

The Impact of Leadership Crisis and Political Instability in Africa: An Analysis of the Gbagbo-Quattara Leadership Crisis in Cote d' Ivoire

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Abstract

This study strives to unravel the impact of leadership crisis and political instability in Africa with specific reference to the Gbagbo-Quattara leadership tussle in Cote d'Ivoire. The study relied on secondary sources of data and the post-behavioural theory as its theoretical framework. The study adopted the descriptive research method while data for the study were analysed using qualitative method and content analysis. It was observed that the Gbagbo-Quattara leadership crisis and several others in Africa are driven by personal interest and refusal to accept the result of the presidential election declared by Independent Electoral Commission of Cote d'Ivoire. Further findings from the study revealed that the pressure mounted by the African Union, Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) and the United Nations contributed immensely to the early resolution of the leadership crisis in Cote d'Ivoire. To avoid leadership crisis and political instability in Africa, regional and international election observes should be deployed to monitor all elections across the world. In addition, regional and international organizations and agencies should also sanction citizens and leaders whose actions and conduct constitute a threat to peace and security at all levels.

Keywords: *Political instability, Leadership crisis, Africa, Impact, Gbagbo and Quattara*

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Background to the Study

Leaders at any level emerge formally or informally through the political process which can be open, transparent or anarchical depending on the existing variables hence, political power is regarded as legitimate if it is acquired through a free, fair and transparent electoral process. A political system or state is said to be sovereign if it is independent and free from external influence and control. Thus, political systems and states that are democratic have the tendency and potential to enjoy political stability and development than nations that are undemocratic. This clearly explains why conflict arising from the struggle for political power accounts for most of the violence, insecurity and underdevelopment in most African states especially in undemocratic regimes.

Historically, Pan-African scholars and leaders like Kwame Nkrumah of Ghana, Felix Houphout Boigny of Cote d'Ivoire, Daniel Arab Moi of Kenya, Robert Mugabe of Zimbabwe etc. ruled for several years but failed to lay good foundations for sustainable leadership and development in Africa hence, lack of leadership succession plan coupled with frequent military coups have helped to increase the level of conflict and political violence and insecurity in pre-colonial and post-colonial Africa. Achebe (1984) reiterated that failure of leadership accounts for the myriads of problems confronting the African continent and cautioned that African leaders must address the question of leadership indiscipline and ineptitude.

It is in the light of the above background that this study examined the impact of leadership crisis and political instability in Africa with specific reference to the Gbagbo–Quattara leadership crisis in Cote d'Ivoire.

Theoretical and Conceptual Analysis

The study was guided by the post-behavioural theory which is a clear resistant against orthodox behaviouralism which is perceived as parochial and limited in all ramifications. According to James John Guy cited in Ntete-Nna (2004), post-behavioural theory or approach see political science as having a public purpose hence, it should not only strive for generalization and the verifiable understanding of the political process but rather, the practitioners and political leaders should commit themselves to making the society and political environment a better place. Post-behaviouralists therefore posit that political scientists and members of the ruling class should be able to communicate with the victims of society and less privileged citizens to ensure that the choice of research projects and policy actions reflect the immediate concerns of majority of the people and not just the ruling elites. Thus, post-behaviouralists are concerned not just with techniques of study but also with the broader questions of values such as justice and morality all geared towards policy re-engineering. Thus, contextually, existing policy actions and reforms across Africa represents some of the steps taken to address the socio-economic and political (leadership) problems facing the African continent in line with post-behavioural philosophy and techniques.

Conceptual Analysis

Leadership can be viewed and analysed from different perspectives but from a general perspective, leadership refers to an individual who provides direction, implement policies and

inspire others. However, the first major study of leadership styles was performed in 1939 by Kurt Lewin who led a group of researchers who identified different styles of leadership (Lewin, etal. 1939). Achebe (1984) also identified leadership failure as the main problem facing Africa. According to him, the trouble with Nigeria is simply and squarely a failure of leadership. In his contribution to the subject-matter Akinyanju (2000) posited that since democracy emphasizes majority rule/input, it is much deeper and it can be appreciated by its salient features hence, he added that genuine democracy implies equal material capacity to reach and mobilize the people. He contended that political democracy cannot be achieved without economic democracy and that democratization results as a reaction to monocratic authoritarian personal regimes. He gave the following as the general features of monocratic centralized regimes: political exclusion and denials, concentration of resources at the centre, concentration of constitutional and extra-constitutional powers in the hands of few persons or a person with the courts and other institutions of the state emasculated or endured dependent on the power centre. In his words:

Monocratic regimes like we have run in Nigeria for the better part of the existence of the country have produced disastrous effects: gross deprivation, pervasive corruption, economic decline, political violence, and infrastructural decay. When it is then perceived that democratization fosters development and provides the basis for negotiations and bargaining in the polity, societies struggle to democratize. Democratization is very rarely voluntarily allowed. It is achieved as a result of pressure. The pressure could be internal or external but usually a combination of both. In Nigeria, the internal pressure to democratize had been against colonial or indigenous authoritarianism (Akinyanju, 2000: p. 3).

The above position was corroborated by Gurr (1994) when he posited that where the fundamental human rights of under privileged minorities are not respected and their feelings considered in the process of policy formulation and implementation, the rate of conflict and insecurity may increase in Africa in the 21st century. In other to avert leadership related conflicts in multicultural societies he reiterated that there must be territorial constitutional integration as well as minimum consensus. Similarly, Jega (2007) argued that for leaders and followers to work in harmony and enjoy the dividends of good governance, there must be transparency and accountability on the part of public office holders. He asserted that a democratic political culture developed overtime creates the basis for sustainable processes of good governance in democratic countries including Nigeria (Jega, 2007: p. 158). Eskor Toyo (1982) also contended that the mere adoption of democratic rule does not translate the state into a democratic state. According to him, democracy refers to the extent to which actual political power to determine their social destiny belongs to the vast majority of citizens who constitute the people distinct from a ruling oligarchy or class. Scholars have also argued that no democracy can function without inputs from the people hence; Ola Oni (1999) also reiterated that democracy can be viewed as a political and economic arrangement of society such that the interest of the majority of people determines the management and direction of society benefiting the majority of the people. Why democracy is yet to impact positively on the lives of Africans remains a mystery which this paper will help to unravel. However, Awa (1973) maintained that whether a country operates a situational, traditional or charismatic leadership

styles, there is a consensus position among scholars that good governance and good leadership is an essential requirement necessary for the growth and development of any society. The process leading to the emergence of leaders at all levels is therefore more crucial and fundamental in the socio-economic development of any state. This paper is, therefore, an attempt at unravel the impact of leadership crisis in Africa with specific reference to the Gbagbo-Quattara leadership crisis in Cote d'Ivoire.

Analysis Showing the Impact of the Gbagbo-Quattara Leadership Crisis in Cote d'Ivoire 2010-2011

It will be recalled that the leadership crisis in Cote d'Ivoire started when the electoral commission declared Alassane Quattara who is from the Northern part of Cote d'Ivoire as the winner of 28th November 2010 presidential runoff election. In a related development, the country's constitutional council charged with the responsibility of certifying the election results also declared the former incumbent president, Mr Laurent Gbagbo, from the Southern part of Cote d'Ivoire as winner of the same election thus, the declaration of two election results/candidates in the same election by two institutions in the country no doubt set the stage for the leadership crisis that ravaged Cote d'Ivoire in 2010. This development attracted local and international pressure urging both leaders to respect the decision of the Cote d'Ivoire electoral commission. In a newspaper report captioned "Gbagbo must quit, Quattara tells Mbeki" published in the Daily Sun Newspaper of Monday of 6th December, 2010, Alassane Quattara appealed to the international community through the African Union's (AUs) envoy to Cote d'Ivoire and former South-African president, Thabo Mbeki to prevail on the then incumbent president, Laurent Gbagbo to quit power immediately. In the same vein, Choiyoung-Jin the then United Nations representative in Cote d'Ivoire on behalf of the then United Nations Secretary General upheld the election results declared by the Cote d'Ivoire electoral commission and consequently called on Mr Laurent Gbagbo to step down and hand-over power to Alassane Quattara unconditionally. With reference to the election results, the UN envoy stated categorically clear that Alassane Quattara scored 54.1% of the total votes while Laurent Gbagbo scored 45.9%. The Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) also expressed its displeasure over the inordinate ambition and conduct of the two actors in the Cote d'Ivoire leadership crisis and relying on Article 45 of its protocol on democracy and good governance, Cote d'Ivoire was suspended from the activities of the Commission.

However, post-conflict analysis and records revealed that apart from the emotional and psychological trauma suffered by the people, the conflict left at least 3,000 people killed and more than 150 women raped (Human Rights, 2008). The recalcitrant posture of the then incumbent led to increased tension and killings which consequently led to his arrest and prosecution by the United Nations and the International Criminal Court (ICC). The presidential election result declared by the Cote d'Ivoire Electoral Commission was upheld and Alassane Quattara was sworn in as the democratically elected President of Cote d'Ivoire. The table below shows the justification for regional and international intervention in conflict situations in Africa.

Table 1: Justification for international intervention in conflicts in Africa

S/N	Articles of the UN	Justification based on Chapter VII of the United Nations Charter
1.	39	The security council shall determine the existence of any threat to the peace, breach of the peace, or act of aggression and shall make recommendations, or decide what measures shall be taken in accordance with articles 41 and 42, to maintain or restore international peace and security.
2.	40	In order to prevent an aggravation of the situation, the security council may, before making the recommendations or deciding upon the measures provided for in Article 39, call upon the parties concerned to comply with such provisional measures as it deems necessary or desirable. Such provisional measures shall be without prejudice to the rights, claims, or position of the parties concerned. The security council shall duly take account of failure to comply with such provisional measures.
3.	41	The security council may decide what measures not involving the use of armed force are to be employed to give effect to its decisions, and it may call upon the members of the United Nations to apply such measures. These may include complete or partial interruption of economic relations and of rail, sea, air, postal, telegraphic, radio, and other means of communication and the severance of diplomatic relations.
4.	42	Should the security council consider that measures provided for in Article 41 would be inadequate or have proved to be inadequate; it may take such action by air, sea or land forces as may be necessary to maintain or restore international peace and security. Such actions may include demonstrations, blockade, and other operations by air, sea or land forces of members of the United Nations

Source: Kalama, Fieldwork 2020.

Fallout of the leadership crisis in Cote d'Ivoire also shows that over seventeen thousand (17,000) persons fled their homes to seek refuge in neighbouring Liberia, Kenya and other African countries hence; management of refugees was a major impact of the Gbagbo-Quattara leadership crisis in Cote d'Ivoire. The table below shows the nature and drivers of conflict in Africa.

Table 2: Recent Conflicts in Africa Linked to Natural Resources

Country	Duration	Natural Resources
Algeria	1992	Oil gas
Angola	1975 – 2002	Oil diamond, timber, Ivory
Angola (Cabinda)	1975	Oil
Burundi	1993	Land
Cameroon/Nigeria	1997	Oil
Chad	1980 – 1994	Oil, uranium
Congo Brazzaville	1993: 1997	Oil
DRC	1993	Copper, cobalt, diamond, gold, timber
Kenya	1991	Walter, grazing pasture, lives stock
Liberia	1989 – 1996	Iron, diamonds rubber timber, drugs
Libya	2011	Oil
Mozambique	1976 – 1996	Ivory, timber
Morocco	1975	Phosphates, oil
Papua New Guinea	1988	Copper, gold
Rwanda	1990	Coffee, land
Senegal	1997	Drugs
Sierra Leone	1991 – 1999	Drugs, Copper, cobalt, diamond, gold, timber
Somalia	1988	Bananas, lives stock
South Africa	1990s	Drugs, land, platinum
Sudan	1983	Oil
Western Sahara	1976	Phosphates
Zimbabwe	2000	Land

Source: Adapted from Mophosa, S.B 2012:p.3.

The data in the above table clearly shows that the selfish desire and ambition to control the wealth and natural resources in different part of Africa accounts for the frequent conflict among African states and its leaders. This also explains why the culture of sit-tight leadership is fast becoming a culture in Africa.

Conclusion

The study examined the impact of the leadership crisis and political instability in Africa: An analysis of the Gbabo-Quattara leadership crisis in Cote d'Ivoire. Using the descriptive method and secondary data, the study observed that the conflict in Cote d'Ivoire was a post-election conflict which degenerated into a national crisis which caused the displacement, death and maiming of several innocent citizens. It was further observed that regional and international pressure compelled the leading actors in the conflict to honour the election results earlier declared by the Cote d'Ivoire Electoral Commission. Further resistance and protests by Laurent Gbagbo and his loyalists led to his forceful arrest and prosecution by the United Nations.

Consequently, Alassane Quattara, the acclaimed winner of the presidential election was sworn-in as president of Cote d'Ivoire hence, marking the end of violence and hostilities in Cote d'Ivoire. The mediating role played by the United Nations and other regional organizations like the African Union, Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) etc. also account for the early resolution of the conflict. Based on the gaps observed, the study also made recommendations.

Recommendations

The following recommendations will go a long way in addressing the problems associated with leadership and leadership recruitment processes and challenges in Africa:

1. Minimum and maximum educational standards in terms of academic qualification should be set for all intending leaders to ensure that only qualified leaders with the requisite experience are screened and allowed to contest elections at all levels. This will also compel intending leaders to build their capacity before aspiring or venturing into politics.
2. There is need for both political and electoral reforms in Africa to ensure that the power to supervise and conduct elections is vested in one institution. It will be recalled that in Cote d'Ivoire both the Code d'Ivoire Electoral Commission and Cote d'Ivoire Constitutional Council were vested with the powers to oversee the election in Cote d'Ivoire. This duplication of function no doubt helped to escalate the conflict in Cote d'Ivoire.
3. The civil society community in Africa should rise up and be a life to their responsibility as watch dogs of the society. It is on record that in Cote d'Ivoire and other African countries the civil society community was passive except for a few who constantly interrogate government financial transactions and processes.
4. Regional and international organizations must not hesitate to invoke relevant provisions, protocols and articles against over ambitious African leaders and their collaborators. Such erring leaders should be held accountable for their actions and prosecuted in accordance with international law.
5. The culture of accepting every government in power should be discarded by African people and citizens hence, the people must learn to resist and confront illegitimate regimes and governments in any part of Africa. In the same vein, constitutional amendments that will promote tenure elongation and sit-tight leadership should also be resisted in Africa.
6. Perpetrators of violence and conflict in Africa should be sanctioned and the country concerned should also be isolated and suspended from regional and international organizations to serves as deterrence to others. Such international actions will go a long way in checking the excesses of desperate and over ambitions African leaders, politicians and elites.

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