

**THE STATE AND MANAGEMENT OF CONFLICT IN AFRICA: IMPLICATIONS FOR
NATIONAL RECONCILIATION AND DEVELOPMENT IN SOMALIA**

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Abstract

The study examined state and management of conflict in Africa: implications for national reconciliation and development in Somalia. The study was guided by two objectives and guided by the political development theory of Lucian Pye. The study adopted ex-post facto research design and relied on secondary sources of data such as text books, journals and Internet materials. The data generated were examined and analyzed using ethnographic descriptive technique, and from there conclusion was reached. The findings showed that the war created suspicion among the populace and there was lack of trust on the government. It further showed that in addition to large refugees and migrants most youths had been radicalized by the armed groups, and many people had severely suffered as a result of the war. Based on the findings the study recommended that, the issue of reconciliation should be properly addressed by the government to ensure tolerance, trauma healing and transparent leadership necessary for development. Somalia's government should give consideration for humanitarian reliefs to communities and persons that had suffered severely from the conflict. International organizations particularly, the African Union and the United Nations should support the government by assisting refugees and displaced persons to return home for productive life. It also recommended that the government should embark on de-radicalization of children and youths who were members of armed groups, and to demobilize and reintegrate combatants into peaceful and productive society. Through this means the armed groups would be denied the ideological victory they seek, and for development to take place.

Keywords: state, conflict, management, reconciliation and development

Introduction

Right from the time man came down from the tree the quest for better society has been of great concern amidst uncertainty and insecurity. In addition, man's atavist nature and primitive accumulation of wealth heightened the spate of insecurity as espoused in Hobbes' state of nature. However, the appearance of the civil society and the formation of the state in Locke's theory provided better platform for development. The emergence of the state revolves around agro-societies which date back to thousands of years in Mesopotamia in Asia. Modern state first arose in Europe with large armies and organized tax system to maintain the state. This basically, was to protect lives and properties of its inhabitants which was deficient in the primitive societies (Fukuyama, 2004). Since then, the state has not only acquired currency in socio-political and economic discuss but organizational framework in inter-state relationship and management of people within

its sphere. Hence, the sovereignty of the state is sacrosanct which has reduced intra and inter-state conflicts in the western countries.

However, similar opinion cannot be held most African countries particularly, Somalia where conflict is rife. Poor conflict management and subsequent collapse of Gen. Said Barre's administration plunged the country into devastating turmoil. Mention should also be made of inter-clan rivalry and intermittent face-off with the neighbouring countries such as Ethiopia and Kenya which weakened the state. How the administrations grappled with these situations affected the stability of the country and Somalis' confidence in their leaders. The aforementioned makes it pertinent to point out that Barre's and subsequent administrations lost monopoly of instruments of violence as different warlords emerged. This sordid situation has affected genuine reconciliation, and equally made it difficult to engage the people in development activities. In view of the above this study tries to examine the state and management of conflict in Africa and its implication for national reconciliation and development with particular reference to Somalia.

Study Objectives

The objectives are to:

1. understand how management of the Somali conflict affected its national reconciliation and development, and
2. examine how reconciliation and development could be realized in Somalia.

Theoretical Orientation

Examining the essence of the state and conflict management has attracted wide theories. This study adopted the Political Development theory by Pye as its framework. Most theories in this regard associate development with democracy and economic growth with the state as agent. The theory is relevant in developing countries in the sense that it explains developmental processes and challenges. Ayeni (2018) explains that political development study as sub-field of Political Science emerged in the 1950s dominated by liberal democracies. The theory postulates that political culture determines political and development level of a state. This implies that development takes place through strengthening of the political institutions to allow mass participation in the political processes. The theory is characterized by equality, capacity of the political system, and differentiation and specialization of the political system. Equality entails rule of law and mass involvement in political processes. Pye (1965) affirms that political offices should not be by ascription or traditional system but by achievement, merit or competition. In Somalia, public office holdings are by ascription to traditional system, clannishness and 'godfathers' which hinders development. Capacity of the political system relates to output of the system and its effect on the society including execution of policies in line with universally recognized standard. This involves administrative rationality and orientation to policies guided by justification which links ends and means. Capacity of a political system is therefore, associated with poverty reduction, ignorance and disease.

In addition, differentiation and specialization of political system demand that political offices and agencies be specialized in function but collaborate to achieve public goal. This implies participatory political culture, good governance and strengthening of the political institutions. These variables while not synonymous influence each other towards improving the state. Political development therefore, depends on the level of political culture, authoritative structures and political processes (Ayeni, 2018). Undoubtedly, Somalia has low political culture resulting from decades of war and failure of public institutions. The outcome being prevalence of poverty, uneducated and unskilled citizens which undermine the development of the state. The import of Political Development theory is evident, given that the theory makes it possible to analyze state management of conflict in Africa and its implications for national reconciliation and development with regard to Somalia.

CONCEPTUAL LITERATURE REVIEW

Numerous scholars have tried to explain the meaning, emergence and essence of the state. Engels views the state as an outcome of the society at certain stage of development. This suggests that the society had

entangled itself in social productive relations preceding the emergence of the state. The classes as mentioned were locked in antagonistic relationship which necessitated existence of the state to rescue the two classes (bourgeoisie and the Proletariat) from consuming themselves in fruitless conflicting interest. Government became the machinery to manage the conflict and stabilize the society for general good. The government is supposedly neutral in the conflict of interest between the classes. This idea was deposed of when Marx and Engels (1970: 35) opine: “the executive of the modern state is but a committee for managing the common affairs of the whole bourgeoisie.” This suggests that the state and the government are not neutral but designed to manage the interest of the dominant class; the bourgeoisie. This was tacitly upheld by the erstwhile colonial masters in their oversea territories.

The Neo-Marxists however, advanced this belief in context of neo-colonial states. To this Okolie (2005) argues that in most neo-colonial states the relationship between the state and economic structure is complex unlike states in Europe and America. While states in the advanced economies maintain the economic and social relations under which bourgeois accumulation of wealth took place and improve factors that lead to sustained development. This cannot be said of neo-colonial states where political and economic structures are evolving or weak and enmeshed in political rivalry (Ake, 1981) in a way that the governing elites personalize and control the structures instead of the other way round. Liberal scholars such as Rostrow see the state as unifying which must undergo five developmental stages in its economic and political maturity. While the advanced economies have passed the identified five stages in their development the neo-colonial states are struggling to do so. In line with this, Awodola and Ayuba (2015) describe ‘state’ as expression of concept of justice that legitimizes its internal arrangement and power that determines the ability to fulfill minimum functions that is, protection of the citizens, provision of basic services and resolution of conflicts between persons, groups or nationalities. The inability to provide the basic needs paves way for frustration, poverty and rebellion against the state. This study however, shares Awodola and Ayuba’s view on state. The preceding scenario indicates that conflict has been part of the dynamics of human relationship that causes strain and stress between parties on shared interest. This occurs where there is disagreement over value, idea, perspective, desire or processes, dissenting opinions, interests etc on issues affecting the parties (Nnonyelu, 2009). This implies disagreement in which parties involved perceive threat to their interest. Some scholars argue that conflict has ontological basis in human needs and the denial of these needs makes resolvable differences to degenerate into armed conflict. The psychological import is that conflict has its primacy in human needs. The denial from achieving the need causes conflict. Needs, personality and motivation theorists such as Maslow have identified deprivation as the major cause of conflict. Within this context it is easy to understand the nature and character of violent conflict in Somalia. Francis (2006) conceives conflict as pursuit of incompatible interest by different groups. Hence, it consists of drive that is difficult or irreconcilable with real or perceived opponent. Where competition fails to meet attainment, the tendency is for people to confront those they hold responsible for frustrating their ambition which is associated with relative deprivation. In this regard Falet (2006:47) concisely says, “the greater the discrepancy, however marginal between what is sort and what seems attainable, the greater will be the chances that anger and violence will result.” This suggests that conflict emanates from social interaction because through it ideas, desires, interests and claims clash (Agyeman Duah 2001). However, not every social interaction is bad because sometimes, it is beneficial to the parties concerned. Undoubtedly, without social interaction it would be difficult for polity to operate, hence it is inevitable.

Marxist, Conflict and Feminist theorists believe that conflict is an outcome of poorly integrated social institutions that manifest in the interaction of opposing forces (Unanka, 2004), that seamlessly emphasize interests over norms and values. As expected, pursuit of interest generates conflict which is seen as aspect of social life rather than abnormal or dysfunctional occurrence (Marshal, 1998). Unanka (2004) further argues that society is made up of groups that compete for scarce resources. In the struggle for dominance inequality and classes emerge which leads to conflict in the society. This implies that economic system or mode of production is the material foundation of social life. The organic unity of production forces and social relations of production constitute the economic structure (Akpuru-Aja 1998) which enables the society to

organise, manage and reproduce itself in material sense. Dynamics of the structure results in alienation, tension and conflict in the society. Hence, the outcome of relationship and reward in social relations is opposing classes which form the fulcrum of Marxist and Conflict theories. Having shed light on the issue it is pertinent therefore, to conceive conflict as outbreak of war or use of destructive weapons, arms and ammunitions as mechanism to attack, incapacitate, kill or destroy an opponent's human, material and financial resources, and investments with the aim of achieving victory or dominance. This scenario removes conflict from daily rancor or friction in the polity and places it at the context of power.

Conflict Stages and Identifications

It is essential to focus on identifying some criteria that signify existence of conflict. With regard to the classification but in addition to national and regional terms, their commonly evident view as identified by Aja (2007) and Gaya-Best (2006) include,

- 1). Stage of low intensity or early warning indicators signify approaching conflict which come in various ways such as provocative utterances, threats, propaganda, military build-up, high defense budget, movement of troops, severance of diplomatic ties, withdrawal of economic or military aid and suspension of membership of international organization. This falls into low level period of conflict often caused by poor communication and lack of openness. It requires intelligence gathering and interpretations. At this stage adequate responses could prevent conflict.
- 2). Resistance or medium level conflict falls between low and high level conflict. The parties do not deny existence of conflict hence, employ mild strategies such as propaganda, espionage and guerilla warfare for instance, Pakistan-India over Kashmir, and Israel and Iran.
- 3). Explosive or high intensity stage involves open warfare, aggression, economic war/blockade, insurgency, terrorism and counter terrorism for instance, Iran-Iraq war, Somalia-Ethiopian war over the Ogaden region, insurgency in Somalia and the Nigerian civil war. Conflict studies reveal that there are two parties in any conflict, the primary parties who are directly and visibly involved. The other is the shadow or secondary parties who are indirectly involved through proxy. They complicate the situation because their roles are complex and not easy to identify.

Nexus between Insecurity and Development

Insecurity literally means unsafe but implies much more when viewed from security prism. As a dynamic concept it connotes different meanings such as absence of safety, danger, hazard, uncertainty and lack of protection. This suggests that opposite of security does not necessarily mean insecurity. It could be better understood as aspect of security architecture of the state that guarantees the development of the state. Given the preceding scenario, security is not only absence of threats but existence of a robust mechanism to respond proactively to challenges posed by real or potential threats (Ewetan & Urhie 2014). This implies that insecurity exists where and when the mechanisms (technology) to respond to threat are lacking or inadequate. As a dynamic variable it is orientated to time, technological and geographical dimensions with robust state policy. Since individuals, groups and nationalities make up the state security somehow broadens to refer to, freedom guaranteed by law and enforced by the state which allows the groups or organizations to pursue and demand their rights or interest without fear or threats ..., and to the individuals security may refer to freedom from arbitrary arrests, unlawful detention, extra judiciary executions, hunger, famine, disease, debt, squalid environment, high mortality rates and suffering (Mac-Ogonor, 2014:169).

On the basis of the foregoing Beland (2005) espouses insecurity as a state of fear or anxiety due to absence or lack of protection including personal, group, national and extant policies and laws. Achumba, Ighomereho and Akpan-Robaro (2013) give two perspectives to the concept, firstly, being open to danger or threat of danger and a condition of being susceptible to harm or injury and secondly as state of being exposed to risk and anxiety or unpleasant emotion in anticipation of misfortune. These views presuppose that those affected by insecurity are not only uncertain or unaware of what would happen but are vulnerable to danger. This places insecurity as breach of peace and security whether historical, religious, ethno-regional, civil, social, economic or political that contribute to conflict which leads to fear and destruction of lives and properties

(Ewetan & Urhie 2014). Ogbonnaya and Ehigiamusoe (2013) identify two sources of insecurity: external threats and threat from beliefs especially, religious and political caused by frustration. Bar-Tal and Jacobson (1998) in their study of security challenges used political and socio-psychological approaches in their analysis. Political approach sees security as ordered condition of existence for individuals and the social system with secured environment that enables the citizens to pursue their goals without threat. This implies that as a responsibility the state should provide security and create the enabling environment for the development of the citizens. On the other hand, socio-psychological approach argues that people experience insecurity personally or collectively. It explains that most conflicts on closer consideration reveal that politics or control of government patronage is the primary cause of conflicts (Ogbonnaya & Ehigiamusoe 2013). In line with the theoretical framework therefore, the overall development of the state is anchored on the political culture of the people and the efficiency of the political institutions. Where there is low political participation invariably, as espoused by the theory development would be slow.

Development however, has endured conceptual and methodological shifts associated with economic growth, per capita income and Gross Domestic Product (GDP). Ozoh and Ugorji (2018) espouse that development has moved away from economic growth to the ability of the people to use resources according to cultural values in solving individual and collective problems and ensure welfare of the citizens. With effective leadership, minimum corruption and good governance a state would be able to provide public goods such as shelter, healthcare, security, food and employment and education (Anazodo, Igbokwe-Ibeto & Nkah, 2015) which Somalia as a member of the global community needs. Development from economic stand point implies reduction of poverty, inequality and unemployment. It is a multi-dimensional process that involves structural changes, attitudes, institutions, economic growth, etc.

Essentially, development is concerned with poverty, inequality and unemployment in relation to the populace. This separates it from economic growth which is quantitative increase in output and economic parameters such as Gross Domestic Product (GDP), and per capita income over time. Economic growth as component of development concerns material and financial needs of the citizens. Development rather, involves sustained quantitative and qualitative increase in national activities including orientation in the educational and social systems (Uzoh, 2014). Undoubtedly, the ongoing visible activity in Somalia remains the conflict and how to restore peace in the troubled state which certainly is not development. Uzoh believes that development is better measured using the Human Development Index (HDI). It takes into account literacy rates, infrastructure and life expectancy which affect productivity and economic growth. This incorporates women as major agents of development considering their role in the society. The goal of development is to increase quality of life of the citizens. For a country to develop, it needs to provide its populace with peaceful environment then basic resources and services, such as food, healthcare, education etc. Increase in GDP or per capita is necessary for development but does not indicate how fairly resources are distributed in the society which could lead to change in social, cultural or political conditions (Anazodo, Igbokwe-Ibeto & Nkah, 2015). HDI measures well-being of the citizens and determines a country's development. In this case, HDI indicates that Somalia is one of the lowest in world ranking. Another method to measure human development Sesay (2014), explains is Political Freedom Index (PFI), which evaluates personal security, rule of law, freedom of expression, political participation and equal opportunity. However, development is not static in the sense that even the alleged developed countries are still developing. In this regard, through sustained reform programmes therefore, Somalia could achieve development and consequently, improve the living standard of its citizens. Connected to this is Uzoh (2014), assertion that peace and stability correlate with development. In other words stability is a key to progress.

Method of Data Collection and Analysis

The study adopted ex-post facto research design, and relied on secondary sources of data such as text books, journals and Internet materials. The data generated were carefully examined and, analyzed using ethnographic descriptive technique to extract valuable information in order to establish a logical relationship between the variables.

Conflict Management and its Implications for National Reconciliation and Development in Somalia

Somalia's prolonged conflict constitutes security threat to the East African region. The dynamics of the conflict and inability of the state to contain it provide insight into conflicts in most African countries that undermine genuine development. Conflict in the region indeed, Africa is often explained with reference to poverty, clan-divisions, resource war and weak political structure to tone down East-West ideological rivalry and colonial legacy (Ikpe & Allen, 2020) which is becoming embarrassing to Africa. These narratives could be traced to inefficiency of the states to control economic resources and political power which manifest in clan/ethnic rivalry, wide spread poverty and armed conflict. The state is often personalized by the governing elites who deliberately exclude segment of the population and abandon extant administrative processes of social equity to enable them extract and allocate national resources along primordial, clan and regional lines. For instance, Barre in place of good governance used the military to oppress the people and enriched himself (Country of Origin Information Report, 2009) that the citizens lost confidence in the government which contributed to rise of armed groups (Menkhaus, 2004). As Barre's government became corrupt and unpopular, opposition intensified to include some military officers (Mutunga, 2006). Added to failure of governance, poverty, famine and unending conflict was increasing the number of child-soldiers among the armed groups. Somalia enjoyed aids from some western countries which boosted government's expenditure especially, the military. As already identified, this was the stage of low intensity or indicators of impending conflict which to the peril of Somalis was ignored. Expectedly, the people being tired of the traditional elites sought for alternative and credible leaders in the warlords. The implication is weakening of the state in the control of instruments of violence, and dearth of development. Climatic changes such as famine and drought added to the worsening situation. Thus, Somalia's conflict became matrix of complex factors which drag and influence each other making it one of Africa's longest conflicts.

In relation to the above, Nnoli (1980) argues that competition for national resources stir up various factions and groups who employ institutional and non institutional methods to their favour. Somalia's political elites like their counter parts in Nigeria alienated the citizens and politicized clanship/ethnicity to loot national wealth. Alienation could be by creating disaffection among aspiring elite class on account of perceived threat or by distancing larger percentage of the population from economic well-being owing to poor governance and failure to ensure social security by the existing power blocks. The later provides mechanisms for religious intolerance, ethnic conflicts, terrorism and insurgency (Aloa & Uwom, 2012). In the struggle for power, Ake (1981) notes that African leaders employ every available means to get into position of authority with less concern on the needs of the citizens and by implication, development of the country. On this basis, scholars argue that conflict has ontological foundation in human needs, denial of which makes resolvable differences degenerate into serious conflict. Within this context it is easy to understand the nature of violent conflict experienced in Somalia which impacts on national reconciliation and development.

Given the above, it is pertinent to point out that ineffective provision of basic needs amidst abundant resources project states as weak, fractured or failed, akin to most African states. In this situation, the public institutions including the extant laws holding the fabrics of the state are weakened which affect the supreme authority of the state, monopoly of force. Somalia having lost the monopoly was unable to provide the necessary security which alienated the citizens the more. However, armed groups provided some level of security in areas of influence (Abdulkadir, 2012) which make them to enjoy element of acceptability among the people in relation to the government thereby, tilting issue of loyalty to their favour. As pointed out by Clapham (2004), the emergence of states and central authorities in Europe are basically, to protect the citizens and state territories. Unarguably, African states having emerged from shackles of colonialism are struggling to meet such expectations. From inception state institutions in Africa are designed as comprador agencies and unable therefore, to transform into provision of security and basic socio-political needs in the society (Milliken & Krause, 2002). It is germane to note that countries involved in several years of armed conflict such as Central African Republic, Chad, the Democratic Republic of Congo Sudan and indeed, Somalia have been weakened in the provision of social services and protection of their territorial sovereignty

(Menkhaus, 2006; Ikelegbe & Okumu 2010). A closer examination indicates that their territorial sovereignties are not protected by the armed forces but respect for international laws by other states. Arguably, the sovereignty of a state is questioned when unable to hold together the nationalities that make up the state. Similarly, the government has lost the trust and loyalty of the populace, to regain it would be far from being easy. Agreed, that Somalia's public institutions have collapsed but the Somalia society is still intact despite decades of violence.

Given the preceding scenario, end of conflict however, does not automatically translate to peaceful, stable social and economic developments. It rather calls for reconciliation because peace is not fixation but process. Reconciling with the Al-Shabaab armed group would be a major breakthrough in the sense that the group has continually rejected every peace deal with the government and the international community. The fact that it has preponderance of youths and child-soldiers in its ranks makes it expedient to reconcile with the group. Unarguably, the group is the most terrorist organization in Somalia with links with foreign terrorist organizations such as Al-Qaeda and Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS). It is believed that genuine governments do not negotiate with terrorists but since the conflict has raged unending negotiating with the armed groups is better option as this would guarantee peace and development in the country. For this to take place terrorist acts need to be jettisoned by Al-Shabaab. Reconciliation requires climate of tolerance, respect for truth, strengthening the rule of law, trauma healing and transparent leadership which encompasses range of political, developmental, humanitarian, and human rights programmes and mechanisms (<http://www.ousaid.gov.au>). It involves deliberate effort to re-establish cooperative contacts, getting the citizens to accept each other as part of the national identity and for mutual co-existence necessary for development, breaking down stereo-types, prejudice and discrimination (Aja, 2007; Dambach, 2011). In the process, considerations for humanitarian relief are given to communities and persons that have suffered severely from the conflict, to disarmament, to demobilization and to reintegration of combatants into peaceful and productive members of the society. Others include helping refugees and displaced persons to return home for productive life, rebuilding infrastructural support, assisting with social rehabilitation, trauma counseling, public confession, granting amnesty and peace education. Where this is genuinely managed in relation with dynamic and transparent leadership Somalia's development becomes easier. It is worthy of note that genuine national reconciliation as aspect of peace building takes time particularly, where there is deep suspicion, likely repeat of ugly incidence, loss of close relative among others. Since development represents a whole gamut of change; complete move away from condition of life widely perceived as unsatisfactory towards a life condition regarded as materially and spiritually better (Ozoh & Ugorji, 2018). In essence, development is people oriented therefore, for it to have true meaning must be supported by stable environment and progressively improve the quality of life and standard of living of all Somalis.

Conclusion

The argument of this paper is that how a state manages conflict reflects its overall development. The implication is that reconciliation and development take place through deliberate strengthening of the political institutions to allow mass participation in the political processes. Inequality, poor political system, lack of differentiation and specialization of political system are the basis of violent conflict. Furthermore, the pattern of politics since after independence in 1960 remained unchanged: intense contest for power, brute force, clan manipulation, poor governance and corruption. Consequently, poverty, unemployment and inequality remain high, thereby serving as fertile ground for conflict. Most scholars agreed that the insurgency in Somalia is worsened by the prevalence of these factors. This reality is corroborated by the political development theory which is linked to overall development and discrimination in the sharing of national resources: economic and political which is crux of Somalia's violence. This creates opportunity for radicalization of armed groups such as the Al-Shabaab who believe they are Sala fists or reformers that want to establish sacrosanct Islamic ideology that has been tainted by Western culture and doctrines of other Muslim groups.

Recommendations:

- 1). The issue of reconciliation should be well addressed by the government of Somalia so that genuine national reconciliation could be realized particularly, in the area of deep suspicion, apprehension of ugly incidence or loss of close relatives.
- 2). There should be, as a matter of genuine reconciliation climate of tolerance, respect for truth, strengthening of the rule of law, trauma healing and transparent leadership which requires range of political, developmental, humanitarian, and human rights programmes and mechanisms
- 3). Government of Somalia should give consideration for humanitarian relief to communities and persons that have suffered severely from the conflict. In addition, international organizations particularly, the African Union and the United Nations in conjunction with the government should assist Somalia's refugees and displaced persons to return home for productive life. A follow up programme such as social rehabilitation, trauma counseling, granting of amnesty and peace education to the citizens should be initiated by the government so as to encourage peaceful co-existence.
- 4). International organizations particularly, the African Union and the United Nations should assist the government of Somalia to immediately design road-map for demobilization and reintegration of combatants into peaceful and productive members of the society. This would go a long way in helping combatants who are still in the jungle to rethink on possible guerrilla warfare which often accompany most wars.
- 5). The Somalia government should immediately embark on de-radicalization of the citizens particularly, children from age ten and youths who are members of armed groups to understand that violence is no longer fashionable in the contemporary world. Through this means, the armed groups would be denied the ideological victory which they seek.

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