification (taxonomy), the widespread condition of latent and manifest conflict disorder in the continent has

generated extensive debate on the literature about the structural and psycho-cultural factors sustaining the state of quasi-anarchy in these countries. (Ross, 1993, Sandole and Sandole, 1986). John Collins (1973), for instance, has provided a broad classification based on the "construction of domestic disorder consolidated variables," as a framework for analysing and comprehending civil disorder in Africa. These include anomic outbreaks, subversive activities, revolutionary activities, elite instability and domestic suppression composite variables.

A combination of these multivariate factors has been widely used as a basis for determining civil war, especially as codified in the ICPSR study. A variant of this model has been presented by Donald Morrison and Hugh Stevenson based on actor categorisation: elite, communal groups and mass movements. A number of studies of conflict in the African region have tended to utilise this model of analysis. Lewis Snyder (1984:154) in his study of political disintegration in Third World countries concludes that:

More germane to the security concerns of multi-ethnic developing states is the estimated potential for separatism. The evidence reviewed so far suggests that potential for separatist activity is greatest in developing societies where ethnic cleavages are already deep and where political discrimination against peripheral communities is widely practiced.

In Africa, a graphic feature of this phenomenon or "map" is the "extreme vacillation from one block of ethnic support to another with the change of rulers and their regime. In this process, we find the ground of articulation between "class and ethnicity." In Nigeria, Chad, Liberia, Sierra Leone, Sudan, Somalia and the Democratic Republic of the Congo, where "catastrophic balance required between ethnic forces shapes the structures of politics", the substantial violence required to suppress an ethnic revolt leads to the phenomenon of violence trap where identity and violence reinforce each other. In these instances, conflict becomes protracted "and developmental programmes are inevitably paralysed." Re-activating development processes, as Mark Duffield (2001:36) argues, is "therefore a non-linear exercise that will often require the creation of new institutions and forms of social organization." Thus, in this unsettled condition of violent social conflict, development projects now need to address:

the interests and opportunities of different identity groups within a states, for encouraging democratic governments that enjoy widespread legitimacy among the population, for fostering consensus on key nation issues...and for building mechanisms for the peaceful conciliation of group interest. (Duffield, 2001:38)

Although this mode of analysis has provided significant insight to the understanding of the generative structure of domestic fragmentation and conflict in African states, it has been widely seen to be insensitive “either to substantial differences in the form, intensity, and potential effects of conflict episodes that focus on limited issues in contrast with conflicts in which the structure of authority or the integrity of the state is at issues.” (Scaritt, 1993: 253). Seen in the context of changing social condition, a simplistic categorization of conflict, clusters based on primordial or ideological factors can be patently misleading. On this view, Gurr has provided alternative classification and complex topology of African conflicts involving “mobilization of people based on several overlapping identities,” ethnicity, class and political association.

Gurr’s taxonomy essentially derives from and conflates both instrumentalist and constructivist approaches to the study of ethnicity and ethnic conflict in African social formations. As reflected in Rothchild’s analysis, both perspectives provide the theoretical basis for understanding the phenomenon of group cohesion and disintegration that affects oppositional forces in countries such as Sierra Leone, Liberia, Congo, Somalia and Sudan, thus creating conditions of domestic quagmire that have generally made conflict settlement an exceedingly difficult task.

Explication

The existential degeneracy and crisis in African social systems over the last four decades has generated extensive debate in the literature on the structural and psychocultural factor sustaining the quasi state of anarchy in these countries. The conflict triggers highlighted include issues of identity, nationalism, social structure, nation-building and an anarchic and virulently hostile international environment. (Zartman and Deng, 1991)

In explanatory terms, the debate in the literature has been characterized by profound epistemological divergences. The orthodox or conventional genre, is mechanistic and state-centric, and in analysis and interpretation a “consequence of its view of society, its rationalist orientation and its focus on problems delimited by disciplinary boundaries.” (Chilcote, 1981:74) The second, and increasingly more popular radical genre, tends to be dialectical, holistic and system-level in orientation: it construes civil disorder as a resultant of double antimony of class and function bearing on Africa’s positions in the international division of labour.

In line with the essentially orthodox paradigmatic approach to contemporary historical and political inquiry, a number of writers have

proceeded unreservedly to identify primal factor in the cumulative progression, of many "African States primrose path to threatened disintegration" and the near anarchic institutional order in others in the past four decades. Thus, a number of brilliant contributors to four contemporary volumes on crisis and instability in Africa edited by Richard Joseph, *State, Conflict, and Democracy in Africa* (1999), Donald Rothchild, *Managing Ethnic Conflict in Africa* (1997), Francis Deng and William Zartman, *Conflict Resolution in Africa* (1991) and R. A. Akindele *Civil Society, Good Governance and Security in Africa* (2003), have systematically highlighted the structural and primordial factors that sustain fissiparous and explosive developments in post-colonial African states.

These factors according to Ibrahim Elbadawi and Nicholas Sambanis (2000:245) included ethno-linguistic fragmentation, high level of poverty, failed political institutions and economic dependence on natural resources:

Ethnic identities and hatred are seen as the cause of violent conflict. However, more systematic analysis of the causes of civil wars and conform to a global pattern that is better explained by political and economic factors as well as by the extent of ethnic, cultural and religious diversity in the society.

Thus, characteristics associated on historical and primordial grounds with African states and societies need to be carefully reconsidered because of profound permutations in environmental conditions since the last four decades. Hence, without conclusive supporting evidence one cannot simply assume that the evidence of the primordial configuration of African societies provides sufficient clues to understanding present developments and evaluating future trends. It would, however, be a grave mistake to ignore cultural conditioning entirely, since predisposing factors in the political process such as belief systems and values are, in the main, historically conditioned. The crucial questions are how much and in what manner?

Samuel Huntington and J. Nelson have both reached a similar conclusion in relation to contemporary Third World systems: "that increasing levels of socio-economic development produced broader, more diverse, and more autonomous patterns of political participation." Nevertheless, the persistence of ethnic cleavage, and the extent to which it continues to structure the language and perception of social and political intercourse in Africa, have rendered arguably untenable the Marxist and functionalist prediction of an erosion of ethnic identity and conflict with increasing modernisation in Africa. Rather, as a number of analysts have rightly and persuasively argued, socio-economic transformation and state expansion may "widen and intensify

ethnic identifications and stimulate pervasive competition on the basis of these enlarged cultural identities." (Bate, 1976:54)

A variant of this orthodox explication is based on Samuel Huntington's institutionalization theory which sees civil disorder in African societies as a "necessary and inescapable condition in the creation of political order and is thus intimately bound up with the process of modernisation and political development" (Dudley, 1985). In his disquisition, Huntington attributes the ubiquity of violence and political instability in "modernizing" societies in large part to the "rapid mobilization of new groups into politics couple with the slow development of political institutions" (Huntington, 1968:4). Political instability in African countries as well as in Asian and Latin American countries, he argues, is primarily the inexorable consequences of failure to develop political institutions sufficiently adaptable, complex, autonomous and coherent to cope with the emergence of new and variegated social forces resulting from profound changes in the substructural base. Thus, he (1968:11) contends:

Historically, political institutions have emerged out of the interaction and disagreement among social forces, and the gradual development of procedures and organizational devices for solving those disagreements...As social forces become more variegated, political institutions had to become more complex and authoritative. It is precisely this development, however, which failed to occur in many modernizing societies in the twentieth century. Social forces were strong, political parties remained fragile and disorganized. The development of the state lagged behind the evolution of society.

Following this analytical tradition, a number of observers (Panter-Brick, 1970; Mazrui, 1976) have construed the prevailing instability in African states largely as a function of institutional weakness and the incapacity of the political system to develop and maintain a general belief that "the existing social order and its main solutions are generally appropriate" (Harries-Jenkins and Van Doom, 1976:20).

Phenomenal social and economic changes in post-colonial Africa, it has been suggested, manifestly complicate the problems of establishing "new bases of political association and new political institutions combining legitimacy and effectiveness" (Zartman, 1983:29). This is arguably the direct consequence of the diversification and multiplication of social forces and the concomitant diminution of traditional sources of political authority, broadening political consciousness, rising expectations and participation. Since, in such a context, as comparative experiences of other modernizing polities attest, the rate of social mobilization and the expansion and

intensification of political activism outstrip political institutionalization, the inevitable consequence is political instability and disorder.

Such an analytical perspective no doubt provides significant insights into the problems and dynamics of the African social order. For instance, considered from the viewpoint of the institutionalization theory, the problematique of military intervention in African states could readily be explained in terms of the general politicization of social forces and institutions. This explanatory perspective, which sees the proclivity and destabilizing effects of military intervention in African states as rooted in the political and institutional structure of the society, does not necessarily contradict the alternate conceptualization of Janowitz: "that the most important causes of military intervention in politics derive from the distinctive social and organizational format of military establishment" (Janowitz, 1964:39). From a theoretical standpoint, societal conditions could be seen as predictor variables, while military institutional factors could be seen as intervening variables. This indicates that a necessary and sufficient explanation of the predispositions of the African military to seize power is conditioned by the manner in which intra-military characteristics relate to broader societal variables. In other words, societal conditions which are deemed to be compatible, or indeed identical, "will not necessarily produce like rates of military intervention unless intra-organizational factors are constant" (Moskos, 1981:55).

These considerations notwithstanding, the explanatory and predictive relevance of this perspective is necessarily delimited by the implicit ideological bias, and for this reason it has been subjected to devastating criticisms on methodological and substantive grounds. Thus, Claude Ake (1979:116) has contended that the theory of institutionalization has "no scientific status; it is neither applicable to the world nor useful to understand it." By explicating political instability and violence in countries such as Nigeria largely as a function of political "modernization" and "development" the institutionalization perspective poses a veritable form of reductionism which sees disorder as a defined stage in an established progression towards an assumed model of stable political institutions: the competitive capitalist state or the "open market societies," in the words of C.B. MacPherson (1962). In this respect, the conceptual bias of the institutionalization approach misleads by seeking to parade what is patently ideological as a "theoretical", "conceptual" construct. Billy Dudley (1985:17) explains why:

the charge of misrepresentation derives from the fact that the conceptual constructs of the 'modernizers' and the developmentalists not only misdescribe the political processes of the Western states, but, in that misdescription, prevent students of the African polities from confronting the

reality of African politics, which is that the 'problematics' of the African polities can only be made comprehensible if put within the perspectives of a world political order in which the African states feature as nothing more than peripheral enclaves of the Western capitalist system.

As an alternative to Huntington's neo-Weberian intellectual demarche, the radical explication of conflict and instability offers an essentially structural analysis based on the dialectics of development and underdevelopment.

The two major clusters of orthodox literature on instability and political order in Africa, so far reviewed, share one basic, if fallacious, assumption: that political instability in Africa is a pre-eminent resultant of endogenous or domestic, system-determined variables. Since such a development in the contemporary international system is a very rarely endogenous, the "context of change" (exogenous properties) has somehow to be incorporated into the model itself. In other word, a composite theory of instability and violence in African countries should be anchored not only on the internal dynamics of its social order, but also "on how that society is inserted into the world system at a particular point in the development of that system" (Roxborough, 1979:25; Wallerstein, 1979). This dialectical and world-system orientation, as it affects the internal processes of social change, constitutes the "core-complex" of the radical literature on the crisis of under-development in Africa.

Judging from its explanatory and predictive tendencies, this cluster of literature derives its epistemological antecedent from Marxist-Leninist thought, as mediated through historicist tradition. It argues essentially that political instability in Africa (as in other Third World countries) stems from "congenital susceptibility to imperialist pressures" and the structural subordination and dependence of African states in the world market (Ake, 1985).

Thus, in Onimode's (1988) explication, the fundamental roots of Africa's continuing mass immiserization and political instability reside in "imperialist exploitation of the continent", with the concomitant and inevitable result of "stagflation" uneven development, alienation, mounting external debts and periodic outbreak of social crises and military coup d'états. Conversely, the solution to this existential crisis of our time, Onimode (1988) argues, must begin with a recognition of the failure of orthodox developmental strategies and a discarding of the hypothesis on which such edifices have been constructed. This necessarily entails "deschooling" and disabusing the minds of the present and potential policy-makers of African states through an educational methodology that advances the process of "dealing critically and creatively with social reality and (discovering) how to participate in the transformation of their world" (Freire, 1985:14).

In Onimode's view (1988) such an educational methodology would necessarily have to be constructed on the theory and praxis of scientific socialism, with the express objective of evolving a "political strategy for a socialist Africa" which could be pursued by new regimes "controlled by the broad mass of the African population." Ultimately, therefore, socialist revolution is the only effective way of terminating "underdevelopment" and the periodic discharges of political crises evolving from it. But the tragedy of the African political drama, Onimode would contend, is quintessentially that, despite the multiple symptoms of accelerated crisis, the comprador elite which dominate development planning in African states persist in the institutionalization of values which, as one indomitable critic has noted, "leads inevitably to physical pollution, social polarization and psychological impotence: three dimensions in process of global degradation and modernized misery" (Illich, 1977:8).

While it may not be doubted that the above conceptualization and explication of the "radical genre" has indeed advanced our comprehension of the constellation of forces engendering periodic discharges in peripheral capitalist states, much of these writing on Africa has been shown to be "methodologically weak, empirically questionable, and historically irrelevant." Given the relevant structural changes in parameters in the past decade - institutional reforms, the political economy and constitutional imperatives that are "constructed to mediate the conflict within the ruling class and between them and the oppressed classes" - it would indeed be analytically difficult to maintain that "nothing has changed". However, it has to be conceded that, on the whole, the revisionist critique of the dominant orthodox literature proffered by radical scholars represents a most incisive and perceptive theoretical discourse on the crisis of African states.

Impact

The devastating social consequences of civil disorder in Africa have become a central inhibiting factor in the quest for meaningful development. Statistical comparison of Africa and other regions suggest that Africa surpasses in terms of civil war and collateral destruction of infrastructures for economic development. According to the Ibrahim Elbadawi and Nicholas Sambanis (2000:249):

Africa has the highest incidence of civil war, especially if we combine the incidence of war in SSA and North Africa. Perhaps more to the point, the incidence of war has increased in the last two decades in Africa, while it has fallen or remained stagnated in other regions. Wars in Africa are on

average relatively short and tend to be among the bloodiest. They are therefore the most intense civil wars (in terms of casualties per unit of time). Only Asia has seen more war-related deaths than Africa in the last 40 years and this estimate need not include all civilian war-related deaths that were due to starvation, illness and other disruptions caused indirectly by war in Africa.

The impact of these internal convulsions on developmental programmes in Africa has been profound. This changing social context in the continent has generated animated debates concerning issues of development and security (Duffield, 2001). That is, that in the light of prevailing condition in the continent, development and security has proven antithetical in circumstances of unabated conflict. Thus, the development consequences of civil disorder can be 'identified from their direct and indirect impact on the society and the economy.' Such impact, Ali Abdel and Gadir Ali (2000:239) notes, involves "the destruction of both human and physical capital, the disruption of economic transactions, including the increased cost of conducting such transactions, the distortion of resource allocation by the state." As a consequence:

All these effects have a direct implication on the development process broadly defined. In this respect it has now been established that during the period when wars are raging the per capita growth rate of the economy gets reduced by 2.2 percentage points compared with the normal non-war, the per capita growth rate gets reduced by 2.1 percentage points. These, we suggest, are massive derailment for development (Collier, 1999:170).

Thus, the contribution by Ayo Dumoye has succinctly noted that the International Human Suffering Index developed by the Population Crisis Committee in Washington DC, suggest that "90 per cent of the countries with highest level of human suffering were located in Africa." Similarly, the African Centre for Development and Strategic Studies (ACDESS) under A. Adedeji (1999) has placed most African states in the categories of countries engaged in armed conflict or "civil strife" and those in "severe and prolonged political crises". As a consequence, Dumoye concludes "there is no gainsaying the fact that conflicts, especially ethnic conflict, have negative impact on political stability and economic development."

This unsettling and debilitating condition is reflected in some current statistical analysis of conflict development in Africa. Omar Touray (2005:636) estimated that "some 26 armed conflicts erupted in Africa between 1963 and 1998, affecting 474 million people or 61% of the continent's population." At sub-regional level, 79% of the population were affected in East Africa, 73% in

Central Africa, 46% in West Africa, 51% in North Africa, and 29% in Southern Africa. These glaring statistics are suggestive of a continent in paralyzing crisis of under-development fuelled by accelerating economic stagnation. This systemic condition of hopelessness is directly linked to the “various aspects of development failures in Africa as a continent.” The enervating condition (“the hopeless continent”) has been linked by *The Economist* (13-19 May, 2000) to obvious “mixture of natural and man-made disasters”:

Floods in Mozambique, threats of famine in Ethiopia; mass murder in Uganda; the implosion of Sierra Leone; and a string of wars across the continent ... the nature of post-independence African state and the nature of the political contest therein or lack of such contest, external intervention in the internal affairs of African countries by political powers of various domination and vintages, external interventions driven by brute economic motives and internal destabilization driven by the motive of capturing the state and its coffers.

These wide ranging anomic phenomena and their impact on development processes in Africa constitute the focus of parts II and III of this volume, especially in terms of how primordial identities defined the character of emergent social forces and their contestation for state power. As Mary Kaldor (2001:7) has observed, “unlike the politics of ideas which are open to all and therefore tend to be integrative, this type of identity politics is inherently exclusive and therefore tends to fragmentation.”

The convulsive dimensions of crisis arising from this “identity politics” are the carnage of Rwanda, the mayhem of Darfur and the “horrific violence, large scale torture of civilians, pillage of rural institutions and industrial assets, and mass looting of village property” in Sierra Leone (Abdullah, 1997:17). The structural deformities of these peripheral formations manifest in different ways: crises of legitimacy, political instability, institutional weakness, and lack of natural identity, economic scarcity, and external vulnerability. These deformities are anchored primarily to the “domestic class structures, production relations and forms of exploitation that sustain neocolonialism, and the nature of the client post-colonial states that these class structures have developed” also operate to intensify this condition. The destabilizing consequence of these multiple contradictions is, as a number of analysts have noted, been the prevalence of gladiatorial or “exclusionary politics” (Onimode, 1988).

Thus, peripheral social formations by this consideration embody the anomaly of existence: state decay. The peripheral feature of this decay in the West African social formations has been the “state’s declining capacity to rule or to maintain the conditions for the operation of its eroding productive

infrastructures." Three areas of the decline are highlighted by S. W. Sangpam's review article. These are (i) the "increasing inability of the state to relate national means to policy ends, as seen in the inefficiency of public administration, security forces, economic policies, and so forth"; (ii) the decline in probity, manifest in the systemization of corruption. The general response of social forces to this incapacitation of the state has been "withdrawal into survival activities" (e.g. ethnic militias in Nigeria) in one respect, and, in the other circumstances (Sierra Leone, Liberia and Chad), the contestation of state power, which often results in a "zero-sum ethnic struggle for dominance, which may be expressed in violent internal conflicts." Thus, the forms of withdrawal and "shrinkage of the political arenas" vary from one formation to the other depending on the nature of the conjunctural crisis (to use Gramsci's phraseology): "self-enclosure," "suffer-manage", parallel systems (black markets), guerrilla warfare, secessions, regional irredentism, vigilantism, coups, popular revolt (Cote d'Ivoire) and civil war (Zartman, 1995).

Conflict containment

As noted in the preamble, it is fairly obvious from development in the region in the past four decades that whatever the strategy or combination of strategies adopted by Africa states in their quest for economic transformation, it can achieve only minimal success in the absence of effective conflict management regime, to deal decisively with the present and likely future flashpoints on the continent. In current discourse, the literature on conflict management and conflict resolution encompasses a series of assumptions bearing on distinctive conception of conflict, its logic and trajectory as instrument of a variety of social and economic objectives. Conflict is not "a crime of national leaders or a disease of international society, but simply a traditional method of resolving the quarrels that inevitably arise in international as in all other societies." (Claude, 1971:226) Thus, Donald Rothchild has noted in his classic, *Managing Ethnic Conflict in Africa* (1997:1), that:

Grim scenarios notwithstanding, there is nothing inevitable about destructive conflict between African states and their culturally distinct identity groups. Deep social cleavages and highly injurious encounters have occurred in many countries where peoples and groups disagree over basic rules, yet a comprehensive picture also shows accommodation, reciprocity, and negotiation. Regularized political interactions among state and ethnic leaders over time are likely to facilitate their cooperation. But how are

leaders to structure relations to promote predictable interaction and thereby avoid mutually damaging encounters?

Francis Deng and William Zartman, *Conflict Resolution in Africa*, (1991), have responded to this last question by offering a triadic structure of conflict reduction

using the analytical artifice of the number of parties involved: unilateral methods or conflict prevention, bilateral methods of negotiating the management of solution of violent conflicts, trilateral methods of mediation, and multilateral methods of institutionalized conflict reduction" (Zartman, 1991:300).

In this context, the primary task of the third party (in a variety of conflict management role) is to "avert or interrupt the use of force, preventing an aggravation of the dispute and keeping the contenders apart while the processes of international conciliations are set in motion" (Claude, 1971:226). For this purpose, the literature emphasizes a combination of peace-building and security regimes with the express objective of containment, localization and stabilization of conflict situation in a "variety of social-psychological principles and concepts at the individual, interpersonal, group, inter-group and international levels or analysis" (Binter, 1987:44).

In this regard, the African Union (and its antecedent continental - OAU - and sub-regional organizations) has experimented with a plethora of conflict management regimes to address the trauma of a "continent that tragically accounts for the bulk of the world's war-induced deaths" (Touray, 2005:635-636). These include the Commission on Mediation, Conciliation and Arbitration, the Mechanism for Conflict Prevention, Management and Resolution, and the Conference on Security, Stability, Development and Cooperation in Africa (CSSDCA), and finally, the Common African Defence and Security Policy (CADSP). In functional terms, therefore, CADSP represents an expression of the rationalization, focalisation and concentration of multiple of existing antecedent security regimes in the continent since the establishment of the Organization of African Unity in 1963. As Omar Touray (2005:640) has noted:

These efforts at the continent level were complemented by similar initiatives at the regional levels. This shows that African leaders have been alive to the debilitating effects of conflicts and to the need to find regional solutions to regional problems, even if their efforts did not always yield the desired results. Together with the OAU mechanism for conflict prevention,

management and resolution, the regional initiatives constitute the building block of the new Pan-African defence and security policy. Notwithstanding their limitations, they directly spurred African Leaders to institutionalise common defence and security issues by making relevant provisions in the Constitutive Act and by taking the necessary measures to operationalize them.

In this regard, the adoption of the document entitled "Framework For a Common African Defence and Security Policy," by the African Union Assembly of heads of State and Government in Sirte on 28th February, 2003, signalled the determination of leaders of this prostrate continent to come to terms with the unsettled and debilitating condition frustrating endeavours at collective regional response to crisis of under-development such as OAU Lagos Plan of Action and the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD). Thus, while NEPAD and all similar schemes seek to deal with the "root causes of conflicts such as poverty and bad governance, the Common Africa Defence and Security Policy aims to deal with conflicts both directly and indirectly, through preventive diplomacy and rapid intervention in conflict zones" (Kent and Malan, 2003:30).

As a regime, the Common African Defence and Security Policy is expected to combine both diplomatic and military measures (African Standby Force) to influence protagonists toward greater "vendicality and developing innovative alternatives that might be fed back into the policy process to improve the relationship among the parties and to de-escalate and resolve the conflict" (Ali and Matthews, 2004:395). The CADSP as Omar Touray (2003:636) has concluded is, therefore,

...neither a mere political declaration with no binding authority, nor a simple continental military and police outfit. It is essentially a strategy based on a set of principles, objectives and instruments that aims at promoting and consolidating peace and security on the continent as well as at releasing energies and resources for development."

However, significant problems remain bearing on the legal, fiscal and instrumental capacity of the African Standby Force (ASF) and related mechanism as can be presently seen in the conundrum of Darfur, Sudan, and the Democratic Republic of the Congo (Oakeley, *et al.*, 1998). Furthermore, a number of contributors to the debate on peace-support operations have aptly concluded the conflict management regimes are only a necessary but not a sufficient condition for sustainable peace in Africa. The reason is fairly obvious: it does not deal with the structural deformities in the post-colonial states that generate destructive violence and war. Thus, in Robert Oakley *et*

al., *Policing the New World Disorder: Peace Operations and Public Security* (1998:5), Michael Dziedzic has rightly argued:

historically, conflict between states has been a predominant source for soldiers and statesmen. During the post-cold war period, however, it has been anarchic conditions within the sovereign state that have repeatedly posed the most acute and intractable challenges to international order...The essence of this problem in many Third World states is the frailty and decay of Governmental institutions, especially those devoted to responding to citizen demands, preserving law and order, and resolving internal disputes. Domestic pressures, brought on by ethnic cleavages, overpopulation, poverty, maldistribution of wealth, environmental degradation, and rapid social mobilisation often outpace and even overwhelm government ability to respond.

These intra-system factors are widely seen to be responsible for the rapidity of resurgence of civil conflict after some period of settlement as in Liberia, Chad or Sudan. Thus, Betty Bigombe *et al.* (2000:323) have observed that "globally within the first ten years of the end of a conflict, 31% of them have resumed. African conflicts are even more prone to restart than the global average: half of African peace restorations last less than a decade." The solution it is now widely argued in the literature resides in democratic transformation of institutions of governance (Ndulo, 2006, Berman, et al. 2004, Kaarsholm, 2006, Richards, 2005). Defenders of neo-liberal orthodoxy, Ibrahim Elbadawi and Nicholas Sambanis (2000:245) of the World Bank have argued in this regard that:

the best and fastest strategy to reduce the incidence of civil wars is to institute democratic reforms that effectively manage the challenges facing Africa's diverse societies. To promote inter-group cooperation in Africa, specially tailored political governance and economic management institutions are needed.

On this view and basically in line with this analytical premise, Taisier Ali and Robert Matthews, *Durable Peace* (2004) have contended that any sustainable peace-building process must need address four basic elements: a secure environment, new political institutions that are broadly representative, a healthy economy, and a mechanism for dealing with injustices of the past and future. This view basically glosses over the nature of post-colonial state in Africa, the pattern of elite recruitment and the congenital dependence and domination of the economy of these social formations by the core powers. In

other words, "little thought is given to an examination of the nature of the state itself, its location within the matrix of class-divided society, and its relationship with contending social forces" (Alavi and Shanin, 1983:81).

Consequently, in the neo-liberal response to the challenges of sustainable peace in Africa, the "problematic of the state is narrowed down to that of efficacy of its public institutions or organs to achieve objectives and programmes of 'modernisation,' focusing especially on the respective roles of "ruling elites," political parties, the bureaucracy, and the military" (Alavi and Shanin, 1983; 289). The various contributions to this volume reflect the participants' subcultures in the debate on the theme of the ontological linkage between conflict, primordial identities and development. There is, however, a fairly obvious consensus that the politicization of ethnic and religious identities in the contest for material objectives has unleashed turbulent and unsettling condition of collapsed and failed states in Africa with collateral catastrophic impact for developmental programmes. Whether the root cause (or causes) is to be attributed to ethno-linguistic fragmentation of this countries or "high level of poverty, failed political institutions and economic dependence on natural resources," there is a considerable case in the literature for a multi-sectoral policy response that seeks to establish the priorities for structural risk-reduction and a governance regime that "mitigates existing differences and support peaceful ways of solving disputes." This observation constitutes the ultimate *raison d'être* of volume.

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