LEADERSHIP CONTESTATION AND REGIONAL INSECURITY: ASSESSMENT OF POLITICAL CONFLICTS ON WEST AFRICAN STATES

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Abstract

Leadership and leaders are crucial in society and state, just as leader is essential its appointment and emergence is of great importance and interest to the citizens and effective functioning of state. Fractured states and insecurity from perennial disputes over emergence of political leaders in Africa are becoming alarmingly worrisome, because of its continuous negative impacts on the fragile African states and already volatile Africa's international political environment.

The primary objective of the study is to investigate nexus between contestation for leadership in a democratic system and insecurity in West African states. Theoretical framework for the analysis is combination of State Fragility Theory and Elite Theory. The study adopted qualitative research methods in which secondary data is employed for analysis. The study identifies poor democratic culture of inability to effectively disengage from traditional political system by emerging African political leaders/politicians as the basis of contestation problems. The study concludes that African politicians perceives politics as a 'must win race', absence of tolerance to political opponents/opposing views, imperial presidency/desire to remain in power for eternity, prebendal politics, myopic political elites/politicians, legacy of colonial administration of not rendering service to humanity, obsession for pecks of office, power and glory as well as love for title as some of the causes of contestation problems in African politics and political life. The study recommends reorientation of African political elites/politicians on the ethics of modern democracy, acceptance of

political leadership as service to humanity not a place to create imperial presidency, and development and adoption of tolerance as an integral part of democratic political culture.

Introduction: African continent because of its scary reputation of being the world's leading theatre of conflicts, war, poverty and instability has been described as scourge by many European and American scholars due to certain notable attributes identified with the continent (Meredith, 2005). One of these features is perennial political conflicts that always degenerates to wars, insurgency and ethnic cleansing all of which create situation of insecurity that drives state to the level of fragility or failed state. Notable among the identified features is the preponderance of abject poverty in the continent despite the fact that the continent is blessed with the highest amount of mineral resources needed globally and, best brain which are allowed to drain away to other continent when the potentials embedded in the abundant human resources are not adequately tapped. Prominent of these features is also sit-tight/authoritarian leadership that make use of adulterated politics to attained and retain the leadership position in order to authoritatively allocate values in the state. Adulterated politics with corrupt political culture has caused intense and extreme leadership contestation in many African states like Chad (Hisne Habre and Goukoni Wadeye), Liberia(Doe/ Taylor/Johnson), Cote d'Ivoire (Gbagbo/Guei/ Quattara) and Sierra Leone(Tedjan Kabba & Fouday Sankoh). In the recent times, there has been increase in political conflicts and electoral violence arising from contestation for leadership position in different African states.

It was these outlined processes and procedures to leadership position that are desecrated upon and perverted by African political elites as contenders for leadership as displayed by Samuel Doe who openly promotes violent ethnic politics. Perversion of electoral rules applicable to Bedie/Gbagbo with their introduction of the concept of 'full-blood' Ivorian into Cote d'Ivoire political

lexicon and cause division in the armed forces as well as uprising in the northern part of Cote d'Ivoire (). Continuous political conflict emanating from leadership contestation generates a lot of insecurity into both national and international political environment of West African states in Liberia and Mali.

In states like Niger and Chad, the greatest stumbling block to prosperity and security is leadership contestation between the political elites that made virtually all ethnic nationalities stockpile cache of arms and ammunition which enhance rate proliferation of small and light arms in West Africa (Ani & Ejiaga, 2015). Parts of those arms constitute the bulk of arms with the marauding Fulani cattle rustlers and banditry ravaging northern part of Nigeria. Infarct, the Liberian leadership contestation between the political elites like Doe/Thomas/Johnson/ Taylor is one major intrastate political conflict to have multiple and spiral insecurity effects on West African states of Sierra Leone and Cote d'Ivoire. Thus, insecurity has become fundamental challenge undermining political and socio-economic development of most African states, Abubakar and Yahaya (2018:44), Nwagwu (2018:21).

There exists causal relationship between leadership contestation, political conflicts and insecurity in the continent of Africa. Preponderance of political conflicts emanating from leadership contests has greatly eroded legitimacy of many African leaders to effectively govern their states, (Hegre, 2014:161). Inability to govern well breeds poor governance; attempt to cover leader's inadequacies leads to leaning heavily on ethno-religious threshold in contesting for leadership position. Riding on the threshold of ethno-religious politics makes Africa to be a flashpoint for ethnic based leadership contestation and religious induced extremist insurgency that are wrecking havocs and weaken state institutions. Continuous political conflicts emanating from leadership contestation portrayed Africa as a renowned global established theatre of war where nearly all countries in the continent are facing or had been confronted by one bloody political conflict based on squabbles between the elites in their quest for political leadership, Akinyemi

(2001), Nwolise (2011), Ogunsanwo (2013) Abubakar and Yahaya (2018:45), Nwagwu (2018:21).

Leadership and leaders are fundamental in society and state, just as leader is essential its emergence is of great importance and concerns to the well-being and effective functioning of the state. Essentiality of leaders and leadership position makes it utmost attractive and competitive in modern African states. Legitimate attainment of leadership position confers political power and authority to allocate values in society on the leaders. But, attaining leadership position (to become leader) requires detailed/outlined processes and procedures. It is these outlined processes and procedures of attaining leadership position that are desecrated and perverted by African elites as contenders to leadership position (as was shown by Samuel Doe who openly promotes ethnic politics and also Bedie/Gbagbo introduction of 'full blood' Ivorian concept into the constitution which spark division in the armed forces and uprising in the northern part of Coted'Ivoire). Perversion and parody of principles of attaining leadership position contrary to the laid down rules and regulations breeds rancour, acrimony and political conflicts that negatively impacted on the peace, orderliness and security/protection of life of citizens which are primary duty of state. This makes African politics and political practice in post-colonial states to be full of intrigue that defies known logic of politics and democratic principles (Sharma, et al 2013).

Democracy as a global and popularly acceptable method of choosing and changing leadership prescribed the best means of avoiding political conflicts that are associated with other means of leadership selection, Nwolise (2011), Diamond, et al (1995). This is because it is based on popular participation, party politics and citizens' mobilization to determine candidate of their choice whom they want to vote for. The irony of African politics is that, there are contradictions between democracy and African politics. Democracy, which is globally acclaimed and adjudged as the best means of choosing and changing leaders in modern states, it is this same democracy that serves as basis of generating political conflicts when choosing or changing leaders in

Africa. While Africa politics believe in face value of democratic ideal such as presenting candidate for elective posts and formation of political parties, African elites rejects content value of democracy such as tolerance and spirit of sportsmanship. Once candidate nurture/signifies leadership ambition for political office it is assumed there should be no other contenders against this hopeful political ambition. Contenders for such position are seen as foe or political enemy that must be battled to submission or defeat. This leads to introduction of corrupt democratic political cultures of ethno-religion politics, thuggery and militia who are empowered with weapons which are later used for trans-border crimes.

Coming to leadership position through election confers political power and authority on individual. But, attainment of political power and leadership position in modern African states is not completely divorce from traditional political system in which occupier through ascribed traditional political system have access to unrestraint power and political glamour. There exists contradiction between African politics, African political leaders/leadership and global politics. African states and politics are having contradictory philosophy to that of political leaders/leadership, while African states were created as modern political entity, and its political structure and processes are moving towards new global political trends. African political leaders/leadership are still exhibiting traditional political behavioural patterns of life/imperial presidency where incumbent leaders see leadership as permanent position to be occupied for eternity and unchallenged, Nkrumah (1974), Meredith (2005), Akindele and Oche (2001:116). Good governance, representative government and equitable participation have made democracy a desirable system of governance globally, Sharma, et al (2013:64), Atte (2001:116).

Concept clarification

Leadership contestation is the intense struggle for political leadership position by the elites of a given state with the sole aim of attaining political power in order to exercise political authority that goes along with the political

responsibility of managing, administering and authoritatively allocate values and resources in a state or polity. It is extreme tussle for position of authority that deals with exercising control over resources and people of a given territory as political leader. Contestation for leadership in Africa can be seen in two ways; the struggle for political power through use of arms, which may be military (Coup d'état), revolution (Museveni in Uganda, Paul Kigame in Rwanda and Gadhafi in Libya), or rebel attacks (Sankoh in Sierra Leone, Yormie Johnson/Charles Taylor in Liberia) and politics/ electoral contests which may be inform of ethno-religious politics or class/elite politics. The two breeds a lot of political conflicts and insecurity in the continent of Africa. Contestation for leadership in Africa can either be intra-class contestation (Gowon/Ojukwu-military elite, Awolowo/Akintola-political elite) or inter-class contestation (Babangida and Abiola-military elite vs. business elite). The contest may be between incumbent and a fresh contender(s) from another political party, it may be between two ideologically dominant parties, it may be between ethnically assertive groups within a state, it may be between presumed conservative and assumed revolutionary groups Political conflicts in Sudan, Niger, and Rwanda were intra-class between rivals of two political parties. Cases of elite politics/leadership contestation that degenerated into political conflicts and insecurity are Tshombe/Kasavubu/Lumumba and Mobutu/Kabila in Congo, between Charles Taylor/Yormie Johnson and Alh. Koroma in Liberia, fractionalized war lords in Somalia and between Goukoni Waddeye and Hisne Habre in Chad.

Insecurity is the presence of fear from occurrence of known incidents that may cause both physical and psychological damage to an individual, group, society and state. Insecurity is diametrically opposite of security and Obasanjo (2000) opines that insecurity can be analysed from two broad levels: internal and external. Internal insecurity could be insecurity of people (anxiety/panic) and insecurity of the state (threat from ethnic militias, insurgents, terrorist and espionage which can weaken states' institutions,

remove or reduce sovereignty of a state). While external insecurity comes from external threat such attacks by organised criminals, international terrorist groups, externally trained militias to disrupt internal peace of a state. Insecurity creates bad image for Africa as a continent that is full of political crises which in turn makes Africa as one of the most unsafe place to do business or investment. In the era of globalization while other continents and regions are welcoming foreign direct investment, Africans are scaring away the same foreign direct investment from their territories.

Electoral/Political Conflicts: These are different intra-state violent demonstration centred on filthy democratic practices or electoral processes manipulation that undermining constitutional emergence of political leaders in a state. For instance, Lauren Gbagbo and Yahya Jammeh refusal to step down after losing in a democratic contest, unconstitutional ascendancy of presidency by Faure Eyadema after the death of his father, using military coup to remove democratically elected government in states like Sierra Leone and Mali, many of these political conflicts though internal political conflicts generates insecurity into the regional political environment, Nwolise (2011), Obasanjo (2000).

Theoretical Framework

Fragility theory contends that a *functioning and legitimate* state is a prerequisite for re-establishing peace, security, economic development, social order and democracy. A fragile state is one that is *unable to effectively respond to the challenge of governance and security within its geographical territories (*Emphasis is mine). This explains Collmer (2009) position that fragility is a product of 'fundamental failure of a state to perform functions necessary to meet citizen's basic aspiration and needs. Fragility occurred due to absence of legitimacy that evolves from popular sovereignty to freely elect their leaders that are accountable and are responsive to the people. Rotberg(2003) cited in Ndukwe et al (2018:34) notes that 'fragile state increases criminal violence (through electoral violence and political conflicts that leads to ethnic clashes/cleansing and insurgency) which further weakens

the state's authority and potential for effective governance. Fragile states are usually associated with tensed, deeply conflicted and dangerous warring factions whom most times lead to breakdown of law and order. The relevance of the theory lies in its deduction of legitimacy as the basis of peace and security in state (Obasanjo, 2000). Thus the main reason why peace, stability and security continue to elude many African states is traceable to illegitimate means adopted by African leaders in the process of contestation for leadership position. The major reason why many modern African states are fragile and may remain fragile is lack of legitimacy by leaders in the process of attaining leadership position because of poor leadership contestation mechanism embraced which prevent emergence of a nationally acceptable leader(s) that will meet the yearning, needs and, aspiration of the people. Emergence of nationally acceptable leader will propel the state towards national integration and nation-building rather than embarking on divisive elements that put the state in jeopardy, unrest, violent conflicts and insecurity. Prominent scholars of this theory are Collmer, Kaplan and Rothberg.

Elite theory popularised by Gaetano Mosca in 1939, is a theoretical and methodological framework for researching connection between political and economic power in society. Elite theory investigates power and control with the aim of analysing elites and non-elites (general public) differentiation. It is concerned with inequalities based on power or lack of thereof. To elite theory power is based on other resources such as economic assets and organizational strength which may give rise to control over other resources. Thus, public policies (including voting patterns) are values and preferences of governing elites. Elites are groups of people, who hold institutionalised power to control societal resources (due to their possession of time, energy, wealth, status and prestige which enable them to motivate people) and have a serious influence on decision-making process (actively or potentially). Political elites inordinate ambition makes them to use their possession of wealth, position, knowledge and spiritual to cause division between different

ethnic nationalities that are supposed to be integrated into a well-established modern African state. Elite's ethnic cleavage as platform for advancing leadership contest leads to fractionalization of states along ethno-religious line in Cote d'Ivoire by Gbagbo. This had pushed many states toward violent democratic contest between ethnic nationalities and ethnic cleansing in a proposed election in Liberia and Sierra Leone all of which impacted negatively on regional security of West African sub-region. Because elites possess economic, political, spiritual and institutional power with which elite can use as resources to control both brain and might of people to carried elite desire objective such as violent political conflicts. Sometimes political elites like Charles Taylor, Yormie Johnson, Fouday Sankoh can turn democratic violence into low intensity warfare recruiting and distributing arms to young able-bodied supporters. Much of his arms are not returned even after demobilization and they constitute large bulk of what criminal elements are using to carry out crimes across the borders. Moreover, low intensity warfare open the region for marketing and sales of ammunition by war merchants and military industrial complex making it easy to access weapons in the region.

Possession of wealth, status, prestige, knowledge, spiritual/religion and institutional power enable elite to motivate and influence gullible citizens into adversarial ethnic nationalism and cause division among people. This was manifested by Samuel Doe as serving president openly encouraged his supporters to tame opposition with cutlass. Invariably, through institutionalise power there is proliferation of light and small arms which constitute insecurity to the regional environment. Using institutional power, Gbagbo and Guei manipulates National Assembly to amend constitution to technically eliminate strong opponent (Quottara), as serving president, Jammeh compelled the Electoral Commission to declare him as winner after losing election. All these affect leadership legitimacies which is the basis of peace and security. Once state is fractured, its institutions weakened, bad governance set in, then political conflicts is inevitable. Combinations of these variables prevent a state from effectively combating its internal

political crisis which can ripple across the porous borders where there is proliferation of light and small arms constitute insecurity to the regional environment. There are different types of elites. These include political elites, business elites, military elites, academic elites; trade/labour union elites and traditional elites. Mosca (1939) cited in Okpanachi and Bello (2014) opines that because "there is concentration of political power in the hands of elites as group they perform all political functions, monopolises power and enjoys the advantages what that power brings". Other proponents of the theory are Wright Mills (1956), Vilfredo Pareto (1968).

Selected Leadership Contestation in Africa: Poor leadership vision blurs African elites from differentiating between leading an ethnic nationality and leading multi-ethnic state. It is this myopic politics that makes African elites to embark on prebendal politics in the quest for leadership position, (Joseph, 1991). But the contradiction that exist between African leaders and democracy makes democratic system to be prone to electoral violence and political conflicts which its current attendant repercussion within and outside the shores of affected African states inform of insecurity and insurgency. Imperial presidency and authoritarian democrats drives states to towards political conflicts, insecurity and insurgency, Nwolise (2011:28). Democracy and party politics being a game of number exacerbate and polarised African states into ethno-religious assertive polity that accentuate political conflicts and insecurity.

Liberia, a peaceful West African state until 1980 presents a good case study in leadership contestation. Perceived dominance of political scene by American-Liberian resulted in military coup of 1980 led by Samuel Doe. Emergence of Samuel Doe as Liberian leaders marks the beginning of leadership contestation in Liberia. Doe ruled for five years as a military head of state before nurturing the ambition of transforming himself to democratically elected president. This ambition brought Doe against many of his former associates whom he accused of plotting to overthrow his

government. Doe's tough stance on his political opponents who stands on his way of realising his political ambition resulted in 'authoritarian leadership', Aworawo (2011:18). It also divided the polity along ethnic lines as Doe persecute both individual as enemy and their ethnic group as collaborators that must politically nullify. This made many of his peers from different backgrounds who were prevented and persecuted for nurturing presidential ambition to resort to low intensity war that later degenerated into Liberian civil war. Ruthlessness with which Doe deals with his political opponents coupled with ethnicity introduced into Liberian body politics accentuate violent demonstration when Doe claimed victory at the poll which was not free and fair. Violent political demonstration leads to emergence of many factional leaders such as Charles Taylor, Yormie Johnson, and Alh. Koromah, Meredith, (2005).

Cote d'Ivoire is a good example of stable polity in West Africa until the demise of Felix Boigny which created leadership vacuum which could not be quickly filled as the state has never experienced changing of power from one leader to another. Attempt to individually and unilaterally take undue advantage of situation created political uncertainty which was not effectively handled with common purpose. Intense political bickering and imposition of political leaders by the emerging elites was the beginning of leadership contestation in the country. The death of Boigny led to emergence of Konarie Bedie as president of Cote d'Ivoire, Bedie refusal to democratically relinquish leadership post due to leadership contestation between Bedie and other political elites prompt military coup that brought Gen. Guei to power. Attempt by Guei himself to assumed imperial presidency through kangaroo election led to political impasse between Guei and Gbagbo, this political impasse later produced Lauren Gbagbo as president. On getting to power, Gbagbo decision to turn politics upside down due to leadership contestation between Ivorian elites leads to political conflicts which introduced ethnic and regional sentiment to political lexicon of Ivory Coast and insecurity in West Africa that warrant regional body intervention in internal matters of Cote

d'Ivoire, Oche,(2011:85), Nwolise,(2011:37), Mu'azu,(2011) and Aworawo(2011).

African States and the Effect of Leadership contestation on the state.

SN	State/country	Effects on the state
1	Congo DR	Protracted civil war since 1962, wretchedness
2	Sudan	Protracted civil war, loss of sovereignty that leads to division of country into two, ethnic cleansing, polarised the state along ethno-religious lines.
3	Somalia	Failed state, fractionalization of people to clans, terrorist hide out and base, protracted war.
4	Angola	Protracted civil war, inability to efficiently utilise her mineral resources, poor infrastructural development
5	Liberia	Paralysed state institutions, protracted civil war, arm proliferation and organized crimes, paved ways for external machinery and militias to destabilise the state.
6	Chad	Fractionalised the military institutions along elites interest; paved ways for expansionary foreign policy from Libya, caused rift between Libya and France. Partial loss of territory to Libya
7	Sierra Leone	Experienced failed state syndrome, worst civil war in West Africa, raised child soldiers, organized crimes, destruction of agricultural land
8	Cote d'Ivoire	Fractionalised the citizens and state along ethnic and regional line, balkanised national integration, destroyed relative peace, unity and harmony experienced in the state and West Africa.
9	Mali	Failed state syndrome, insurgent attacks, enthronement of dreaded international extremist religious terrorist in West Africa, ethnic cleansing.
10	Rwanda	Failed state syndrome, ethnic cleansing, promote ethnic distrust

Source: Field Survey by the Author.

Causes of Leadership Contestation

Winner-Takes-all syndrome: Leadership contestation in Africa is fierce and usually degenerated into political conflict as a result of what Akinyemi (2001:9) describes as restrictive party democracy that practice politics of first-past-the-post where winner-takes-all. This makes leadership contestation to become a matter of 'must-win' or what Sonny Okosun, in one of his classic albums refers to 'now or never, we rather win now or lose it forever'. Attempt to *win leadership position and keep it forever* makes contest to become violent in nature. This pitch supporting ethnic groups of a candidate against another, for instance the peck of power made many ethnic tribes of Samuel Doe to support his immoderate political ambition because his success is ethnic success. Inciting ethnic politics generates bitter party politics competition that later produced protracted civil war in West African sub-region.

Ends to be Served: One of the major causes of unethical leadership contestation and its attendant political conflicts is the 'ends to be served', Imobighe (2001:41). African elites believe attainment of leadership position is an avenue to accumulate exclusive privileges for themselves by diverting public resources to enrich and protect their privileges, friends and ethnic associates. Leadership post is seen as avenue to secure unrestraint access to security of life and wealth. **Thus, attainment** of leadership position becomes a matter of life and death when Faure Eyadema of Togo sideline all known constitutional provisions to promote family dynasty and ethnic hegemony.

Artificial Adulteration of politics: Contradiction between professing democratic system and refusal to abide by democratic ethics through manipulation of democratic ethics to a contender advantage serves as basis of political conflicts. The conflict is emboldened by African elites philosophy of seen those who joined the race to contest as enemies and not political opponents that offers alternative views in the corridor of party

politics and power game. Throughout their time, both Goukoni Wadeye and Hisne Habre did not see themselves as competitors competing for political office rather each see the other as archy-enemy in Chad. It is the determination to squeeze out opposing views that usually degenerates into confrontational and violent intra-state political conflicts that ends up creating insecurity in the polity. This is what Oche (2001:78),Nwolise (2011:30) refers to as 'artificial adulteration' of politics with violence and poor democratic culture in the process of leadership contestation.

Inordinate Political Ambition: Desire to attain leadership position and retaining political power by all means has been the basis of continuous fighting for leadership position in modern African states that is causing political instability. Suppression and oppression of perceived political opponents individually or collectively as groups degenerates to authoritarian leadership and imperial presidency. The suppression of perceived political opponents individually could take the form of identifying and targeting individual (candidate/ aspirant) as political foe just as it was between Doe, Taylor and Johnson in Liberia. This makes targeting leading, notable or staunch party members who can exercise great influence on other members as followers (the case of Quattara in Cote d'Ivoire) as object of elimination. Collectively in terms of party politics in Africa which tilted towards ethnic/religious supports which enable incumbent to perceive a given set of people (ethnic or religious) as collectively political adversaries that needed to be political crushed in order for contender to realise their political ambition. Suppression and oppression of perceived adversaries leads to marginalisation and persecution which are sometimes leads to low intensity war fare between a given ethnic groups supporting the incumbent and other ethnic groups opposing the political ambition of the incumbent (the case of Gbagbo and the Northerners in Cote d'Ivoire), (Imobighe, 2001).

Lack of policy proposal by Contenders: Democracy as system and process is a game of number in which contestants have opportunity of persuading or

persecuting people into accepting contending candidate. In a civilized and well established societies where democracy have firm root, candidates persuade people with manifesto and programme they have for citizens if elected into power. Candidates can also pick holes in programme and policy proposal of opposing candidates as a means of campaigning/canvassing floating voters. In African politics and among African elites issue based programme/manifestoes does not exist rather divisive issues are raised and die hard party loyalists use such flanks to cause fracas in the polity. Attempt to canvass/campaign is not always based on issue of policy proposal that are important to the voters, rather aspirants or candidates resort to persecution rather than persuasion (as Jammeh did to Barrow's supporters in The Gambia) in order to coerce the challenger or other contending candidates to submission or frustration. Lack of tolerance of opposing views, when critical issues are raised and there is need to take a position (proposed or opposed) is making African party politics volatile and conflict prone.

Constitutional Manipulation: Politics in most African states is filled with primordial factors that inhibit effective functioning of democracy as a system or process of leadership selection. One of such factors used to obstruct challenging candidates that is influential is citizenship/indigeneship, this play out in Cote d'Ivoire where legislature rubberstamped *Ivorienship clause* in the constitution to prevent Alhassan Qouattara from contesting as a candidate against Lauren Gbagbo. This *Ivorienship* for leadership and promulgation of law that aspirant that is not residing in the country in the last past four years is not qualified to contest for presidential post, when it is obvious that the challenger has been serving as World Bank official and his just returning back to Cote d'Ivoire and could not have reside in the country for four years consecutively. Constitutional manipulation to prevent opponent from running for leadership position serves as the genesis of political conflicts that almost disintegrate a country like Cote d'Ivoire and caused serious security challenges in West African states. One of such security threat was the Touareg ethnic militias that transformed and

metamorphosed to a dreaded extremist international terrorist that almost overran Malian state. The major problem of political elites and politicians is their innate nature and desire to self-esteem and actualization to attain enviable position which they consider 'a must' once they conceived the idea as an aspirant (incumbent inclusive).

Existence of Assertive Ethnic Groups: Multi-ethnic nature of African states generates adversarial political culture of ethnically motivated political conflicts due to politics of ethnic rivalry. Outbreak of violent political conflicts in one country can also ignite political conflicts in many other states with similar ethnic groups who share common boundaries (Mali, Algeria and Chad with Touareg Arabs), Suifon (2012: vii). Preventing the contagious effects of political conflicts on the immediate international political environment took centre stage of foreign policy of West African leading to the formation of Economic Community of West African States Monitoring group (ECOMOG), Albert,(2012:6). Oche (2001) observes that ethnic hegemony is a major factor in extreme leadership contest. Each ethnic group see defeat of a candidate from their area as defeat of the entire ethnic group, thus ethnic politics.

Faulty Class Formation: Formation of political class in the post-colonial African states was not based on ideology that can translate to politicians satisfying the interest of people, rather, it is based on comprador and conspiracy tendencies of building political dynasty where selected few members will benefit to the detriment of large number of people, this breed democratic political conflicts and discord between those who want continuity and those who want change of the status quo. Unhealthy Democratic Party politicking in Africa usually produced fatal bitter rivalry between two ideologically divergent political leaders as was seen between Tsombe and Lumbumba in the newly independent Congo Republic which put the newly independent country into bitter civil war and the country never recovers till the present time. Trouble usually brewed in African democracy and party

politics due to desire by the politicians to build imperial presidency by discouraging formation of other parties which might serve as opposition and competitor to the first or earlier party. This gave birth to one party system in a state like Ghana, Cote d'Ivoire, Tanzania and The Gambia. But, where there exist assertive major ethnic groups like Nigeria in which there is keen competition among the leading politicians and the idea of one party state is impossible. The politicians resort to self-help and other foul means to frustrate perceived opponents in a state like Nigeria which usually leads to democratic political conflicts in form electoral violence such as '*Operation Wet e*' that gave the Western Region of Nigeria global reputation and name as ''*Wild, Wild, West''.* Democratic and electoral competitions has always been seen by African politicians as 'must win' phenomenon which former Nigerian President Olusegun Obasanjo simply put as ' *Do or Die affairs*'. The politics of 'do or die' or democratic political violence was resuscitated by the late Samuel Doe, former president of Liberia, who in an attempt to seek electoral office and win in the face of democratic opposition decided to use self-help. One of the mechanisms used to raise his populism is ethnic chauvinism, intimidation of perceived opposition and outright elimination of political opponents. This act caused Liberia five years' civil wars and West Africa sub-region is yet to recover from the ripple effects of the Liberian civil war which affect political stability and peace in both Sierra Leone and Cote d'Ivoire.

Effects/Impacts and Consequences of leadership contestation on African states

Weak State Institutions: Extreme leadership contestation weakens civil and military institutions of many African states in the recent time. Leadership contestation also create heavy political conflicts that permits incursion of Gaddafi's expansionary foreign policy that leads to flexing of muscle between Libya and France in Chad, this provide avenue for the recruitment of private militias and body guard by Libyan leader from the Touareg Arabs domiciled in Mali, Algeria and Chad. It is these trained Touareg Arabs that

now constitute global extremist religious terrorist group that almost overran state of Mali with their terrorist attacks. Weak state institutions create rooms for neo-colonialism in many African states through heavy reliance on former colonialists or other predatory states for security and defence pacts.

The Biggest Arms Market: Perennial conflicts emanating from leadership contestations has turned African states into conflict ridden continent which provide Great Avenue for the military industrial complex to turn Africa to their biggest depot and market for sales of ammunition. This increases in the rate of volatility and fragility of many modern African states and even turned some states to like Mali, Somalia, Rwanda, Liberia and Sierra Leone to acquired failed state status. This has culminated in proliferation of small and light arms in the continent, where every little disagreement between elites or political parties that can be resolved amicably by diplomacy are resorted to the use of arms where weapons are easily and freely distributed. Inordinate ambition of African elites made the continent to be vulnerable to arm poachers and dealers. Rather than making Africa productive continent where valuable consumable items are produced to add value to lives of people, it has turned Africa continent to a place where lives of productive people who can add value to productive economic base are consumed in cold blood and sent to grave in their prime. Contestation has polarized the people in some states along ethno-religious line which greatly affect level of harmony and unity in the state. Polarisation of many African states nationals along both ethnic and religious line/ sentiment widens the gap of nation-building and national integration which are lacking in modern African states, this seriously eroding unity needed to put the security of many states on the right tracks. Easy accessibility to arms added a new dimension to Africa's insecurity problem through increase in arm proliferation as a result of desire to equip militias fighting for African elites.

Loss of Lives: Political conflicts that emanates from leadership contestation has claimed more lives than epidemic, because it is easier to individually and

collectively control epidemic than to control political conflicts. Killing and maiming people in multitude, thus, human lives were lost in thousand, young and old, males and females, civilian and military personnel, and most of these victims of situation are innocent and ignorant of what they are dying for. Massive death made Africa to have the highest mass graves in the world, Obasanjo (2000). Fierce leadership contestation has also increase the rate of cruelty and continuous violation of human rights and international laws of war. Insecurity from arm proliferation has in no small way destroyed West African economic integration plan due to cross border banditry which necessitate individual state taken pragmatic foreign policy to safeguard their state security.

Increase Fragility and Failed State Status: Pathology of conflicts from leadership contestation in Africa has become endemic to the extent that it is causing fatal disruptive consequences in some states to a situation of failed state status in Somalia, Rwanda, and Congo. It has made many African states to be more fragile to the level of solvent state for instance Liberia, Sierra Leone and Mali, (Atte,2001). Managing crisis of excessive leadership contestation that degenerates into potential regional conflicts and insecurity in Liberia, Sierra Leone and Cote d'Ivoire in this era of 'explosive war fare' is arduous tasks for both the global, continental and regional organizations as witnessed in Mali, Sierra Leone, Somalia, Rwanda and Liberia. Recruitment of ethnic militias in conflict ridden place created heavy political decadence that permeate emergence of dreaded terrorist groups from among the newly recruit young and gullible citizen for terrorist activities either in the country or any other place of the organization choice. Thus it makes Africa a breeding ground for terrorist recruit, training and testing of newly acquired terrorist acts (as exhibited by Fouday Sankoh and Charles Taylor and lately in Mali, Meredith (2005).

Unattractive to Business and Foreign Investment: Leadership contestation in Africa generates a lot of political conflicts that heat up both

domestic and international political environment. It is the negative/consequential effects of leadership contestation from divisive and polarised polity where presumed opponents are persecuted that leads to violent demonstration. Thus, attempt by incumbent power to curb perceived political enemies resulted in clamp down from where low intensity warfare, militancy and insurgency emanates. Increase in the rate of intra-state political conflicts with its attendant political instability which prevent long term economic and development planning that makes Africa to be so labelled as 'the most difficult and unpredictable place to transact business'' thus prevent and affect amount or level of foreign direct investment that can be attracted into the continent of Africa as no investor will want to put their investment in an unpredictable and solvent political and economic environment, Ekweremandu(2018).

Exposure to Organized Crime: Low intensity warfare experienced from leadership contestation in Liberia, Sierra Leone, Mali and Cote d'Ivoire has left sour taste of insecurity not only in host states but in the whole West Africa sub-region. Its full development to civil wars in these countries gave birth to other sinister tactics that exposed many modern states in Africa continent to international organized crimes (such as gun running, human trafficking, sea pirate, gang rape, arson, ethnic cleansing) and above all wide circulation of arms and ammunition that made socio-political environment to be completely unsafe for both domestic and international business. Political conflicts from leadership contestation exposed children to hazardous life of war zone such as child soldierhood, who were brutally indoctrinated with little or no military training or knowledge about international law on war. Some of these child soldiers are reckless, merciless and dreaded with guns. The menace of these criminal acts constitutes problems which many African states are battling with after the civil war is over, most especially arms, narcotic and human trafficking. It accentuate the process of small and light arms proliferation in Africa continent, this caused African political environment to be highly saturated with all sorts of weapons

and fire arms, some of these arms because of its easy accessibility falls into the wrong hands of non-state actors like terrorist groups and this emboldens their nefarious activities that make human lives more insecure and expose people to technically unmitigated attacks from people who possess these fire arms (even the armed robbers, kidnappers and ethnic militias). Easy accessibility to arms aided in promotion of fratricidal wars in the continent. Leadership contestation in Africa has created fertile ground for the emergence of ethnic militia and dreaded extremist religious terrorism whose doctrine, belief and ideology are counterproductive to the overall well-being of a secular state, Obasanjo (2000), Meredith (2005).

Bad International Image: Perennial political conflicts from leadership contestation that create atmosphere of insecurity has earned African continent bad international image and reputation as the most unsafe place to do business because of scourge of war, thus while other continent are showcasing new achievements in the areas of scientific breakthrough, economic improvement, Africa keep on feeding the world with revulsive images of savagery to the world,(Obasanjo,2000; Ekweremandu,2018). Thus, leadership contestation degenerating to the level of political conflicts and insecurity is a disincentive to foreign direct investment and portfolio investment. Political conflicts have also made Africa to be the best home for instituting organized crimes where human trafficking reign supreme, drug courier is prominent, gun running is rampant, in fact sub-Saharan Africa ranked among the highest among areas that is highly saturated with small and light arms used to foment asymmetric war. Perennial political conflicts made political leaders to spend billions of dollars on security either to fight insurgency emanating from political conflicts or to suppress their perceived political adversaries. Political conflicts have turned Africa continent to an impoverished continent as many states substituted development with security. Fighting create disrupted economy, refugees, displaced people, destroys farmland, produced abandoned children, close schools and generates large amount of unemployed youths which provides fertile ground

for poverty and its sinister partner-militancy and insurgency from extremist religious terrorist group.

Destructive of Productive Economic Base: Loss of state resources (both human and material in Congo DR, Sierra Leone, Liberia, Niger and Sudan) during the political conflicts that emanates from leadership contestation as war and insecurity leads to killings of human beings which are the best and highest quality resources from the continent of Africa. Destruction of productive economic base of state which is agriculture and educational institution, killing of women and children which are socio-cultural institution leading to destruction of family values embedded in African culture. Political conflicts from leadership contestation have turned back wheels of national progress and economic development of African continent by many centuries. Little infrastructure provided are destroyed in the cause of raging political conflicts and funds meant for socio-economic development are diverted to prosecution and procurement of weapons and military hardware leaving developmental issues to suffer. The higher the level of underdevelopment the higher the level of poverty, the higher the level of poverty the higher the risk of nation serving as base for recruitment and training of terrorist suicide squad.

Divisive Ethnic Nationalism: In Africa, Democratic Party politics, electoral process and leadership contestation has pitched African elites in fierce political fight which intermittently propped up intrastate conflicts. Preponderance of intrastate conflicts in a divisive ethnic-nationalism political environment has prevent sustainable state integration and nation-building that can facilitate emergence of cohesive African elites that can serve as standard bearers for gauging performance of political leadership. Absence of cohesive Africa elites to check-mate emerging political leaders leads to authoritarian leadership and nepotistic politics which accentuate complacency breed mismanagement and poverty in the state. Continuous increase in poverty profile creates rooms for emergence and festering of

insurgency and extremist religious terrorists and terrorism. Leadership not only divide most African elites to an irreconcilable parts, it also engender ethnic politics that generates political conflicts that makes insecurity part and parcel of African states political features.

Nexus between Leadership Contestation and Insecurity in West Africa.
There is a great linkage between leadership contestation and insecurity in West Africa in particular and Africa continent in general. It is the leadership contestation between Patrice Lumumba and Moise Tshombe as well as the leadership contestation between Mobutu and Desire Kabila in Congo DR that has upturned the country from secured and peaceful state to volatile and ever combustive state that is currently causing waves of insecurity in the central Africa region. Leadership contestation between Augustus Neto/Dos Santos and Jonah Savimbi in Angola exposed that part of Africa to human insecurity where landmines and assorted arms were daily multiplying until the death of principal actor in person of Savimbi that when many Angolans had paid supreme price.

Gafaar Nimeri and John Garang leadership contestation has put Sudan in security dilemma before Omar el-Basir promotion of Arab sentiment to support his political agenda. Human insecurity was raised to the highest level when Sudanese Arabs decided to eliminate virtually all the Negroid Africans in the Sudanese state. The Janjaweed as Arab ethnic militias carried out ethnic cleansing to create room for presumed Islamic state where Sharia will reign supreme. *Arabizaton* of Sudan present opportunity for the extremist religious insurgent to have firm base in Sudan from where they are able to operate in other part of Africa most especially West African states to create insecurity. Despite the separation of Southern Sudanese from their kin in the Northern Sudan, leadership contestation between the two principle characters had created an atmosphere of insecurity in the present Southern Sudan (Ani & Esheya, 2014). Leadership contestation had greatly affected security situation in Somalia. Inability of Somalis elites to accept one of their kinds as substantive political leader despite the fact all of them in Somalia

are of the same ethnic groups created protracted political conflicts that collapsed the state's institutions, leads to failed state status and made Somalia leading place in sea pirate, drug courier, and proliferation of small and light arms.

Leadership contestation is the basis of insecurity situation in Chad, elite political contest between Goukoni Waddeye and Hisne Habre was the genesis of political conflict that was capitalised on by Col. Gadhafi's expansionary foreign policy to sponsored one of the contenders by providing arms and logics to prosecute the war (Ani & Ejiaga, 2015). Crisis in Chad had great impact on security situation in Africa as many of the trained itinerant militias are today extremist religious terrorists causing havocs in many West African states. Liberia used to be relatively a peaceful and serene environment until emergence of Samuel Doe and his authoritarian leadership that believes in annihilation of perceived political opponents which breeds ethnic militias and low intensity war that degenerated into civil war. It was leadership contestation between Samuel Doe and Thomas Quiwomkpa informs of coup attempt on Does' government that 'brings out the beast in Doe' by resorting to ethnic politics and political witch-hunting of perceived contender for leadership position. Thus, people like Sirleaf Helen and Charles Taylor became prime target of Samuel Doe. Persecution of presumed opponents (enemies) resulted into arm struggles between Samuel Doe and Charles Taylor and this provide golden opportunity for Gaddafi expansionary foreign policy through provision of logistics and military hard wares to Samuel Doe's opponents.

Sierra Leone is direct recipient of regional insecurity from Liberia; the country serves as conduit pipe through which arms were sent to Liberia. Fouday Sankoh and his merchants of death took advantage of such opportunity to destabilise Sierra Leone. Political conflicts in Sierra Leone not only threatened to collapse the national state of Sierra Leone but was gradually undermining the regional security that prompt regional intervention in the political conflict. Arm struggles between these political

elites generates insecurity witnessed in West Africa until it became unbearable before Economic Community Of West African States created ECOMOG to curtailed the excesses of this insecurity in the region. Cote d'Ivoire is a good example of stable polity in West Africa until the demise of Felix Boigny which created leadership vacuum which could not be quickly filled as the state has never witnessed changing of leadership before power. Attempt to individually and unilaterally take undue advantage of situation created leadership contestation among Ivorian elites. Ivorian political crisis created serious regional insecurity in West Africa as many small and light weapons were deposited into the country for easy accessibility of factional groups which were used by insurgents to cause mayhem.

Recommendation and Conclusion

Political conflicts and democratic violence is a two-way action that requires both the initiator and collaborators. The initiators are Africa elites that provide indoctrinations, finance and logistics to carry out violence while the collaborators are the ordinary citizens who gullibly fall in to the scheme of African elites and thereby become willing tools to carry out violence in the cause of leadership contestation. Both of them need reorientation about politics and democratic processes. While it is important to educate about the elite' negative consequences of political conflicts and democratic violence, there is need to reduce amount of glamour and pecks attached to political offices in Africa. The collaborators need a viable economic system that permit realisation of individual set objectives. The basis of being willing collaborators is abject poverty, therefore, reduction in poverty level will reduce divisive ethnic politics that breeds democratic violence, elites must also be made to discuss policy based issues and not to wipe up ethnic sentiments. The collaborators must be made to differentiate between tribal solidarity and tribalism. African political elites must evolve a new paradigm, philosophy and approach to leaders and leadership contestation. The philosophy and contesting for leadership position as wrestling match where a contestant must be defeated by all possible means must be discarded; rather

aspiration to leadership position should be seen as competitive game which can be won by any of the contestants. Emerging African elites should see leadership position as test of one's ability to serve humanity and not an avenue to show how brutal one is, or create imperial presidency through corrupt political culture of ethno-religious cards. African elites must also imbibe good democratic virtues such as tolerance of oppositions, make room for intelligible policy debates and allowed the will of electorate to prevail without incitement or intimidation. Imbibe a new philosophy of seen leadership as opportunity to good record for posterity to judge.

Conclusively, for leadership contestation as the basis of intra-state political conflicts that generates regional insecurity in West Africa to subside. Instituting good governance and excellent democratic values by the active regional organization (like ECOWAS) with strong economic, legal and military power to compel obedience on the part of state political leader that violate agreed protocol on democratic ethics (such as rejection of Faure Eyedema as Togolese President unless he is democratically elected) will help in combating state fracture and insecurity in West Africa. To realise perfect atmosphere of peace and security in the continent of Africa great emphasis should be place on legitimacy of leaders in attaining leadership position. This legitimacy must be devoid of corrupt or filthy political culture of ethnic, intimidation, incumbency and religion. This is because the basis of peace in a state is legitimacy, where leader secured willingly the right to lead from majority based on his proposed manifesto, Charisma and experience, ability to govern and command respect from segment of the state will be high. Thus, tendency to disrespect or refusal to recognise right to rule will minimise. Therefore, to prevent political conflicts and insecurity in west Africa sub-region securing legitimacy by emerging political leaders is a must and sanctity that must be upheld by the regional and continental organizations,

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