

AN OVERVIEW OF ETHNIC CRISES IN POST-COLONIAL AFRICA

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ABSTRACT

Africa has been identified by the West as the most volatile and susceptible in terms of conflict and other forms of disturbances that hinders peace, progress and development of the continent. The antecedents leading to the variant crises in Africa had long-rooted history in most instances which becomes “generational”. Ethnic conflict is the worst of all forms of crises to the fact that it takes different dimensions when ignited. This paper attempts a critical overview of the causes, nature and dimension, mediation and consequences of ethnic crises on Africa with specific reference to Nigeria, South Sudan, Kenya, Rwanda and Zimbabwe. The methodological approach adopted in this

research is “qualitative method”. Secondary source materials have been utilized, which comprised mainly published books that have been critically analyzed. This paper found out that ethnic conflict/crisis is the root cause of all forms of conflicts/crises such as political, religious, communal, civil wars, wars, coup etc. In conclusion, it has been observed that ethnic conflict is the major stumbling block to Africa’s development. If solved, Africa and the world will achieve relative peace and development because the resources that are directed for humanitarian services as a result of crises would be channeled towards developmental programs.

Key Words: *Africa, conflict, crises, intra/inter, war*

INTRODUCTION

Africa is one of the most heterogeneous continents on earth. It has diverse ethnic and sub-ethnic composition with distinctive socio-political, economic, cultural and historical backgrounds. Africa has experienced colonialism by the European powers such Britain, France, Portugal, Germany, Italy, Spain and Belgium in the 19th century. The second half of the 20th century was a landmark in the history of Africa in that most of the African countries gained their political independence particularly from the 1950s through the 1960s. In the struggle for independence, Africans irrespective of their differences fought and won the European Hegemonies. Unfortunately, they could not stand united for the task of nation building. Indeed, that has caused a serious threat to their corporate existence, peace, unity, progress and stability as enshrined in the “mottoes” of most African nations.

The continent of Africa has been highly susceptible to ethnic conflicts which in turn take different dimensions. This has prompted the insinuation that Africa is the home of wars and instability (Aremu, 2010; 549), thus, the prevalence of conflicts in Africa has become its main feature. As the 20th century begins Africa consist of some fifty four countries (Mazrui, 1993; 36). From independence, about one-third of these countries have experienced large scale violence (Mazrui, 1993; 36). There has been one kind of conflict or the other in west, south, east, north and central parts of the continent. Wars or conflicts are embodiment of human society and history overtime as a process of state formation. Perhaps, conflicts are not only susceptible to African countries but rather, a global phenomenon that predates state formation and a continuous

process in ascertaining certain objectives, interests or goals. In the classical period for instance, there were the Trojan, Peloponnesian and Amdasian Wars to mention but few. The United States has experienced a civil war. In contemporary Europe, many countries such as Bosnia, Serbia, Turkey and Northern Ireland have experienced series of conflicts or Wars and have served as tension and flash points. In Asia, Cambodia, Sri-lanka, Burma and Iraq are conflict prone areas. Latin America is not an exception in this phenomenon. Peru, Guatemala, Mexico and Colombia had their own share of violence and social conflagrations.

Ethnic conflict is the most debilitating of all dimensions of conflict in that most violence are ethnic-rooted. Ethnicity has continued to shape and influence the economic, social and political life of African people since the achievement of independence (James, 1993; 275). In essence, ethnic conflict results into political crises, land dispute, civil wars, resource control, religious crisis etc. This paper seek to examine the nature of ethnic crises, dimension of ethnic crisis, causes and effect of ethnic crises in Africa in a comparative manner.

Causes of Ethnic Crises

Causes of crises or conflicts in African nations are multi-dimensional in nature. There are remote causes which could be traced to the pre-colonial period arising from the process of state formation; growth and development in the African context. However, colonial legacies have shaped the current lingering conflict that could not be resolved for more than half a century after the attainment of independence of African nations. Indeed, the immediate factor that led to outrageous outbreak of ethnic crises has to do with the dynamics of multi-ethnicity or heterogeneous nature of Africa; political in-balance; power struggle; economic factor which has to do with resource control and marginalization that influences ethnic cleavages and regional undertones.

Colonial Legacies

Colonial legacies in Africa vehemently sow the seeds of discontent right from the period of colonialism which germinated and produce a conflagrant result within the first decade of independence. African states founded by Europeans were “artificial and ineffective. They were developed in newly fashioned countries and built on fragile basis (Mazrui, 1993; 36-8). The political units were created dividing ethnic groups along boundaries. A typical example are the Hausa speaking people scattered between Nigeria, and Niger; Yoruba between Nigeria and Benin Republic; Kanuri between Nigeria, Niger and Cameroon; Shona between Zimbabwe and Mozambique; Hutu and Tutsi between Rwanda, Zaire and Burundi; Ndebele between Zimbabwe and Zambia etc. This artificial demarcation of populace produced a fragile ground for the outbreak of ethnic conflicts in those families or ethnic groups that were separated from their kinsmen and were formed into political units with their rival groups. Looking back to the preceding centuries, there was rivalry between some certain groups in Africa which appeared like “Traditional Rivals”. For instance, Dinka and Neur in South Sudan, Shona and Ndebele in

Zimbabwe, which could be traced to the “Nfecane”. Kikuyu and Luo rivalries in Kenya, Tutsi and Hutu crisis in Rwanda etc. Aremu (2010) observed that boundaries of most African states were arbitrarily drawn without regard to ethnic and cultural affinities and that rival groups or cultures can hardly cohabit within the confines of a single state (Aremu, 2010; 551). Furthermore, ethnicity has bred the feelings of suspicions, hatred and mistrust among members of the various ethnic groups in Africa. This has no doubt retarded progress and sustainable development in the continent (Aremu, 2010; 552).

During the early phase of political development in Africa, the colonialists used the tactic of divide and rule within African states by supporting ethnically based political parties so as to weaken and divide nationalist opposition to colonial rule (Henderson,1993; 56). This was typical in Nigeria, Kenya, Zimbabwe etc. The colonialist favored one ethnic group against the other. In Sierra-Leone for example, the creole enjoyed an aura of untouchability, the same with the Tutsi before attainment of independence in Rwanda. Africans were instituted with the notion of ethnic differences and identities during colonial period. Identity cards were issued to Natives indicating their ethnic groups, religion and region among other forms of identities more especially in Rwanda and Zimbabwe which informed the people that they are not the same. Albeit, colonial legacies played a leading historical role that influence ethnic crises all over the continent.

Complexity of African States

Africa is heterogeneous society with distinct people who have diverse origin, history, culture, religion, political, social and economic organizations. Complexity of the new African states provided the fertile ground for peaceful co-existence coupled with their inability to tolerate one another. The complex nature of African people influenced the desire for ethnic identities and struggle for social, political, cultural and economic control and also inclusiveness in the realm of nation building which most often than not results into inter or intra-ethnic crises in Africa, sometimes leading to civil wars international wars (Tiyambe, 1993; 6). In so far as the heart of almost all the conflicts in Africa are over power, resources or the quest for social justice i.e. inclusiveness.

Struggle for Power, Resource Control and Social Justice

Resources to some extent determine the economic potentialities of a nation state. Africa is blessed with different kind of resources which serves as the source of conflict depending on the organization and pattern of control or access. If the resources are not equitably distributed there is the tendency of outcry of marginalization or neglect which evidently produces ethnic solidarity that ultimately resulted into ethnic crisis. The inter-ethnic crises in South Sudan between the Dinka and Nuer; Shona and Ndebele in Zimbabwe; Kikuyu and Luo in Kenya and Tutsi versus Hutu in Rwanda and Burundi are not far-fetched from this explanation. In South Sudan and Kenya, most of the ethnic clashes emanates as a result of grazing or farm lands.

However, control of political affairs and exclusiveness of the non-ruling class by the ruling ethnic groups provided an unpleasant situation in Africa. In Rwanda for instance, political power is wielded in the Hutu who assumed power or control of affairs since the 1959 revolution. The Tutsi enjoyed the plethora of leadership during colonial era. During the Hutu regime, the Tutsi were relegated to the backgrounds of political, economic as well as social opportunities (Young, 1984; 734). This condition experienced by the Tutsi led to the formation of rebel group that consequently led to the assassination of President Jubenal Habyarimana in 1993. The result of that murder caused the catastrophic “Rwandan Genocide” of 1994 (Wagner, 2005; 1303-1308).

In Kenya also, it was struggle over political control that caused the grouses by the Luo speaking people against the politically dominated Kikuyu. This political Saga induced by ethnicity had its origin since before independence. Zimbabwe is not an exception in such development. There has been serious antagonism between the country’s leading Shona who controlled power through ZANU-PF and the Ndebele aligned to the opposition ZAPU-PF. There was no guarantee of justice, equity and fairness for the non-ruling ethnic groups in the political, social and economic realms in most African countries; the system is that of winner takes all. As such, ethnic feeling became dominant among people thereby taking every opportunity or chance as a do-or-die affair. That is why Isawa and Muzrui (1993; 488), asserted that “.... ethnicity has always triumphed in Africa over class consciousness, looking at the ethnic solidarity of the Yoruba people of Nigeria for Chief Obafemi Awolowo and Jarumogi Oginga Odinga of Kenya by the Luo speaking people irrespective of class and social status”.

Poor Governance

Mazrui observed that the Africans who inherited the “artificial and ineffective” new states of Africa from the Europeans were ill-experienced in governing themselves (Mazrui, 1993; 37). He further added that self-government is not something that is easily taught (Mazrui, 1993; 37). Failing states have been one of the major sources of conflict in Africa during the post-colonial period (Mazrui, 1993; 37). Aremu, Mazrui and Henderson (1993) concurred that one of the causes of conflicts in Africa is poor or bad governance characterized by corruption, nepotism, self-centeredness, ill-experience etc. It is glaring that most African leaders have the solidarity of their ethnic groups no matter their poor performance in governance. That is why there are ethnic crises in Africa whenever there is regime change or during electioneering campaigns. This is more prone in Kenya causing large number of the populace to relocate to their province or regions of origin in other to avoid the unforeseen until the elections are over.

Indigene and Settler Phenomenon

Another factor that causes ethnic conflict in Africa is embedded in the demographic point of view. Many writers ignore this factor that need to be given a critical look. Movement of people from one place to another has been an old tradition in the history of mankind as a result of war, drought and famine, security, economic, social, political opportunities as well as other ecological

conditions that support human cohabitation. Settlers in most cases were either discriminated, defied certain opportunities or privileges, dominated in all facets of human endeavor or on the opposite overran the affairs of the host communities. This no doubt can be a catalyst for ethnic conflict.

The phenomenon of indigenes versus settlers produced a crisis of identity as observed by Isawa and Mazrui (1993; 483). This is one of the issues that bedeviled Nigeria particularly Zangon Kataf crisis between the aborigine Atyeb and the Hausa settlers (Aja-Apuru; 2007: Abada; 2009). The Jos-Plateau ethnic conflict between Birom and Hausa settlers and the Ife-Modakeke crisis in South Western Nigeria (Aja-Apuru; 2007: Fatile and Awotokun; 2009). The former two are inter while the later is intra ethnic crisis (Aja Apuru; 2007). For almost a century in the case of the first two i.e. Hausa and the Atyeb; Hausa versus Birom have cohabited together, and in the case of Ife and Modakeke is more than a century. Yet there is no sense of inclusiveness, oneness and integration despite the fact that there had been blood ties through inter-marriages. The above explanation explicitly discussed the conglomerations and all the trajectories that causes and obfuscated ethnic conflicts throughout the countries studied in this paper from the pre-colonial, colonial and post-colonial periods respectively.

Nature and Dimensions of Ethnic Crises

Conflict related to ethnicity in Africa are characterized by indiscriminate and wanton killings, plunder, resurgence after intervals, militancy, participation of state institutions, inter ethnic alliances, sexual harassment and vengeance among others.

The use of arms in ethnic crises such as cutlasses, clubs, machetes, knives daggers and more recently assault rifles worsened the situation in Africa. This had however led to high number of casualties. The youth in Africa are the vanguards in ethnic conflicts bearing the above mentioned weapons. The use of assault rifles emanates as a result of arms proliferation which was witnessed in countries such as South Sudan and Rwanda that turned into civil wars. Ethnic crises led to the killings of important figures such as Ooni Abeweila of Ife in 1849. He was poisoned to death and was not given a royal burial (Aja-Apuru, 2007; 74). In Zimbabwe, Herbert Chitepo, the first chairman of ZANU was assassinated due to ethnic conflagration within the party (Moses and Sabelo, 2010; 282). Also, Nikita Mangena lost his life as a result of Ndebele/Kalanga and Shona rivalry. Tom Mboya, a prominent political figure in Kenya was assassinated in Nairobi during the preparation of the 2007 election. However, the assassination of Chris Msando, a staff of the electoral commission of Kenya in 2013 sent a shocking wave of jittery to people. In Rwanda, the greatest assault was on president Habyarimana when on his return from a peace-talk in Tanzania; his plane was destroyed with a missile from location near Kigali on 6th April, 1994 killing everyone on board including the president of Burundi who is also of Hutu origin (Wagner, 2005; 1303). The number of ordinary people claimed by ethnic conflicts in Africa cannot be estimated because there is no official record.

Reprisal attacks were meted out on rivals after an interval. The Zangon Kataf crisis in its high magnitude started in 1992 and was thus extended to the new millennium (Abada; 2009). This was the same with the Jos-Plateau crisis. Ife-Modakeke witnessed the worst period of crisis in the 1990s. The crisis which erupted on 16th August, 1997 lasted for several days before it was brought under control (Aja-Apura, 2007; 78). Another crisis ensued between the Ife and Modakeke on 22nd September, 1997. Between September and December 1998, there were cases of frequent outbreak of violence after short intervals (Aja-Apuru; 2007). Since the return of democracy in 1999, there is no case of any outbreak between Ife and Modakeke (Aja-Apuru; 2007).

Counter attacks seems to be in form of vengeance. Between December 2011 and January 2012, the report of the United Nations Mission in South Sudan (UNAMISS) indicated that some 60,000 to 80,000 armed Nuer youth combatants carried out more than 21 attacks against the Murle ethnic group as a reprisal for cattle raids (Stella, 2013; 28). On the counter, the Murle attacked on the Nuer districts. From 27 December, 2011 to 4th February, 2012 a small group of young Murle militants retaliated with 44 attacks on the Nuer and Dinka Bor villages (Stella, 2013; 28). The Rwanda annihilation repeated its self time after time. The first massacre took place during the 1959 – 1962 “social revolution” against the Tutsi (Reinhart, 2005; 1299-1301). More than half a million Tutsi were lost to the inferno. In the 90s, Rwanda experienced tragic conflicts arising from ethnicity. The 1994 Rwanda genocide claimed about 800,000 lives majority of them Tutsi. The country has been in chaotic condition from 1994 when the Hutu lost control of political power up to 1998 (Wagner, 2005; 1303).

The conflict produced the emergence of rebel groups or militia in some parts of Africa. These include the Rwanda Patriotic Front (RPF) of Paul Kagame which started their offensive in 1990, three years after its formation (Wagner, 2005; 1302). These had been the National Resistance Army and the National Revolutionary Movement for Development and Democracy (MRND) in Rwanda. South Sudan also had ethnic militia groups such as the Southern Sudan Liberation Army (SSLA), Southern Sudan Democratic Movement Army (SSDM/A), National United Front (NUF) and Sudan People’s Liberation Movement Army (SPLM/A). Other ethnic based militias are found in Africa though performing different functions like Movement for the Emancipation of Niger Delta (MEND) in Nigeria. These insurgent and rebel groups attacked communities in the event of ethnic crises.

State institutions in Africa have aided and abated ethnic conflicts in most instances. The extermination of Tutsi and their exclusion from socio-political and economic realms of nation building was instituted by the state particularly during the regime of Habyarimana who led Rwanda under one party system. In the Rwandan genocide of 1994, state security operatives participated in the April killings. Colonel Theoneste Basogora, a state apparatus mobilized the act of Tutsi extermination (Wagner, 2005; 1304). In Zimbabwe, the 5th Brigade was used in the Matabeleland and Midlands massacre between and 1985 in which more than 20,000 civilians were killed (Moses and Sabelo, 2010; 285).

Alliances between ethnic groups that have a common enemy were hastened. The Dinka Bor and Dinka Bahr el Ghazal were not in-terms within themselves and with the Nuer, but for having shared the same common enemy, Dinka Bor and Dinka Bahr el Ghazal sheathed their swords against their enemy, the Nuer. In Zimbabwe, the Shona and Ndebele seek the support of other ethnic groups to form a coalition.

Ethnic crises in Africa has different dimension which could be political and social in nature to some larger extent economic. It is not doubtful that ethnicity resulted to the formation of political parties in Africa that are largely anchored on ethnic precepts. In Nigeria, the first republic produced a coloration of ethnic or regional parties. The National Council for Nigeria and Cameroons (NCNC) was for the easterners, Action Group (AG) for the westerners while Northern People's Congress and Northern Element Progressive Union (NEPU), United Middle Belt Congress (UMBC) in Tiv land were for the northerners. In Zimbabwe, Zimbabwean African National Union (ZANU) purely belonged to the Shona while the Ndebele paid their allegiance to Zimbabwean African People's Union (ZAPU). In Kenya the main two rivals i.e. Kikuyu formed the Kenyan Africa National Union (KANU) and the Luo belonged to the Kenyan African Democratic Union (KADU). Party politics in Rwanda was influenced by ethnicity. PARMEHUTU belonged to the Hutu while the Tutsi had the Rwandan National Union (UNAR) which was anti-Belgian and monarchical in nature (Reinhart, 1999; 2005; Wagner, 2005; 1301). Top African politicians like Habyarimana, Mugabe, Jomo Kenyatta, Daniel Arab Moi, Oginga Odinga, Obote etc. played the politics of ethnicity. Most of the politicians are "national leaders in their sitting rooms while tribalistic in their bedroom".

Ethnic conflicts in some of the African countries took the dynamics of trans-border by their nature. As observed earlier, the colonial legacy separated ethnic groups along borders. This brought about ethnic solidarity in most cases. For instance, the Shona in Zimbabwe were supported by their Kinsmen in Mozambique while the Ndebele in Zimbabwe gained support from Zambia. In central Africa, the Tutsi gained their preparation ground in Uganda where they recruited their armies from Zaire and Burundi. It is however pertinent to note that Zaire and Burundi have element of both Tutsi and Hutu population. These countries provided mercenaries for the Rwanda ethnic crises. Going by this explanation therefore, ethnic crises have been internationalized in some African states.

In the socio-economic dimension, conflicts arising from ethnicity affected the non-ruling ethnic groups from gaining access to economic pursuit. In Rwanda for example, the Tutsi were relegated to the core in that they could not afford economic assets unless one has a Hutu as a surety (Wagner, 2005; 1301; Young, 1984; 734). Tutsi were restricted from employment in government related jobs and military service. They were restricted from pursuing education among other socio-economic aspects of life. In Nigeria, ethnic crises resulted to sanctions on members of particular ethnic groups from attending their rivals markets. In fact, even the demographic pattern was affected; certain areas are made strictly for specific ethnic groups more especially in Kaduna and Jos.

Another dimension of ethnic conflict is religiosity. This is more prone in Nigeria. The Zangon Kataf and Jos-Plateau crises took religious dimension in most cases. The Hausa settlers in Zangon Kataf and Plateau are Muslim while the Atieb in Zangon Kataf and Birom are predominantly Christians. In the course of their conflicts religious sentiments permeated and worsen the situation. Eventually, other ethnic groups joined in to show their religious solidarity. In this regard, ethnic conflict when element of religion set it metamorphosed to religious crisis and escalates its original boundaries.

Mediation in Ethnic Crises

Ever since the beginning of ethnic conflicts in Africa, series of mediations ensued but yield to no avail. Right from the beginning of Ife-Modakeke intra-ethnic conflict, the colonial government had intervened on several occasions. Colonial effort had started to ensure peace between the warring factions since 1886. The British Colonial Administrator of Lagos Mc Gregor Liard together with the Ooni of Ife tried their best to resolve the issue (Aja-Apuru, 2007; 73-4). This led to the disbandment of Modakeke in 1909, where the refugees were scattered to Owu, Ipole, Edunabon, Ede and Odeomu (Aja-Apuru, 2007; 75). Later on, Ooni Ademiluyi Ajagun allowed the Modakekes to return to Ife provided they recognize their status as settlers and the Ifes their landlords (Aja-Apuru, 2007; 75). In the period between 1940s and 1980s which witnessed the prolonged crisis, Ooni Adesoji tried as much as he could to mediate but the situation aggravated. Federal and state governments tried to resolve the matter leading to creation of Local Government which proved abortive; instead aggravated the situation. The state securities more especially in the post-colonial period were used in bringing calmness in the area.

However, the Zangon Kataf and the Jos-Plateau crises draw the attention of traditional rulers and the Federal Government. In fact, the ethnic crises resulted to the imposition of curfew and deployment of soldiers. State of emergency was imposed leading to the removal of Plateau State Governor Joshua Dariye during president Obasanjo rule between 1999 and 2013. In order to maintain law and order, security check points were mounted in crises areas to avoid wanton destruction of lives and properties and the spilt of arms. The approach at mediation in Nigeria was not out of government's hand as most of the ethnic conflicts were resolved internally unlike in other countries that attracted international mediators to resolve the issues that transcended ethnic conflicts at the long run.

Kenyan ethnic crisis which transformed to political crisis drew the attention of sub-regional, Africa and the international community. The 2017 general election in Kenya because of their ethnic based politics, attracted high profiled personalities like John Kerry, a former American Secretary of State, Thabo Mbeki, John Dramane Mahama, former Presidents respectively of South Africa and Ghana as observers hoping to lean on the political "gladiators" i.e Uhuru Kenyatta and Raila Odinga to behave responsibly (Guardian).

Rwandan crisis was intervened by the Organization of African Union (now African Union, A.U) O.A.U on several occasions (Okoli; 2009). The 1994 Tanzania Accord marked the last accord to be attended by Habyarimana for he was killed before landing on Rwandan soil. Rwanda and South Sudan situations ended up in Humanitarian effort informed by peculiar prevailing situations. The United Nation (UN) had to send special missions to the two countries. Several humanitarian organizations found their ways into these countries to provide aids and “humanitarian services”. In the end, special tribunals were set up for war crime in respect to the Rwandan genocide of 1994. Sanction was imposed on Zimbabwe because of flagrant violation of human rights; but this could be analyzed as having racial undertone.

Despite efforts i.e. traditional, arising from our African traditional institutions, political and religious leader national governments, African regional and sub-regional organizations, the United Nation and international communities, ethnic conflicts remain like a gene in Africans.

Consequences of Ethnic Crises

Ethnic crises are part and parcel of African history right from the pre-colonial period and has transcend to the post-colonial period. African nations suffered and are still suffering from the wrath of ethnic conflicts in different facets of human endeavor. The consequences arising from ethnic crises include the following: wanton killings, demographic disruption, emergence of one party system and ethnic or regional politics, military coup d'état, outbreak of wars and (civil wars) arms proliferation etc constituted the major implications which had become more debilitating in the 1980s and 90s.

In the first place, the Ife-Modakeke could be seen as the most prolonged ethnic crisis in Africa. It is not possible to obtain the exact number of people that were lost to this crisis more especially during the 19th century in a paper of this nature. However, some of the records that are available indicated that in the September 22nd, 1997, the crisis claimed the lives of 12 persons and about 86 injured (Aja-Apuru, 2007; 78). Also, during the same crisis, about 200 houses razed (Aja-Apuru, 2007; 78). It could be possible that tens of hundreds of people if not more lost their lives to the crisis.

According to Stella (2013; 28), 1991 witnessed the most devastating consequences for civil society and the political and socio-economic development of the country. She observed that clashes between different ethnic groups resulted into killings, burning down of villages, looting and destruction of public and private properties, cattle rustling, abduction of people especially children and women. She further observed that the crisis in South Sudan has a consequential effect on food security in that insecurity threatened people to pay attention to their farming activities (Stella, 2013; 26).

Between 1982 and 1987, more than 20,000 people were massacred by the 5th Brigade in Zimbabwe, mostly civilians belonging to the Ndebele ethnic group, the supporters of ZAPU (Tiyambe, 285). In fact, the 5th- Brigade was accused of extermination, abduction and torture of

the civilian populace and also raping of the Ndebele girls (Tiyambe, 1993; 285). Kenya too witnessed extermination of people in conflicts related to ethnic violence. In 1992, about 2000 people were killed (www.transconflict.com). In another related event, about 1,500 people lost their lives in 2007 in the pre-election violence. Ethnic crisis in the 2007 post-election crisis between Kikuyu and Kalenjin claimed about 1000 people. In the same vein, 2013 and 2017 elections witnessed killings although incomparable to the previous once; there were no serious crisis as such.

The worst experience was in Rwanda. In the 1959-62 “social revolution”, half a million of people lost their lives (Wagner, 2005; 1301). 500, 000 to 1,000,000 people were said to have been exterminated in the Rwandan genocide of 1994 (Reinhart, 2005; 1296). After the establishment of the Tutsi hegemony by the RPF, Hutu detainees numbering to about 2, 300 were crushed in 1995; died in government detention (Wagner, 2005; 1306). The number of people killed in the offences by RPF and RPA cannot be estimated as each responded to one another’s oppressing. Disaster had claimed the lives of many civilians in Goma, a city which hosted the Rwandan refugees in Zaire. In Goma, the outbreak which started on 20th July, 1994 claimed 46,000 lives in Kibeho Camp which housed 120,000 refugees (Wagner, 2005;1306). People were dying at the rate of 2000 person per-day (Wagner, 2005;1306).

Apart from indiscriminate killings, demography was seriously dislocated in Africa as a result of the various ethnic conflicts that ensued between different groups. In 1909, the Ife-Modakeke crisis resulted to the disbandment of the migrants to Owu, Ipole, Edunabon, Ede, Odeomu (Aja-Apuru, 2007; 75). Zango-Kataf and Jos-Plateau crises made thousands to vacate the scene of the crisis temporarily and permanently. Jos is no longer the city that it used to be before the crisis; “it is a shadow of its former self”. Many people became Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) because of the prevailing situations. South Sudan too engulfed into civil war. The horrific situation left people in fear, always anticipating a reprisal attack. This forced people to abandon their homes villages and means of livelihood to safer places and mostly to the IDP camps.

The worst population movement as far as ethnic crisis is concerned was in Rwanda. Between 1960 and 1963, about 130,000 Rwanda Tutsi were force into “Great Trek” to the neighboring countries of Uganda, Tanzania, Burundi and Zaire (Reinhart, 2005; 1299). During the Rwandan genocide, on 29th April, 1994, more than 200,000 people fled to Tanzania to avoid Hutu persecution (Wagner, 2005; 1305). When the RPF took over the control of Kigali on 4th July, 1994 after a fierce battle with RPA the Hutu started running for their dear lives. While they were fleeing from Rwanda to neighboring countries, the “Tutsi Returnees” were coming in. On the 13th and 14th April, 1994, more than 10,000 person per-hour crossed over the northern border of Zaire into Goma (Wagner, 2005; 1305). This situation resulted to the emergence of humanitarian agencies and establishment of “Refugee Camps” with Benaco being the largest in the world, the next large camp was Kibeho in Goma (Wagner, 2005; 1305).

Thirdly, emergence of social vices and economic disruption is another effect of ethnic crises in Africa. The conditions of the people living in the IDP and refugee camps was pathetic, many found themselves into drug abuse. This most identified with the militants or rebels who sacked communities. There was the case of sexual abuse; rape, unwanted pregnancy etc. children of school age were denied access to education. Many people were deprived of their means of livelihood such as farming, rearing of animals, trading etc while many lost their properties to the ethnic conflicts that ensued. At the end of 1995, maintaining the refugee camps cost the international community \$2.5 billion (Wagner, 2005; 1306). Also, \$572 million to support reconstruction programs in Rwanda. If we take the whole of Africa, the amount expended to different countries bedeviled with ethnic crises is no small.

Furthermore, ethnicity has institutionalized the idea of ethnic politics. In Africa, most of the political parties represent certain ethnic groups or regions. Consequently, Africa because of this trend transformed into one party system. This is in a bid to perpetuate political control over the non-ruling ethnic groups. Habyarimana, Daniel Arab Moi and Mugabe of Rwanda, Kenya and Tanzania respectively transformed their countries into one-party states.

Another consequence was Coup d'état. Since from the first decade when most African countries achieved their independence i.e. 1960s Africa started witnessing or experiencing coup. These coups were politically motivated and ethnically inspired in most instances. A typical example was the 1966 coup and counter coup in Nigeria. It was clearly indicated that the whole issue was Igbo against the Hausa in the first place and Hausa against the Igbo in the subsequent one (Saleh; 2009). In Rwanda, the 1973 coup against Gregoire Keyibanda and the coming of Juvenal Habyarimana to power had ethnic motives (Young, 1984; 734). The Hutu from northwestern Rwanda accused those from southern Rwanda of monopolizing power during the Keyibanda regime. Secondly, they pointed out that Keyibanda was too liberal to the Tutsi in that he gave them much opportunity such as employment, opportunity to education and participation in the military and other services. Because of these reasons therefore, his government was toppled.

Lastly, ethnic conflicts resulted into wars in Africa. The case of Nigerian civil war between 1967 and 1970 was a typical example (Saleh; 2009). The war in South Sudan was exacerbated by the Dinka and Nuer. There were uprisings in Kenya i.e. serious ethnic violence and Zimbabwe. Arms proliferation worsened the situation in that millions of militia and rebels gained access to assaulted rifles. The United Nation Mission for South Sudan (UNMISS) report indicated that there are some 6,000 to 8,000 armed Nuer youths between December 2011 to January 2012; what about Dinka and other ethnic groups (Stella, 2013; 28). Arms proliferation in Africa contributed to the insecurity the continent is facing. Not only South Sudan, the whole of Africa as a continent is facing the problem of the use of light and assault weapons in different kinds of conflict.

CONCLUSIONS

This paper discusses the nature, varieties, causes and consequences of ethnic conflict in Africa, taking five countries from different African geo-political zones. It has been observed that virtually all African countries have in one time or the other witnessed the outbreak of ethnic conflict. Ethnic conflict therefore can be said to be the root of all crises be it political, farmer-herder, border crises, religious etc, which sometimes facilitates military coups and civil wars in Africa. Ethnic conflicts claimed the lives of people beyond estimation in Africa; destruction of properties; displacement of population; dislocation of socio-economic system and inter-group relation. In fact, it could be concluded that ethnic crises in Africa retarded development and sustainability in the continent. Also important, it has been observed that the 1900s was characterized by high frequency of the outbreak of ethnic crises that are generally politically motivated in countries like Nigeria, South Sudan; though in the then former Sudan Republic, Zimbabwe, Rwanda and Kenya, the focal point of this paper. Lastly, if ethnic understanding and tolerance can be obtained among the divergent African people, other types of conflicts will be minimal if not completely averted and Africa will achieve meaningful sustainable development. All the prescribed Sustainable Development Goals by the UN will be achieved in Africa.

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