

# VESTIGES OF POLITICAL CRISIS IN CONTINENTAL AFRICA: A HISTORICO-CRITICAL REVIEW

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## Abstract

This paper examines the vestiges of political crisis in continental Africa from the pre-colonial, colonial, post-colonial era till date. The paper, using available sources of data and established political and crisis theory argues that the African political issues and other related crisis are consequence of years of accumulated leadership failure and leadership problems. The paper, among other things, stresses that more than fifty percent (50%) of African continent's problem is caused by colonisation and ensuing imperialism. These have resulted in the cases of corruption, poverty and terrorism. The paper recommends that we should go back to the things that bind us together before the advent of the white-man. We must go back to our own type of government (Democracy, *id est*, Ohazurume or Igwebuike as in Ohacracy), a government in which everybody is involved. We must return to our values and be our brothers' keepers.

**Keywords:** Vestige, Politics, Crisis, Africa.

## Introduction

Africa is the world's second-largest and second-most-populous continent. Africa hosts a large diversity of ethnicities, cultures and languages. In the late 19th century European countries colonised almost all of Africa. Africa also varies greatly with regard to environments, economics, historical ties and government systems. However, most present states in Africa originate from a process of decolonisation in the 20th century.

There is great diversity in Africa, and there are many different native groups of people. Many of these groups of people have their own languages, and there are well over a thousand languages recognized on the African continent. Because of this, the African continent has the highest level of multilingualism in the world. The people of Africa tend to be religious. Africa is a continent rich in diversity when it comes to religious beliefs. A majority of the inhabitants of Africa follow Christianity, Judaism or other more Traditional African Religions (ATR). Only a small number of Africans do not consider themselves to be religious. For over fifty years,

the African quest for development had only marginal success. Most African countries are worse off than they were, health and nutrition problems are wide spread, infrastructure is eroding, coups, ethno-religious conflicts, corruption, poverty, unemployment and diseases are the basic features that dominate the third world nations. Above all, poor industrial development and low technological transfer looms large. While Ake (1990:2) believes that political conditions are the greatest obstacles to African development. Other related studies such as, the dependency theorists focus on how Europe underdeveloped Africa, and have attributed causes of these problems to Colonialism, Imperialism and Neo-colonialism.

However, it is a fact that cannot be denied that, in terms of political unsteadiness and its associated penalties, the African countries had some tough moments during the last fifty years or so. In this context most of the third world countries have seen its freedom heroes turn into autocrats, while loot of natural resources, politics of exclusion and deprivation to run the balance of power continues to dominate the public sphere. To date, almost every country in the world is still haunted by historical injustice and oppressive structures that were bequeathed to the post-colonial leadership. This is an aspect which informs the weak institutions of the state, flawed legislative system and constant struggle for political power to the detriment of the well-being of most of the nations, which could have move on a path of development as part of modern societies. Political instability and crisis in the African countries may be as a result of both internal and external factors. However, the penetration of both internal and external factors especially the geo-political and economic interests of the international community constantly plays a significant role in undermining the very process and institutions that are expected to nurture democracy and to instil a sense of stability for societal development in the African countries.

### **Concept of Vestige**

Vestige Simply Means a Mark, Trace, Or Visible Evidence of Something that is no longer present or in existence. It is defined as a surviving evidence or remainder of some condition, practice, etc. It can be said to be a very slight trace or amount of something. It can be called a degenerate or imperfectly developed organ or structure that has little or no utility, but that in an earlier stage of the individual or in preceding evolutionary forms of the organism performed a useful function. It is a footprint or a track.

## Concept of Crisis

The Very Etymology of the term 'Crisis' speaks to the requirement of judgment. Its etymology originates with the Ancient Greek term *κρίνω* ('to separate, to choose, cut, to decide, to judge'), which suggests a definitive decision. Associated with the Hippocratic School (*Corpus Hippocraticum*) as part of a medical grammar, crisis denoted the turning point of a disease, or a critical phase in which life or death was at stake and called for an irrevocable decision. Significantly, crisis was not the disease or illness per se; it was the condition that *called for* decisive judgment between alternatives.

Calling something a crisis means to frame an issue as an urgent, structural threat that necessitates an urgent course of action to avert the danger. Crucially, since the threat is structural, it means that the current status quo is not a sufficient way to deal with the threat. An alternative course of action is necessary. For example, after September 11, 2001 incident, where the world trade centre was bombed by Osama Bin Laden, Attorney General Ashcroft invoked this discourse when he claimed that the 9/11 attacks 'brought us face to face with a new enemy, and demanded that we think anew and act anew in order to protect our citizens and our values.'

A crisis is an unstable or crucial time or state of affairs in which a decisive change is impending, *especially*, one with the distinct possibility of a highly undesirable outcome. It can be defined as a situation that has reached a critical phase. Such a discourse creates what I will refer to as a dislocation: a break or gap in a particular narrative. Discursively, the crisis delegitimizes the narrative, previously used to describe reality. The discursive vacuum needs to be filled with a discourse that is presented as something new and as a solution to the crisis. A crisis is any event that is going (or is expected) to lead to an unstable and dangerous situation affecting an individual, group, community, or whole society. Crises are deemed to be negative changes in the security, economic, political, societal, or environmental affairs, especially when they occur abruptly, with little or no warning. More loosely, it is a term meaning "a testing time" or an "emergency event". James (2008) lists several definitions of crisis, which are an important precursor to understanding crisis theory. The core element in each of them is that an individual is overwhelmed.

1. People are in a state of crisis when they face an obstacle to important life goalsóan obstacle that is, for a time, insurmountable by the use of customary methods of problem solving. A period of disorganization ensues, a period of upset, during which many abortive attempts at a solution are made. (Caplan, 1961)
2. Crisis results from impediments to life goals that people believe they cannot overcome through customary choices and behaviours. (Caplan, 1964)
3. Crisis is a crisis because the individual knows no response to deal with a situation.

The possible things that can trigger crisis are:

1. A negative event occurs which leading to a feeling of subjective distress
2. Distress leading to an impairment in functioning
3. Coping skills fail to improve functioning

The term **õcognitive keyö** refers to your belief about the negative event, which influences how well you will be able to cope with the event. Changing your perspective and help improve your ability to cope.

When one notices that a crisis is impending, he can opt for one or all of the following

1. Alter the perception of the negative event and offer coping strategies
2. Lower the distress he feels
3. Return functioning to pre-crisis levels

Crisis can be thought of as both a danger and/or an opportunity. There is a myth that says that the Chinese word for õcrisisö means both danger and opportunity. While this is not exactly accurate (any more than the word õopportunityö contains the word port), the sentiment is true. If an individual in crisis is able to muster their coping skills, supports, and resources, they will find themselves able to come through the crisis and be more prepared to work through future crises. On the other hand, if they do not seek that support, their functioning will decline further and they will find it harder to deal with things.

## **Meaning of Politics**

Etymologically, Politics is taken from the Greek word *Politikáø* meaning "affairs of the cities." It is the process of making choices applying to all members of each group. More narrowly, it refers to achieving and exercising positions of authority and organized control over a human community, particularly a public. Furthermore, politics is the study or practice of the distribution of power and resources within a given community (this is usually a hierarchically organized population) as well as the interrelationship(s) between communities.

A variety of methods are deployed in politics, which include promoting or forcing one's own political views among people, cooperation with other political subjects, making rules, and exercising power, including conflict against adversaries. Politics is exercised on a wide range of social levels, from sets and ethnic group of traditional societies, through modern indigenous administrations, firms and institutions up to independent positions, to the global level. It is very often said that politics is about rule. A political system is a framework which defines acceptable political methods within a given society. History of political thought can be traced back to early antiquity, with seminal works such as Plato's *Republic*, Aristotle's *Politics* and the works of Confucius.

## **Political Crisis**

Political crisis occurs when there is an unstable condition in the affairs of the state as a result of conflict. This can be caused by a misunderstanding by the people in power or with the masses as a result of unacceptable policy. Mismanagement, embezzlement, corruption, ethnic crisis, religious wars, clash of cultures to mention but a few are all possible causes of political crisis. In Nigeria as in many African countries, there are many factors that have been propelling political crises in the country. These factors have been the brain behind the political problems in the country. Among the causes of political issues in Nigeria are, but not limited to: Greed, Bad governance and Religious fanaticism.

## **Political Theories**

Aristotle considered the city to be a natural community. He considered the city to be prior in importance to the family which in turn is prior to the individual, "for the whole must of necessity be prior to the part". He also famously stated that "man is by nature a political animal" and also argued

that humanity's defining factor among others in the physical realm is its wisdom. Aristotle conceived of politics as being like a being rather than like a machine, and as a collection of parts none of which can exist without the others. Aristotle's conception of the city is organic, and he is considered one of the first to conceive of the city in this manner.

The common modern understanding of a political community as a modern state is quite different from Aristotle's understanding. Although he was aware of the existence and potential of larger empires, the natural community according to Aristotle was the city (*polis*) which functions as a political "community" or "partnership" (*koinōnia*). The aim of the city is not just to avoid injustice or for economic stability, but rather to allow at least some citizens the possibility to live a good life, and to perform beautiful acts: "The political partnership must be regarded, therefore, as being for the sake of noble actions, not for the sake of living together." This is distinguished from modern approaches, beginning with shared bond theory, according to which individuals leave the state of nature because of "fear of violent death" or its "problems."

Excerpt from a speech by the character 'Aristotle' in the book *Protrepticus* (Hutchinson and Johnson, 2015 p. 22)

For we all agree that the most excellent man should rule, i.e., the supreme by nature, and that the law rules and alone is authoritative; but the law is a kind of intelligence, i.e. a discourse based on intelligence. And again, what standard do we have, what criterion of good things that is more precise than the intelligent man? For all that this man will choose, if the choice is based on his knowledge, are good things and their contraries are bad. And since everybody chooses most of all what conforms to their own proper dispositions (a just man choosing to live justly, a man with bravery to live bravely, likewise a self-controlled man to live with self-control), it is clear that the intelligent man will choose most of all to be intelligent; for this is the

function of that capacity. Hence it's evident that, according to the most authoritative judgment, intelligence is supreme among goods.

Locke, on the other hand believed that human nature is characterised by reason and tolerance. Locke also believed that human nature allowed people to be selfish. This is apparent with the introduction of currency. In a natural state, all people were equal and independent, and everyone had a natural right to defend his "Life, health, Liberty, or Possessions". Most scholars trace the phrase "life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness," in the American Declaration of Independence, to Locke's theory of civil liberties.

Locke assumed that the sole right to defend in the state of nature was not enough, so people established a civil society to resolve conflicts in a civil way with help from government in a state of society. Locke also advocated governmental parting of powers and believed that revolution is not only a right but an obligation in some circumstances. These ideas would come to have profound influence on the Declaration of Independence and the Constitution of the United States.

Politically, Kant was one of the earliest exponents of the idea that perpetual peace could be secured through universal democracy and international cooperation. He believed that this will be the eventual outcome of universal history, although it is not rationally prearranged. The exact nature of Kant's religious ideas continues to be the subject of especially heated philosophical dispute, with viewpoints ranging from the idea that Kant was an early and radical exponent of atheism who finally exploded the ontological argument for God's existence, to more critical treatments epitomized by Nietzsche who claimed that Kant had "theologian blood and that Kant was merely a sophisticated apologist for traditional Christian religious belief, writing that "Kant wanted to prove, in a way that would dumbfound the common man, that the common man was right: that was the secret joke of this soul.

### **Theory of Crisis**

It is the Marxist theory of the *necessity* of crisis that sees crisis as a necessary expression of the inherently contradictory form of capitalist production, which marks the dividing line between `reform' and `revolution', between social democracy, which seeks institutional reforms within a

capitalist framework, and socialism, which seeks to create a fundamentally different kind of society. If crises are purely contingent, or if they merely mark the transition from one phase, 'regime' or 'social structure', of accumulation to another (Aglietta, 1979; Bowles, Gordon and Weisskopf, 1984), then socialism has no objective necessity and the socialist movement has no social foundation. If a reformed capitalism can meet the needs of the working class, the class struggle loses its objective foundation and socialism is reduced to an ethical ideal, which has no particular connection with the needs and aspirations of the working class, expressing a particular set of moral values which have no privileged class basis and have no more validity than any other.

The theory of crisis has a central role to play in the ideology of Marxism, and cannot be understood outside that ideological context. However it is hardly sufficient to defend the Marxist theory of crisis on ideological grounds. The Marxist claim to set socialism on 'scientific' foundations rests unequivocally, as Luxemburg so clearly realised, on the scientific status of its theory of crisis. If the theory cannot claim such a status, it becomes merely an ideological prop to a variant form of ethical socialism. Thus, while an *understanding* of the Marxist theory of crisis can never be disengaged from its ideological and political context, it is equally important that it be evaluated on strictly rational *scientific* grounds. This work is concerned exclusively with the scientific evaluation of Marx's theory of crisis, but in full knowledge of the political and ideological significance of the issue.

### **Pre-Colonial Period**

Pre-colonial Africa had many different forms of politics and government and such a variety of politics and government were closely related to the level of economic organization and production. Village-style government with a council of elders and/or village chiefs predominated in hunting and gathering and small agricultural societies. Before Africa was colonised, the continent was characterised by a large degree of pluralism and flexibility. The continent consisted not of closed reproducing entities, equipped with unique unchanging cultures, but of more fluid units that would readily incorporate outsiders (even whites) into the community as long as they accepted its customs, and where the sense of obligation and solidarity went beyond that of the nuclear family. Pre-colonial African societies were of a highly varied nature. They could be either stateless, state run or kingdoms, but most were

founded on the principles of socialism in that they were self-governing, autonomous entities, and in that all members took part, directly or indirectly, in the daily running of the tribe. Land was held commonly and could not be bought or sold, although other things, such as cattle, were owned individually.

In those societies that were not stateless, the chiefs ran the daily affairs of the tribe together with one or more councils. These councils simultaneously informed the chief, checked his powers and made policy by reaching unanimous decisions. If unanimity was not reached, a village assembly would be called to debate the issue and majority ruling would now apply. The chief would listen silently to all queries during such meetings and every male adult was free to criticise him. The role of the chief during such meetings was to sum up what had been said and attempt to form some consensus among the diverse opinions. Hence the chief did not rule or dictate but led by consensus. Many tribes, especially those that were stateless, had no central authority and no class system, and many of those that did could depose a chief that was thought to have abused his power.

An overarching feature of pre-colonial Africa was that its societies were not designed to be the all-powerful entities that they are today, hence the abundance of confederation-type societies. One reason for this was that the villages and tribes commonly owned the land, a fact that undermined the basis for a market economy and a landed aristocracy, another that there was an abundance of available land to which dissatisfied individuals or groups could move. The creation of a market economy in Southern Africa was further undermined by the area lacking the regular markets and trade fairs that flourished elsewhere in Africa, as well as in medieval Europe, and thus the potential for continuous economic development.

While pre-colonial indigenous African systems had many appealing qualities, something that has been widely advocated, if not practised, by many post-independent African leaders and Africanists generally, they have some obvious weaknesses when attempting to build a centralised state around them. The fact that chieftaincy is mostly based on kinship, for instance, is problematic because of the exclusive nature of leadership that this entails, which is especially problematic in countries with ethnic antagonisms. Secondly, some of the customs of indigenous African society might have been effective in relatively smaller-scale societies but are less likely to be so in the larger states of present day Africa.

## **The Vestige of Colonial Legacy**

Scholars traced many of Africa's recent problems to the colonial experience. Western imperialism had a complex and contradictory impact on Africa. Some changes brought real gains, others had a destructive effect on African life that is felt down to the present. In their colonies, Europeans introduced new crops, technologies, and cash economics. They built roads, railroads, harbours and cities. The new forms of transportation were meant to make the colonies profitable by linking plantations and mines to ports. Exporting raw materials and cash crops helped pay for Europeans rule. Most Africans who were subsistent farmers, gained little or nothing from these facilities. After liberation, the pattern of economic dependence continued. To pay for expensive development projects, African nations exported mineral and agricultural goods to the industrial world. But most profit flowed out of Africa because they have to buy expensive manufactured goods and technology from the west. Also, many large farms and mines were still owned by westerners.

During the colonial period, Europeans undermined Africa's traditional political systems. Even when they left African rulers in place, they told Africans how to govern. In other cases, Europeans denied educated Africans top jobs in colonial governments. At independence, colonial powers expected that African leaders would almost immediately transform authoritarian colonies into democratic nations. These powers seemed to forget that many western nations themselves had achieved democracy only after centuries of turmoil and with the help of strong industrial economics. They expected us to be what they become after many years of wars and uproars. Stretching us (infants though we were) beyond the limits we could go.

Colonial government had an impact on health care and education in Africa. Western doctors developed vaccines for yellow fever and small pox, and helped reduce deaths from malaria. This government usually does not emphasise general health care, however. Medical attention was more likely to be provided by missionary groups. By the 1950s, in response to nationalists demand, colonial rulers built more hospitals and schools. They emphasised elementary education (expressing how far they want us to go in life), but established relatively few secondary schools and only a handful of universities. In establishing our education, their personal interests is paramount, there was no consideration of the needs of the colonies. With limited education, people in liberated colonies faced additional challenges

in the modern world. At independence, African nations inherited borders drawn by colonial powers. These borders often caused immense problems. Europeans had staked out colonies according to their own political and economic interests, regardless of who lived in a particular region. Colonies therefore, included people from diverse ethnic groups and with different, even conflicting, interests. As a result, many new nations were made up of hostile groups forced to live together in the same country. Some borders also split people of the same ethnic group into two separate nations. Rather than draw new borders, leaders of the new nations worked to build a sense of unity where none existed.

Four European powers ó Britain, Belgium, France, and Portugal ó controlled almost the entire African continent. Only Egypt, Ethiopia, Liberia, and white ruled South Africa were independent nations. The rising tides of nationalism, however, were sweeping over European colonial empires. Around the world, liberation will follow this tide. World War II sharpened the edge of nationalist movements in Africa. Early Japanese victories in Asia shattered the West's reputation as an unbeatable force. Also, African troops provided support for allied armies in Africa, the Middle East and other parts of the world. When they returned to find discrimination and second class citizenship at home, these ex-soldiers became easy recruits for growing nationalist movements. Nationalists also, found support among workers in wartime defence industries. Often, strikes by workers over issues such as pay escalated into demands for freedom.

After the war, most people in Europe have had their fill of fighting. Many were reluctant to return to combat over their overseas colonies. Britain and France, the largest imperialist powers were faced with growing nationalists demand. In response, they adopted new policies towards their African colonies. Both countries introduced political reforms that would lead to gradual independence. Colonial powers soon learned, however, that they could neither dictate the terms nor the pace of change. Pressure for independence built up both within and outside Africa. After India won independence in 1947, African leaders grew impatient. Furthermore both the United States and soviet union rejected colonialism. Everywhere the cry rose: "Freedom Now." Most nationalist leaders were western educated. Many were powerful speakers whose words inspired their supporters. Kwame Nkrumah in Ghana, Jomo Kenyatta in Kenya, Nnamdi Azikiwe in Nigeria, and Leopold Senghor in Senegal, to mention but a few, were skilled political organisers. In colonies throughout Africa, leaders

organised political parties. In the cities, these political parties published newspapers, held mass rallies, and mobilized support for independence. Demonstrations, strikes, and boycotts were designed to pressure European governments into negotiating timetables for freedom.

During the great liberation each has its own leaders and its own stories. More than fifty (50) new nations were born in Africa during the great liberation. Throughout the continent, Africans had great hopes for the future. People looked forward to rapid political and economic development. African leaders knew they had much to do to build modern nations, but they welcomed the change to deal on an equal footing with the other nations of the world. After seventy (70) years of colonial rule, Africans were again in control of their destinies. During the early decades after independence, the new nations took different paths to modernisation. Some made progress despite huge obstacles. Others were plunged into crisis by civil war, natural disasters, military rule or corrupt dictators. In some parts of Africa, standards of living actually fell after liberation. In many countries, a small elite enjoyed wealth and privileges, while the majority lived in poverty.

Africa emerged during the cold war between United States and Soviet Union. The struggle between the two superpowers and their allies affected many African nations. Each superpower supplied arms to African governments it favoured. That policy boosted the power of the military in many countries contributing to instability. Cold War rivalries affected local conflicts within Africa. For example, the Soviet Union and the United States supported rival groups in Angola's civil war. The two superpowers also became involved in a long, bloody war between Ethiopia and Somalia. The cold war left a painful legacy. After it ended, weapons supplied by the superpowers remained in the hands of rival African tribes, governments and guerrilla forces. Armed with modern weapons, these groups spread violence across many lands. Independence is the beginning of a real struggle. The new nations faced two critical issues; first, they needed to create unified states with stable governments. Second, they had to achieve economic growth that would improve the standard of living of their people. Meeting these challenges would be a long, complex process. After independence, African nations set up governments modelled on those of departing colonial rulers. But parliamentary system did not work in the new African countries as they did in European nations, where they had evolved over centuries.

Colonial borders had left most African nations a patchwork of people with diverse cultures, languages and histories. Nationalism had helped unify Africans within each colony to end foreign rule. But once freedom was won, many Africans felt their first loyalty was to their own ethnic group, not to a faceless national government. Like eastern European nations, African nations were plagued by ethnic and religious conflict. In Sudan, for instance, the Arabic speaking Muslims, with majority in the north, dominated and persecuted the minority, mostly African Christian groups in the south. These southerners tried to break away, resulting in a civil war that has continued to the present. Westerners often blamed African civil wars on old tribal rivalries. But most conflicts were more complex. Some were rooted in colonial history. Britain, for example, often chooses to rule a colony through what it called tribal leaders. It assigned Africans within a colony to tribes, and then chooses one tribe to rule the other. This system fostered ill will that continued long after independence. Civil wars also erupted when liberation leaders monopolised political and economic powers for their own group. In Nigeria and Zaire, civil war blew up when the economically successful groups tried to set up their own nations. In Africa, as elsewhere, civil war unleashed terrible violence.

Faced with divisions that threatened national unity, many early leaders turned to a one party system. Under this political structure, a country has a single political party, or only one party that has any real likelihood of winning elections. Multiparty systems, these leaders declared, encouraged disunity. In Tanzania, Julius Nyerere claimed that a one party system could be democratic and offered voters choices within the party. In fact, most one-party nations became authoritarian states. After the struggle for independence, some nationalist leaders became dictators. Some used their position to enrich themselves and become privileged elite. Others used force to hold onto power. When bad government led to unrest, the military often seized power. More than half of all African nations suffered military coups. Military leaders claimed that they, unlike the politicians, who they said sought power and wealth, were motivated by a sense of duty to their country. Some military rulers, like Idi Amin, who murdered thousands of citizens in Uganda, were brutal tyrants. Others sought to end abuses and improve conditions. Military leaders usually promised to restore civilian rule once they had cleaned up the government. In many cases, however, they gave up power only when they were toppled by other military coups.

By the mid-1980s, political and economic woes brought Africa to the brink of crisis. Demands for change came from inside and outside the continent. African thinkers looked for African solution to their problems. They studied pre-colonial African societies that had limited rulers' power and allowed people a share in decision making. They did not propose returning to the past, but hoped instead to build on traditions that had worked before. While some Africans demanded this sort of 'people participation,' external forces called for democratic reforms before making more loans. Under this pressure, some governments eased autocratic policies. They legalised opposition parties and lifted censorship. In some places, multiparty elections were held, removing long ruling leaders from office. A key to modernization was building productive economies and raising standards of living. Developing modern economies meant improving agriculture and developing industries. To achieve these goals, African nation has to build transportation systems, develop resources, increase literacy, and solve problems of rural poverty. Many had little capital to invest in such projects. As a result, they had to make difficult choices.

Many newly independent nations chose socialism, which meant that the government made economic decisions about using resources and producing goods. Socialist' governments wanted to control scarce resources, using them where government planners thought they were most needed. They hoped to end foreign economic and prevent inequalities between rich and poor. But to regulate the economy, socialism created large bureaucracies, which generally were inefficient. Often, policies imposed by the national government were ill suited to local farming communities. Some African nations set up mixed economies, with both private and state run enterprises. These, too, had problems. These nations relied heavily on foreign aid from the United Nations, the World Bank, and industrial nations. Foreign capital was used to build airports, hydroelectric plants, and factories and to improve farming. Some programmes succeeded. Others were costly failures, due partly to mistakes by government planners or foreign advisers. Although African nations did build some industries, they remained heavily dependent on imports. Most people were subsistence farmers. As a result, there was too little demand for manufactured goods to make local industries prosper.

In the early years, governments pushed programs to increase earnings by growing more cash crops for export. But land used for crops

such as cotton, tea, coffee, or sisal could not also be used to produce food. As a result, African countries that once had fed their people from their own land had to import food. The food dilemma had another aspect. Many city dwellers earned low wages and needed cheap food to survive. Farmers, however, would grow food crops only if they received good prices for them. Many governments kept food prices artificially low to satisfy poor city people. As a result, farmers either used their land for export crops or produced only for themselves. Many early government programs neglected rural development in favour of industrial projects. By the 1980s, governments realized they must pay more attention to farmers' needs. In Zimbabwe, the government helped small farmers with tools, fertilizer, and seed. Additionally, it made sure farmers received higher prices for their crops. The policy paid off in higher food output. Soaring oil prices in the 1970s also hurt developing economies. Most African nations were oil importers and had to pay out large amounts of currency for much-needed fuel. Prices for African exports fell, plunging the young nations deep into debt. Governments had to pay so much interest on loans that they had little money for development.

The debt crisis led the World Bank and other lenders to require developing nations to make tough economic reforms before extending new loans. African governments had to privatize businesses, cut spending on development projects, and stop subsidizing prices of basic foods for the urban poor: In the long term, the reforms were designed to help economies grow but in the short term, however, it increased unemployment and led to higher prices that the poor could not pay. The population explosion put a staggering burden on Africa's developing economies. In 1965, Africa's population was about 280 million. By 1990, that figure had increased to something above 650 million. The continent's population was expected to double before 2020. As in other developing nations around the world, rising population meant that the least-developed countries had to find ways to feed, educate, and generate jobs for the fastest-growing number of people. In the early 1970s and again in the 1980s, prolonged drought contributed to famine in parts of Africa. Livestock died, as farmland turned to dust and blew away, millions of people became refugees. The Sahel was especially hard hit. This semi desert region stretches across Africa just south of the Sahara. There, overgrazing and farming removed topsoil and speeded up desertification, or the spread of desert areas.

In countries like Ethiopia and Sudan, civil war intensified the effects of drought and famine. Each side in the conflict tried to keep relief supplies from reaching the other. On several occasions, huge international efforts helped save millions of people facing starvation. Rain forests, too, came under attack. To boost badly needed export earnings, African governments allowed hardwood trees to be cut and shift to global north. Once forests were cleared, heavy tropical rains wash nutrients from the soil and destroy its fertility. In Kenya, an environmental activist named Wangari Maathi challenged government policy by starting the Greenbelt movement. He hoped to restore the government and create job opportunities for the women in areas such as planting trees, marketing, and forestry. In Africa, as elsewhere, modernization disrupted old ways. Colonial rule also undermined African traditions by promoting western cultural influence. Today, people across Africa face a similar dilemma. On the one hand, they want the high standard of living, advanced technology, and other benefits associated with modern societies and on the other, they value and went to prevent their own culture and tradition.

By 2000, almost half of all Africans lived in towns and cities, and rural people were still migrating to cities at a rapid rate. Although urbanization contributed to the development of a larger national identity, it weakened traditional cultures and undermined ethnic and kingship ties that unified rural communities. Young urban dwellers who returned to their villages often scorned traditional ways. Yet many educated Africans took pride in their culture. Today, as in the past, Africa is home for many religious traditions. Colonization and modernization disrupted traditional practices, but in rural areas, people remained faithful to their own beliefs. Both Christianity and Islam spread to Africa centuries ago, and both have grown since their introduction. At times, African clergy risk their lives to stand up to dictators. Sometimes, they were unable to due to violence and ethnic conflicts led to mass killings even in churches where people had taken refuge. Islam has long influenced the northern part of Africa and linked it to the Middle East. Islam you will recall spread along trade routes into East and West Africa. Muslim African nations felt the effect of the Islamic revival that began in the Middle East. Its messages of reform based on Islamic traditions and its call for social justice were welcomed by people in Africa and around the world. So, too, was its rejection of western influences. In the early 1990s, Algeria's Islamic party did so well in election that the government feared an Islamic revolution. The military

cancelled further elections. That action outraged Islamic extremists, who attacked politicians, scholars, and others, sometimes massacring whole villages. The government responded with force and more than 70,000 people were killed in the fight. In other African lands, as in parts of Asia, the Islamic revival stimulated deeper religious commitment. Many Muslims, like some Christians in the west, believed that the world had become too secularized and returned to the faith of their ancestors.

### **Summary of Findings**

The African political crisis is a consequence of its leadership problems. Internally, most of the African countries are governed in ways that have been regarded as far from the modern western state systems upon which they are modelled (Tutu, 2004 in Otieno, 2008). Leadership is not a new concept in the African traditions or cultural practices. Though, the forms and context could be different but these nations have their own efficient ways of governance, even before the advent of the so called colonialism. During the onset of multi-party democracy in the so called third wave of democratization, most regimes in the African Nations did not embrace the changes that accompanied the transition. For instance, most nations accepted multi-party democracy out of western pressure and agitation for change (Huntington, 1991).

As a result, the constitutional framework and the state institutions have been tampered with in order to create a non-level playing ground for the oppositions. Some of these practices have witnessed a serious violence during electioneering periods, which inevitably causes political crisis. Though the form and context varies from country to country, evident are the recent elections in Uganda, Nigeria (2003 and 2007), Kenya (1999), Zimbabwe, Sudan, (2010) Rwanda, DR Congo, among others. In respect to crises, the African Nations suffer a lot of setback particularly in situations where both political and social crisis thwart the developmental path of the nations. Instances of skirmishes and full blown wars abound in the continent, prominent among which is the crisis in Sudan (Darfur, Janjawid and Sudan Liberation Army), Rwanda (Tusi and Hutu), Ivory Coast, Chad, Niger (recent coup by the military), Madagascar, Nigeria (Religious and ethnic crisis in Jos, Kaduna, Borno and Yobe states), Somalia (Al-Shabbab and the fragile government backed by the AU), etc.

Whereas the earlier generation of African leaders had viewed democracy and development as antithetical, associated democracy with

ethnic conflict resulting in wastage of limited resources, new African elites and organizations in civil society have taken to the barricades to demand democracy not only for its own sake but for its instrumental value as well. In contrast to the intellectual consensus and state practice of the earlier era, a strong linkage between democracy and development has been vigorously asserted in the post óCold War era of superpower disinterest and withdrawal (Ake, 1990; 1993a; 1993b; Anyangø Nyongø, 1987; 1990; Bates, 181; 1990; Holmquist, 1989; Mengisteab and Daddieh, 1999; and sklar, 1987). Quoted in Cyril K. Daddieh.

### **Conclusion: Toward State Building for Sustainable Human Development**

According to Ake, (1990) the persistence of underdevelopment is related to lack of democracy in Africa. While democracy is desirable in itself, Africa needs democracy because it would greatly enhance the prospects for development. He attributes the failure of the development project in Africa to political authoritarianism. By engaging in political oppression African leaders turned politics into warfare. They then found themselves besieged by a host of hostile forces and they were unleashed by their coercion. This resultant state of siege distracted African leaders from paying attention to development which they relegated to a very low priority.

Secondly, African governments became disconnected from their people and governed without accountability. õAs a result of this, public policy is completely dissociated from social needs and even from developmental relevance.ö(Ake, 1990).Furthermore, the trauma of repeated subjection to arbitrary and coercive rule has turned African societies into hostile forces to be feared, evaded, cheated and defeated as circumstances permit. They turn their loyalty from the all-embracing level of the state and localize it in community groups, kinship groups, ethnic associations, or even religious organizations.

What is happening in Africa now is in effect the strengthening of the process of the localization of loyalties. We might say that as a result of political repression, we are witnessing, not nation building, not development, but in fact, the dissolution of society (Ake, 1990). Ake goes on to argue that subjugation has caused Africa's human resources, the very engine of development, to be squandered. At the level of the community, it

has undermined the people's traditional capacity to cope, leaving many of them at different stages of confusion, withdrawal, despair, or silent revolt. The resultant human toll can be seen in the growing multitude of refugees. As many elites have voted with their feet by migrating outside, African countries have lost the bulk of their most capable and talented people. Lamentably, those who have stayed behind have been denied opportunities and room to cultivate their talents for the development of their countries (Ake, 1990: 2-3).

The fact that oppression has not led to rapid rates of growth may only have shown that a particular form of tyranny is not sufficient for economic development. In itself, the failure of one form of tyranny does not establish the proposition that democracy might be better. It could be that there are other "structural constraints" that would thwart accumulation in a country regardless of the political regime. Besides, some authoritarian states such as Kenya, Cote d'Ivoire and Malawi (among non-oil producing countries) may have actually produced reasonably stable periods of accumulation since independence, as evidenced by high growth rates almost throughout the 1960s and 1970s (Mkandawire, 1990: 10). However, it is argued that, where there has been more respect for democratic practices (however minimal), higher rates of growth and more successful models of accumulation have been ensured along with better terms of the peasant producers (Anyang 1990; Bates, 1981, Ake, 1990). Anyang concludes that part of the "foundation of every true humane society" is "democracy"; and the "foundation of social creativity" or the "foundation of development" in the modern world must, of necessity, be found in democracy (Anyang, 1990; Ake, 1990). According to Abubakar, (2003), the extraordinary challenge facing the African continent is how to cross over into the 21st century when it is trapped in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. He remarked further that while a sizeable part of the world is making the transitions from the industrial era of knowledge, information and computerization, the region is not following suit. Abubakar noted that economic and political obstacles to ECOWAS ought to be overcome to achieve effective integration. The economic obstacles are problems of recession, the gap between rapid population growth and technological advancement and inability to promote education at all levels. However, this view amounts to yielding to the pressures of globalization without overcoming the problems of underdevelopment that is overwhelming the sub-region. In a relatively wider view, Chambas (2002), observed that,

challenges to the African nations are multi-dimensional. The challenges in the region include wide spread and increasing poverty, globalization and the marginalization of the region.

I will conclude with Gwendolyn Brooksø quote òWe are each other's harvest; we are each other's business; we are each other's magnitude and bond. Like C. JoyBell C. rightly said òWe are all equal in the fact that we are all different. We are all the same in the fact that we will never be the same. We are united by the reality that all cultures are distinct & individual. We are harmonious in the reality that we are all held to this earth by the same gravity. We don't share blood, but we share the air that keeps us alive. I will not blind myself and say that my brother is not different from me. I will not blind myself and say that my sister is not different from me. But my brother is he as much as I am me. But my sister is she as much as I am me.ö **“One love, one heart ... Let’s get together and feel all right” Bob Marley,**

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