

DOES CYCLICAL EXPLANATION PROVIDE INSIGHT TO PROTRACTED CONFLICTS IN AFRICA?

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ABSTRACT

Africa accounted for greater percentage of violent conflict globally since the end of the cold war. There had been resurgence of violent conflict in many nations after what had been presumed to be peaceful resolution of such conflicts. Among the countries that have had recurring violent conflicts are Mali, Central African Republic, Egypt among others. This had resulted in formulation of many theories, largely revolving around causative and redemptive measures. The resurgence of deep rooted and protracted conflicts informed the paper which examined the cyclical model of conflicts in Africa. The cyclical model points government and practitioners to the defects of the haphazard conflict resolution measures which show lack of political will to combine causative and redemptive measures in ensuring peaceful resolution of conflicts.

INTRODUCTION

The joy and expectations of nations in Africa becoming independent was short-lived as conflicts and crises of multidimensional nature dotted the whole map turning citizens to refugees within and outside their nations. According to DFID (2001) report, 10 of the twenty four nations of the World engulfed in direct violence or outright war between 1980 and 1994 were located in Africa. Four of these nations in Africa were Liberia, Angola, Mozambique and Somalia. Of the fifty three nations in Africa as 2004, Albert (2005) noted that more than 47 nations had been involved in conflict. The Conflict Related Map (2008) shows that 88% of the death related conflicts worldwide from 1990 to 2007 were located in Africa.

War and conflicts have increased the cost of governance, and left significant majority of nations in disarray while the victims went or are going through traumatic experiences as well as untimely but avoidable deaths. This position agrees with Peter (2014) that the scourge of Ebola in West Africa Sub-region could partly be attributed to long period of war and instability leading to decay of social infrastructure and inability of the citizenry to have ready access to the basic needs of life including food and meat making them to depend on wild animals.

To a large extent, wars and conflicts have led to unholy competition for the acquisition of high-tech weaponry in the face of massive hunger, death, refugee crisis and deplorable social infrastructure. The Center for Defense Information (1999) notes that Africa has become an attractive and profitable dumping ground of arms and ammunitions. On the other hand, arm manufacturers eager to get rid of weapon stocks made by the end of the Cold War. Also, on account of technological development, the manufacturers are ever ready to turn to Africa because of its disposition to violent conflicts. This informs Berrigan, Hartung and Heffel, (2005) to note that \$1.5 billion worth of weapons came from the U.S to Africa. They further observed that:

All too often, U.S. arms transfers end up fueling conflict, arming human rights abusers, or falling into the hands of U.S. adversaries. U.S. arms sometimes go to both sides in long brewing conflicts, ratcheting up tensions and giving both sides better firepower with which to threaten each other. Far from serving as a force for security and stability, U.S. weapons sales frequently serve to empower unstable, undemocratic regimes to the detriment of U.S. and global security

The goal of this paper is not to focus on theories that attempt to provide explanation on sources of conflicts in Africa but to a large extent the resurgence of violent conflicts while the time frame under consideration will be limited to conflicts since 2000. In particular, it will attempt to examine cyclical explanation to conflicts in Africa and the inability of intervening agencies to restore lasting peace. The study was descriptive while the data sources were secondary consisting of relevant books, Journals, Internet sources and periodic. Content analysis was adopted on the basis of which conclusions and recommendations were made.

The paper consists of conflict trend in Africa since 2000 as the first section. The second section concentrated on literature review while the third examined prevailing theoretical framework for conflicts. The fourth section considered the relevance of cyclical explanation to conflict in Africa and lastly the conclusion and recommendation.

Conflict Trend in Africa since 2000

It is an acknowledge fact that no region within the global system is free from conflicts and crises but the magnitude in Africa and inability of intervening agencies, local or international, to restore lasting peace has been a serious issue. As rightly observed by Sriram, Martin-Ortega and Herman (2014) and Sen (1999), since the end of the Cold War, there have been more of intra-state than inter-state conflicts. Prominent inter-state wars/conflicts since 1990s include the one between Ethiopia and Eritrea in 1998 and the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) that involved some of the neighbouring states. The DRC had not had lasting peace since the 1960 election that produced Patrice Lumumba as the first Prime Minister. The emergence of secessionist movement that broke out in Katanga province backed by the Belgium companies marked the beginning of instability in the nation. Subsequently, Rwanda and Uganda supported the rebels while Angola and Namibia provided the needed support for Kabila. Other countries such as Burundi, Chad and Sudan intervened that made it to become inter-state conflict while

commentators referred to DRC crisis as ‘Africa’s war’. Sad enough, the nation has not known peace till 2013 when Ntaganda rebellion and his M23 surrendered.

It is therefore important to note that the international institutional mechanisms developed after the World War II to prevent, manage or transform conflicts focused largely on inter-state conflicts because of the prevalent of such then. With nations in Africa becoming independent and the prevalent of weak institutions to sustain good governance, there emerged proliferation of internal armed conflicts. The notable scenario emerging from this development is that of the growth internal rebel organizations or/and terrorist organizations that have kept most of these nations divided. Such conflicts manifest as hydra headed monsters reproducing itself at a fast rate beyond what government radar can capture as to prevent. Table 1 below contains the list of nations that have witnessed serious conflict or war since 2000.

Table 1: Conflicts, Crises and Wars in Africa Since 2000

S/No	Country	NO of conflicts
1	EGYPT *	9
2	SUDAN *	14 Since 2003

3	South Sudan *	19
4	Libya	25
5	Tunisia	1
6	Algeria	4
7	Morocco	1
8	Somalia *	12
9	Djibouti	1 Front for the Restoration of Unity and Democracy
10	Eritrea	4
11	Comoro	1. http://www.genevaacademy.ch/RULAC/current_conflict.php?id_state=48 .
12	Burundi	4
13	Uganda	3 Since 2003 http://www.bbc.com/news/world-14112446
14	Kenya	2 al-Qaeda-linked Somali militia in Kenya) and Mombasa Republic Council (MRC) separatist group
15	Côte D'ivoire	1 Invisible Commandos" militia
16	Guinea	1 http://www.crisisgroup.org/en/publications/alerts/2010/conflict-risk-alert
17	Liberia	1 cease fire in http://www.globalsecurity.org/military/world/war/eria.htm
18	Mali *	27
19	Mauritania	2 Largely associated with al-Qaeda
20	Niger	3 http://www.genevaacademy.ch/RULAC/current_conflict.php%3Fid_state=15
21	Nigeria *	6 but numerous ethno-religious conflicts
22	Sierra Leone	1
23	Western Sahara	1
23	Central African Republic (CAR) *	10 Agreement signed with 10 armed groups 10/5/15
24	Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC)*	36
25	Mozambique	1 Signed 2 peace agreements in 2014
26	Angola	2
27	Senegal	1 MDFC Since 1982 ceasefire on April 2014
28	Chad	1. Union Resistance Force
29	Cameroon	Boko Haram infiltration from Nigeria since 2014
30	Ethiopia	8
31	Somaliland	4

Source: <http://www.warsintheworld.com/?page=static1258254223> Retrieved 25/09/15

It is essential to note that out of fifty four nations in Africa, the table 1 above shows that twenty seven nations that is, half of the nations in Africa have engaged in war or are currently at war

since 2000. Another noticeable trend among these nations is that significant majority of these conflicts/wars are internal nature. Also, nations like Angola, DRC, CAR, Western Sahara, Sierra Leone, Nigeria, Mauritania, Mali, Burundi, Somalia, Algeria, Tunisia and Sudan are persistently at war or internal crisis within the last 10-15 years. In addition, it is equally worth noting that this study didn't capture many internal strives the category that Hawkins (2009) calls 'stealth death'. The death occasioned by these conflicts didn't sufficiently catch the radar of political institutions that are supposed to respond or ordinarily receive accurate documentation in academic societies.

The implication therefore is that accurate documentation of conflicts and crises/wars in Africa and the effects would to a large extent be underestimated for a long time to come. For instance many internal conflicts in Nigeria such as Ife-Modakeke in Oyo State, Zango-Kataf and Tiv-Jukun crises among others, in terms of lives lost, persistence, and socio-economic disorganization could be classified in many nations in Africa as major conflicts but not so in this study. Therefore, the continent is recording huge number of avoidable death and humanitarian crises. A typical case is the CAR crisis that was estimated to have led to the death of 4-5 million people as reported by *International Crisis Group* (2013).

On the other hand, Table 2 below contains the list of twenty seven nations that have not been at war since 2000. Given that the dateline is brought back to the 1980s, there exists the tendency that not less than twenty nations would have been recorded on table 1. Among the most peaceful nations are Mauritius, Benin Republic, Cameroon, Sao Tome & Principe, Swaziland, Lesotho, Malawi, Namibia, Zambia, Tanzania, Botswana and Seychelles Island. These nations have not witnessed serious challenge to peace and stability for upward of sixty five years. Rwanda inspite of the genocide in 1994 is considered in this group because of the paper's timeframe.

Table 2: Nations in Africa without War, Conflict or Crisis since 2000

S/NO	NATION	LAST CONFLICT RECORDED
1	ETHIOPIA	1991 Eritrean War of Independence
2	Madagascar	1948 Madagascar Revolt, though there was political crisis in 2009 http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/africa/7937264.stm
3	Mauritius	1810 Battle of Grand Port
4	Rwanda	1994 Rwanda Genocide
5	Tanzania	1979 Uganda – Tanzania War
6	Benin Republic	1894 France attack on Benin
7	Burkina Faso	1985 Agacher Strip War
8	Cameron	1836 Fula jihad
9	Garbon	1945 World War II
10	Ghana	1948 Accra Riots
11	Guinea Bissau	1999 Civil war
12	Sao Tome & Principe	1953 Batepa Massacre
13	Republic of	1999 Civil war

	Congo	
15	South Africa	1990 South African Border War
16	Zimbabwe	1979 2 nd Chimurenga/ Rhodesian Bush war
17	Swaziland	1902 Second Boer War. http://www.newsfromafrica.org/newsfromafrica/articles/art_6880.htm
18	Lesotho	1948 South African Intervention in Lesotho
19	Malawi	1918 World War 1
20	Namibia	1915 Mantu Rebellion
21	Zambia	1945 World War 11
22	Gambia	Since independence http://www.bbc.com/news/world-africa-13376517
23	Togo	Since 1992 http://www.onwar.com/aced/data/tango/togo1991.htm
24	Botswana	Since 1902 http://www.thuto.org/ubh/afhist/saw/saw01.htm
25	Tanzania	Tanzania-Uganda War 1978-79. http://www.onwar.com/aced/chronoc1900s/yr75/ftanzaniauganda1978.htm
26	Seychelles	Since World War II. http://www.mercenary-wars.net/seychelles/
27	Equatorial Guinea	No major crisis though attempted coup in 2004.

Source: Researcher compilation and <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/ni.htm> 27 and <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/africaandindianocean/equatorialguinea/4682356/Equatorial-Guinea-hit-by-Dogs-of-War-attack.html>

A critical examination of the two tables above might convey a wrong impression that only half of the nations in Africa have engaged in civil wars, conflicts and crisis but in actual sense the baseline of the study has revealed this. Therefore, some of the nations recorded (2005) are not included.

Literature Review

Early writings in the field of conflict resolution identified a large number of schemes for describing sources or types of conflict, but Katz (1965) classifies sources of conflict into three: economic, value and power. However, there are substantial evidences to support the view that most intra-national conflicts (Conflict confined to only one nation) are rooted in economic and power factors. Power struggles as noted by Fisher (2000) usually end in a victory or defeat or in a standoff, with a continuing state of tension. Examples of such include Somalia, Muslims versus Hindus in India and Pakistan, and the Northern parts of Nigeria.

Bernard (1957) in Geertz (1994) distinguishes two kinds of conflicts. The first kind she calls “issue conflicts”, like those Sierra Leone, DRC, Algeria, Nigeria, CAR that was triggered by poor governance on account of evolving appropriate mechanism to cope with challenges of modernization, poverty, religion, and ethnic fragmentation among others. The other she regards as “illusory”, which is not really about anything, but simply developed out of dynamic reactions or misunderstanding that may find explanation in chaos theory. Other scholars classified

conflicts as violent (civil, internal war, riots, coup d'état, terrorism, genocide) or non-violence (strikes, peaceful protest legal tussles and various forms of civil disturbance).

According to Essien, (2008), another popular classification of conflict is structural and non-structural conflicts. Structural conflict tends to be endemic, predisposed by the innate character of polity. It resulted from unjust, repressive and oppressive socio-political structures, inadequate access to socio-economic benefits. Most conflicts in Africa are largely endemic by definition to the extent that the predisposing factors are embedded in the political system. Though Essien (2008) opines that such conflicts do not generally last for too long, recent experience in Nigeria and other developing nations reflects that it forms so many patterns and become protracted like the Niger Delta, Tiv-Jukun, Jos and many others.

Last (2008), Francis (2007), Boer (2004), and Falola (1998) observe that conflict had been motivated and sustained by factors such as poverty, illiteracy, unemployment, ethnicity, economics, politics and religion. On the other hand, Mavala (2014) among others locates the effect of British colonial indirect rule system of 'divide and rule' that manifested in playing one ethnic group against the other as a major factor that sowed the seeds of discord that have germinated and flourished uncontrollably as conflicts particularly in Northern Nigeria and elsewhere.

Dibie (2004:31) notes that conflicts rest on four premises that are relevant to the Nigerian society and to a large extent, Africa as a whole. First, that contention and disputation can be a useful way of forcing problems to the attention of those in position to solve them; that is the government. Second, that change and disequilibrium are not to be shunned or avoided. Third, that the causes of social and political problems often reside within socio-political institutions and lastly that change in institutional behaviors will therefore result in resolving social and political problems. The position of Dibie in this regard attempts to connect the remote causes of conflicts in Africa to evolving mechanisms for resolving them.

In the literature of conflict, the features of most conflicts in Africa that is relevant to this study, agree with the classification of Nordlinger, (1977) which he calls intense or severe conflicts while conflict group members attach overwhelming importance to the issues involved and manifest strongly held antagonistic beliefs and emotions towards the opposing party. Azar (1990) refers to such conflicts as protracted social conflicts that are more difficult to resolve. Notter and Diamond (1996) add that such conflicts have created patterns that have become part of the social system and Lederach, (2005) notes that conflict resolution framework is incapable of ensuring enduring peace in such situation. This explains why nations, such as, DRC since 1998, CAR since 1987 and Western Sahara since 1970 till date have been witnessing endemic conflicts among others. The recurring nature and the violent dimension assumed by these conflicts lead to the need to examining the relevant of cyclical explanation to conflicts and crises in Africa.

Theoretical Underpinning of Conflicts in Africa

A critical examination of the literature of conflict cannot but reveal that many focused largely on the bloody aspects and humanitarian challenges at the expense of substantial analyses of more subtle manifestation such as the natures, trends or their dynamics. This might be a reflection of the goals of those involved in the study and the purpose to which they are directed. This paper,

from theoretical perspective attempts to fill the gap with the assumption that a better understanding of the dynamics of conflict in Africa will snowball into developing appropriate strategy to resolving them.

Prominent among theoretical framework on conflict is that of Gurr et al. (1939) frustration-aggression theory. Galtung (2000) observes that there must be polarization before direct violence and before polarization, some level of aggression must be in existence that arose from 'blocked goals because self and/or other pursue incompatible goals' (Gurr (1939), Feierbends and Ivo (1966) cited in Anifowose (2006). Richardson & Sen (1996) add other factors such as historical legacy of mistrust, victim mentality and relative deprivation must equally be present in sizeable quantity to sustain conflict. In other words, those are catalytic factors that must play out for the conflict to be sustained.

In another sense, the decolonization process and poor governance in post colonial nations of Africa compounded the existing cracks in relationships among various ethnic and religious groups. Enloe (1973) therefore identifies that transition to modernity intensifies the political implications of inter-ethnic contact leading to conflicts. This position agrees with Ibeanu (1997) on democratization program by most nations in Africa that had been rancorous. In particular, he presented the list of conflicts associated with democratization process with specific reference to Nigeria as contained on the table 3 below:

Table 3 - Ethno-Communal Conflicts Associated with Democratization Process.

State	Communities	Reason	Effects
Ondo	Oba Akoko/Oka in Akoko South L.G	Relocation of L.G HQ.	Social disorganization without turning violent.
Delta	Ijaw/Itsekiri	Relocation of HQ from OgbaIjoh to Ogidigda in Warri.	Claimed about 1000 lives and massive destruction of property.
Osun	Ife/Modakeke	Creation of Ife East L.G with HQ at Enuwa, close to Oni of Ife Palace	500 lives dead and destruction of over 100 houses
Kwara	Kaima / Baruten axis	Creation of Kaima L.G to comprise thickly populated Baruten axis with Kaima town as HQ	A case of non-violent civil disobedience, until the Government created Baruten L.G with HQ at Kosobosu.
Benue State,	Mbagwaza/ Utange communities in Ushongo L.G.	L.G Election	The two communities nearly wiped off

Source: Ibeanu (1997)

However, extant literature note that not all aggressions lead to violence as some may prefer to suffer in silence, or due to religious indoctrination (Anifowose, (2006). In addition, the presence of respected figures that might mobilize masses for violence without real aggression, these

personalities, LeBlanc (2003) refers to as “the chiefs.”

Another theoretical explanation for conflict that is commonly is referred to is structural functionalism. Radcliffe – Brown (1952) focuses on explaining the basic functions of the political structures in a political system. He examines the relationships between the structures on the one hand and the structures and the whole on the other hand. In this sense, structural functionalism theory assumes that it is the positive contribution of each structure that helps to sustain the political system. Two primary functions according to the theory exist in any society and they are latent and manifest functions. Almond (1965) identifies functional requirements of the political system and the contributions of these functions towards systemic stability. He categorizes these into input and output functions. The input functions include political socialization and recruitment, interest articulation and aggregation as well as political communication. The output consists of rule-making, rule-application and rule-adjudication.

Almond (1965) therefore posits that a stable political system is achieved when the flow of inputs and its conversion to outputs is done in such a way that it encounters minimal but adaptable stress on account of an inbuilt mechanism to accommodate the strains thereby making the political system to maintain its state of equilibrium.

The state of equilibrium that is not achieved within the political systems in Africa is assumed to have accounted for most of the conflicts, crises, and wars. It could be observed that the existing structures such political, economic, social, religious among others have to a large extent failed to perform their functions efficiently though Africa is richly blessed with natural resources, good climate and one of the least disaster prone regions globally. On the other hand, Africa is the poorest region in the world with high rate of unemployment and prevalence of avoidable diseases and death. These, coupled with poor governance could not but leave the citizenry frustrated. Without a legal means of addressing the grievances, issues like land and chieftaincy, access to resources and lack of strong political will to confront the issues involved could not but lead to protracted conflicts.

Sadly, it is the language of violence that is effectively understood and catches the attention of governments in Africa that demands urgent reaction. Hence, conflicting parties through Western adversarial mechanism of conflict resolution are often pacified rather than reconciled. Suppression of violence is misconstrued for peace by government while conflicting parties left dissatisfied wait for the next possible opportunity for resurgence of violence particular by the victims of the last violence seeking opportunity for vengeance.

Galtung (2010) Transcend Model is by far one of the theories of conflict that provided wider understanding by tracing or analyzing the emergence, growth of conflict and mechanism for peace. Transcend Model according to Galtung (2010) is seen as developing a model towards relating conflict, violence and peace. The model identifies basic elements that differentiate it from others in the field of conflict resolution. It focuses on peace, a relation between parties and not on security approach with some challenges. The peace approach views conflict which has not been resolved/transformed as possessing a danger of violence. Through empathic and creative–nonviolent approach, it has the tendency to produce peace which is the best approach to ‘security’. In this sense, to achieve lasting harmonious co-existence, it is preferable to focus on what went wrong, the trend, and what could be done to achieve lasting peace. In effect, Galtung (2000) notes that conflict has its real or identifiable sources that amount to what Adekanye

(2007) refers to as predisposition/structural factor, while Goss-Mayer calls it the underlying or root cause.

Peace approach in addition calls for transformation of another relation between parties, (See McDonald and Diamond, 1996, Lederach, 1995). The approach goes beyond the goals of the parties by creating a new reality. The model does not view conflict as totally bad, as it can positively enhance the quality of relationship and create new opportunities. This position agrees with Osaghae (2000) cited in Zartman (2000) that it is the futility of efforts to resolve the conflicts in Africa that has partly provoked the search for more creative and contextual approaches to conflict resolution.

Transcend models was criticized by Boulding (1977), Kay (2009), Bawer (2007) and Cox and Kay (2009) that Galtung did not produce practical prescriptions for managing or resolving global conflicts because "ideology always trumps objectivity and pragmatism" while other critics observed that the "scholarship" exists to put a respectable face on "Western self-loathing".

In response to the criticisms of Galtung's peace model, Krasner (2004), Doyle and Sambanis (2006), Morri, Hoffman and Peachey (2009), and Call and Cousen (2008) note that critics underestimated the development of detailed interdisciplinary, theoretical, methodological, and empirical research into the causes of violence and dynamics of peace that has occurred via academic and policy networks around the world. Also, the development of UN and major donor policies have been heavily influenced through the contribution of the advocates of peace that are regarded by them as leftists.

The nexus between the three theories discussed is that while frustration – aggression theory provides information on the causative factor, the structural functionalism could assist in locating the exert source(s) of the challenges while the transcend theory provided an expansive information from the causative factor, to what went wrong and what could be done to overcome the issues associated with the conflict..

Cyclical Explanation of Conflict

The goal of cyclical explanation of conflict is to provide a mechanism for understanding resurgence of violent conflicts in Africa particularly at intra state level. Nations in Africa have witnessed conflicts of various magnitudes. One form of conflict, violence or outright war snowball into another while it appears that all the mechanisms for managing conflicts are failing, creating a scenario that might is right

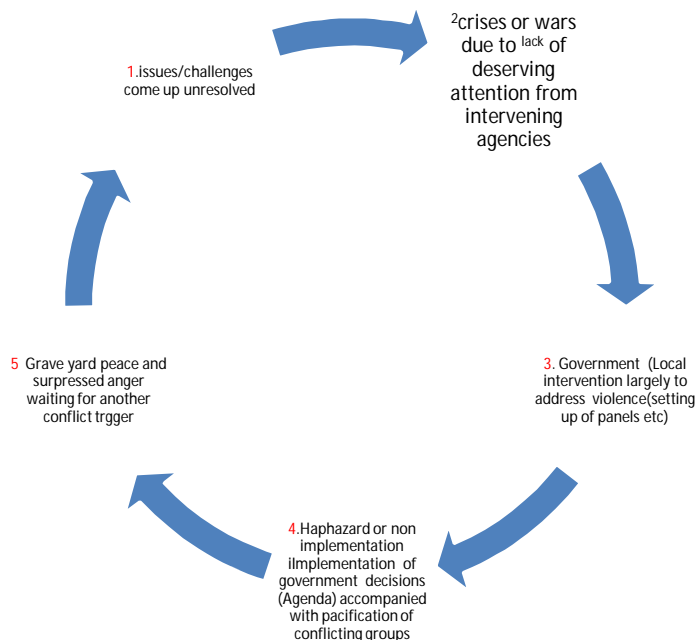
A critical analysis of few of the conflicts, violence or wars in Africa since 2000 will offer insight into these avoidable challenges as contained on Table 2. For instance, in DRC, the Second Congo War was fought from August 2, 1998 — July 18, 2003. Within the same nation, there were Ituri Conflict from 1999 — 2007, Kivu Conflict between 2004 — 2013 and ADF insurgency (2007 – 2014) that was regarded as deadliest since World War II.

In Mali, insurgency in the Maghreb started on April 11, 2002 and continued until 2014. There was the Second Tuareg rebellion from 2007 — 2009 and the third in 2012. In addition, is the Northern Mali conflict (2012—2014). Series of wars were fought in Burundi since 1993 and these include October 21, 1993—August 2005 Burundi Civil War, the December 28, 2000 Titanic express massacre, while the Itaba Massacre happened on September 9, 2002, and August 13, 2004, the Gatumba Massacre.

Sudan witnessed continuous conflict between December 18, 2005—January 15, 2010 as well as Chad-Sudan conflict of May 26, 2009 — 2014 and Sudanese nomadic conflicts. Added to this list is the May 19, 2011 — 2014 Sudan–SRF conflict. Egypt has remained boiling since the unending revolution that began on Jan. 25, 2011 while Sinai insurgency is ongoing since February 23, 2011. Other instances of instability included various protests of November 22, 2012 — July 3, 2013, June 28, 2013 - July 3, 2, 2013, June 2013 and July 3, 2,013—2014 political violence. As for Mauritania, the Western Sahara conflict that started in 1970 is ongoing while the Insurgency in the Maghreb had been from April 11, 2002 — 2014. This analysis agrees with Bigombe, Collier, and Sambanis, (2009) that up to half of African peace building efforts recorded success for less than a decade. Therefore, the observable trend is high incidence of peace collapse in Africa which implies the appropriate strategies and policies have not been evolved by peace agents in the international community and the home governments engaging in peace building.

The chart below shows the flow pattern of conflicts in more or less circular form revealing continuous resurgence.

Figure 1 Cyclical Explanation of Conflicts and Wars In Africa



Source: Researchers’ constructed model (Alao and Nwogwugwu 2015)

Figure 1 above revealed that conflict is inevitable in any given society however, as observed in item 1, conflict issues were largely unresolved. Unresolved issues led to step 2 with a supposedly minor disagreement, which in not addressed could metamorphose into violent conflict. Step 3 shows the usual government reaction to violence by setting up panels or board of enquiry to pacify the conflicting groups just to create the impression that something is being done to resolve the conflict. Step 4 presents haphazard or non implementation of the reports as found in Sango-Kataf, Ife-Modakeke and Saare-Tsaragi in Nigeria as noted by Bogoro, (2007). The usual aim of government is largely that of curtailing violence through provision of relief materials to pacify

conflicting parties. While the root causes of the conflict are not addressed. This, as noted by Galtung (2000), leads to a wrong conclusion that the conflict is over. One fact that could be noted at this stage is the glaring demonstration of lack of political will by government to confront the issues of conflict as found in Alao, (2012). The failure of the previous step leads to unresolved issues brewing into another round of violence. Therefore, cyclical explanation views conflicts in Africa from its repetitive nature and the application of the same mechanism time in and out without the possibility of achieving lasting peace. This indeed is a reflection of failure on the part of intervening agencies to probe deeper into issues occasioning conflicts and wars in Africa and develop a very strong political will to tackle such rather than celebrating failure with the usual slang that the government is on top of the situation while all evidences prove to the contrary.

There is however a note of caution in applying this explanation in the sense that it is not in all cases of intervention that government and other peace agents, locally and beyond failed. In Bauchi State, Nigeria after a prolonged crisis, peace was restored through the bold implementation of Yelwa Kagadama Judicial Commission of Inquiry Report (Bogoro, 2009). The same is true of Ife-Modakeke conflict, Oyo state, Nigeria. The invaluable role of traditional mechanism of resolving conflict could also be acknowledged in the Umunebo-Umuokuzu conflict in Imo State through the *Umuada*. In effect, the explanation may lack general applicability but that does not remove the fact that Africa is persistently going through resurgence of conflict.

Conclusion/Recommendations

The study concludes that the endemic nature of conflict in Africa is a reflection of failure on the part of governments to evolve pragmatic and workable arrangements to manage the differences among various groups. Africa as a modernizing continent cannot but be faced with multidimensional challenges but the political institutions have largely manifested the inability to effectively deal with contemporary conflicts. The cyclical explanation therefore provides a window for understanding the nature of conflict in Africa. This is a reflection that the remote causes of most of the conflicts were not carefully examined while there was lack of political will by governments to confront the issues known.

The study recommends that government and peace agents must be painstaking in critically examining the immediate and remote causes of conflict with a view of focusing on measures to prevent resurgence rather than responding to violence. Such measures include making the management of conflict inclusive, transparent and adequate security coverage through which early warning signal could be known as to minimize explosive situation. To achieve this objective requires the involvement of not only the political elites or traditional rulers, but of a wider group among the citizenry, civil and opinion leaders whose support is essential for the peace process. This explains why Saunders (2000) in Webel and Galtung (2010) views it as an activity that is directed at developing a strong base for peace efforts.

The study further recommends that governments should develop strong political will to confront the observable issues without politicizing then through sincere investigation and implementation of the reports without fear or favour. Lastly, security monitoring in Africa must not only be top-bottom focus but accommodate bottom-top approach as most, if not all conflicts emanate from local sources. If every locality could be adequate monitored, it will prevent simple issues

developing into unmanageable conflict, metamorphosing into religious and ethnic warfare.

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