



Carthage Center

Research & Information

CARTHAGE RESEARCH SERIES
CRS 1/2014

THE IMPACT OF LEADERSHIP AND GOVERNANCE ON
NATION BUILDING IN 21ST CENTURY AFRICA

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Carthage Research Series 1/2014

October 2014

Carthage

ISSN 2308-6696

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Peter Adebayo, "The Impact of Leadership and Governance on Nation Building in 21st Century Africa", Carthage Center for Research and Information, Lebanese Development Network, Lebanon, October 2014.
URL <http://ldn-lb.org/page.aspx?id=21>

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ABSTRACT

Since the attainment of independence by most African countries in 1960, regarded as the golden year of Africa, the problem of leadership and issues of good governance have continued to have devastating impact on nation building in Africa. Indeed, with the exit of the first generation leaders such as Kwame Nkrumah of Ghana, Julius Nyerere of Tanzania, etc. who were more foresighted and pragmatic than the current leaders, has remained problematic for Africa. This paper argues that in addition to the aforementioned problems other critical issues of ethnicity, religious crises, boundary-border disputes inherited from the colonial era, good governance, refugee crises, election disputes such as

the recent one in Kenya, terrorism in Nigeria, Mali, Somalia, the coup d'états such as the recent one in the Central African Republic, coupled with the weakness of African Union, have equally continued to have deteriorating and concomitant effect on the process of nation building in Africa especially in this second decade of the 21st century. The methodology for this paper is based on a multidisciplinary approach and historical perspective.

KEYWORDS

Leadership,
Governance,
Authoritarianism,
Terrorism,
Nation Building.

INTRODUCTION

The interplay of leadership, governance and nation building is intricate and inseparable. This is so because the context of leadership, both theoretically and practically, impacts governance and reflects on nation building processes. Warren Bennis, a leading authority on leadership, once stated in his *On Becoming a Leader* (1989) that 'leadership is like beauty: it's hard to define, but you know it when you see it.' That could

not be further from the truth. In the 1960s, West African countries such as Ghana and Nigeria had higher GDPs per capita than countries in Asia like Singapore, Taiwan, Malaysia and South Korea. In an interval of thirty years, the latter became the Asian Tigers, while the former are immersed in perennial violent wars, armed conflicts and small scale insurgencies, cross-border terrorism, unrelenting economic crises, financial corruption,

kleptomania, famine, diseases and poverty, political instability, to name a few, which have become emblems of the African continent. What made the difference? In the light of the conundrum, this paper attempts to look at how leadership and governance have interacted and the implications of their interactions on nation building within the African context.

CONCEPTUAL ISSUES

The three concepts that are central to this presentation are leadership, governance and nation building. What constitute the meanings of each of the concepts, both theoretically and practically, are enmeshed in definitional welter. It is not within the scope of this piece to contribute to the welter of existing definitions, but to extract perspectives that will be analytically useful for the paper.

In the contexts of the various theories and persuasions on what constitutes political leadership, ranging from

traits theory (intelligence, courage, decisive, discipline, just, etc.), behavioural theory (authoritarian, democratic, laissez faire, etc.), contingency theory (situational, circumstances, condition, etc.), to 'New Theories of Leadership' (Hay and Hodgkinson, 2006: 145), leadership comes across as a form of power, a subtle form of control, but more effective than the naked use of authority. Within the frame of the 'New Theories of Leadership', two influential theories, charismatic leadership theory (House, 1977) and transformational

leadership theory (Bass, 1985) focus on the context of 'governance' and emphasised the leader's ability to cope with radical change and manage the crisis.

An essential element of charismatic leadership architectonics is that the charismatic leader is able to motivate subordinates to produce superior performance without the use of formal authority or power (Kippartrick and Locke, 1996; Shamir, House & Arthur, 1993). In other words, subordinates identify with the vision and

accept the leader's values, personal traits or behaviour as their own, and thereby experience constant and higher levels of arousal. That way, there is high tendency that followers may influence the effectiveness of charismatic leadership (Howel & Shamir, 2005). Charismatic leaders are more likely to be called upon to fix crisis and prompt change. In post-colonial Africa Nelson Mandela was an exemplar of charismatic leadership.

The need for good leaders to be ethical in their leadership is embedded within the meanings of transformational leaders. Burns (1978) recognises transformational leadership as an interactive process which transforms both leaders and followers 'to higher levels of motivation and morality' resulting in positive outcomes. Elements of transformational leadership styles include 'idealised influence' (high moral values, leading by personal example, accountability and ethical standard), 'inspirational motivation' (strong vision, corporate (not personal) objectives, enthusiasm and confidence), 'intellectual stimulation' (creativity, innovation and readiness to challenge old norms) and 'individualised consideration', that is, interest in personal development of followers (Bass & Steidlmeier, 1999; Sashkin,

2004). In other words, the hallmark of transformational leadership is the extent to which the leader influences, or transforms followers through good governance, superior performance and productivity (Bass, 1998). It contrasts transactional-transformational leadership which is an anti-progress leadership (Bass, 1997).

The frame chimes with Rotberg's concept of 'transformative political leadership', the style of leadership that comes with positive change and transformation in good governance. It is a

...strategy for turning visions into reality and charting a way forward to a promising future, access to improving prospects, and a programme for ensuring economic growth and material and human uplift [...] a transformative leader help signally to guide their people into or out of poverty...Leaders help to overcome geographical, climatic, and resource limitations... (Rotberg, 2012:1, 7)

In practice, transformational political leadership synchronises with social justice, equity, service, fairness, collective participation and collegial leadership.

Transformational leadership stems from the servant-leadership and 'committed leadership' paradigms, that is, leadership viewed as service to the people, and as a resolute responsibility to empower, defend, and fend for followers, not an opportunity to pursue selfish experimentations. It transcends inept governance and selfish political pursuit, or transactional (anti-people) leadership

The concept of "governance" in a generic sense involves the task of running a government or any other appropriate entity, such as a nation. It encompasses a set of values, policies and institutions through which the society manages economic, political as well as social processes at different levels, on the basis of interaction among the government, civil society and private sector. Governance straddles the exercise of power, exertion of influence and management of social and economic resources to achieve development. Governance has social, political, and economic dimensions (Sahni, 2003:1-2).

To Barkan (1992), governance involves political management with emphasis on developing networks of reciprocity and exchange, in order to increase the

The Ibrahim Index of African Governance is world's most comprehensive ranking of African governance. It is developed under the direction of the Kennedy School of Government at Harvard University, with the help of an advisory council of African academics. The Index is published annually by the Mo Ibrahim Foundation. It assesses sub-Saharan Africa's 48 nation states against certain indicators of governance. Its sponsor, Mo Ibrahim, a Sudanese cell phone entrepreneur, also created his foundation's prize, \$5million, dubbed The Ibrahim Prize for Achievement in African Leadership, which has been won by three African leaders.

possibilities of accomplishing more while spending less. Governance is about goals and the process by which decisions are implemented or not implemented. Governance provides essential link between the civil society and state and means of giving a shape to the way decisions are made for serving public interest. It broadly means 'the capacity to establish and sustain workable relations between individual actors in order to promote collective goals' (Chazan, 1992:122).

Governance and power are intertwined. World Bank (1989:60) defines governance as "the exercise of political power to manage a nation's affairs." In a more precise governance is the way those with power, use the power. Governance, in essence, indicates the capacity to entrench the authority of the central state and to regularize its relations with society. In other words, it entails 'a process of organizing and managing legitimate power structures, entrusted by the people, to provide law and order, protect fundamental human rights, ensure rule of law and due process of law, provide for the basic needs and welfare of the people and the pursuit of their happiness' Galadima (1998:117). Thus, the quality of governance is reflected in the quality of relationships

between the government and citizens whom it serves and protects.

Hyden (1992:7) views governance as a management function that encompasses 'the conscious management of regime structures with a view to enhancing the legitimacy of public realm'. Hyden's effort to operationalize "governance" inevitably associates good governance with democratic values and procedures. Put differently, governance may be legitimate or illegitimate. Although Hyden's concept of a governance realm is applicable to all political systems, it can be used to extrapolate governance across the African continent, where breakdown of democratic leadership values and governance has been an institutional challenge (Bratton & Rothchild, 1992).

The Ibrahim Index of African Governance uniquely synthesises all of the essential trappings of governance into five key political goods that government owes its citizens. The first is national security, which encompasses preventing crime and related assaults with or without resorting to arms or other forms of physical coercion, human security, including helping citizens resolve

differences with the state and with their fellow. Second is political participation, that is, enabling citizens to compete for office, respect and support for political institutions, tolerance of dissent and difference, and fundamental civil liberties and human rights. Third is participation and human rights, which comprises free, fair and competitive elections, press freedom, respect for civil rights and the absence of gender discrimination. Fourth is sustainable economic development which is built upon a foundation national GDP per capita, national GDP growth per capita, inflation percentages, deficits and surpluses as percentages of GDP, reliability of financial institutions. The fifth is human development, which includes the sub-categories of poverty, health and sanitation, and educational opportunity. These comprehensive set of governance measures provides an all-encompassing definition of governance (Ibrahim, 2012; Rotberg, 2009).

PATTERNS OF LEADERSHIP AND GOVERNANCE IN AFRICA: PAST, PRESENT AND FUTURE

In an opinion editorial published in the Los Angeles Times of July 4, 2004, entitled, 'Africa: Side by Side... But in Starkly Different Worlds', Robert Rotberg, painted a picture of an Africa where 'light and dark sit side by side'. Rotberg, a world acclaimed authority on political leadership, particularly in developing countries, reached the conclusion after an examination of 'contrasting outcomes' of nation building in Zimbabwe and Botswana. Using the differentials in the quality of leadership and governance in the two neighbouring countries as context of analysis, he associates 'light' with good leadership and governance, and 'dark' with everything opposite it. Beyond, the 'light' and 'dark' contrast, leadership and governance in selected African countries in the past sixty years will reveal three leadership patterns that have emerged in post-colonial Africa, namely, the democrats, the benevolent despots and the despots, or put differently, 'the good, the bad and the ugly' (Hackman, 2006). Albert (2011) analysed these varieties of leadership and state systems and their peculiar features. In addition to military

dictatorship, he alluded to what he called 'dynastic rule' and 'long-distance rulership', and affirms that the pursuit of power forms the foundation from which political leadership has emerged across the continent.

At a time of growing restiveness against undemocratic trappings in small sheikdoms (Lebanon, Jordan and Syria) in the Middle East (Friedman, 1995), and quasi Islamic socialist states in Eastern Europe (such as Turkmenistan, Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan and Afghanistan etc.) following the dismantling of the USSR (Smith, 1990), the exercise of governance and leadership in a manner that is suggestive of 'dynastic rule' became the norm in many African countries. Instead of periodical power transfer through democratic consensus, what prevails 'is a situation whereby a leader rules for as long as he lives, and then is succeeded by a member of his immediate family [an heir apparent] when he dies, as if the country is a family estate, and the seat of power an heirloom to be bequeathed to the next generation in the family

tree' (Albert, 2011:13). While this privilege might not be totally condemnable in pseudo-monarchies such as Morocco and Swaziland, the other countries in post-colonial Africa such as Togo, Gabon and Democratic Republic of Congo, for example, where the practice prevailed cannot be so exonerated.

For instance, after ruling Togo for thirty eight years, President Gnassingbe Eyadema was 'succeeded' by his son, President Faure Eyadema. By the time the senior Eyadema died of heart attack on his way to France for medical treatment in 2005, he was the longest-serving President in Africa. The second example is President Omar Bongo Ondimba, who came to power in Gabon in 1967. He won election for his third term in office in November, 2005, and was in power until he died in June 2009. He too was 'succeeded' by his son, Ali Bongo Ondimba. Yet, Joseph Kabila 'succeeded' his father as the President of the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC). Each of the leaders exiled, killed or sent their opponents

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to jail (Albert, 2011). Had it not been for unforeseen political twists that torpedoed their succession plans, the emerging structure in Libya under Muammar Ghaddafi, in Egypt under Hosni Mubarak and in Djibouti under Ismail Omar Guelleh, would have ended the same way (Cammett and Diwan, 2013).

Governance and leadership in Africa has witnessed the 'Big Men' syndrome. This is a situation whereby democrats turned into despots (Rotberg, 2003:29). In Malawi, when Mr. Kamuzu Banda became the head of state in 1966 through democratic means, he subsequently proclaimed himself as 'life president' for the country and 'life chairman' for his party. Frightening repression was imposed on the opposition. In Zambia, President Kenneth Kaunda ruled for twenty seven years (1977-1991), until his ambition to become life president was cut short after losing at the polls to Mr. Frederick Chiluba in a general election in 1991. In Kenya, after the death of President Jomo Kenyatta in 1977, Daniel Arap Moi assumed leadership of the country and ruled autocratically from 1979 until 2002. In the meantime, he rejected scores of constitutional reforms that could have paved the way for democracy in the country (Barkan, 1992).

African 'big men' leaders are usually aristocrats, often showing tendencies that they could compromise and pocket state apparatus and direct them towards personal ends. Zimbabwe under Robert Mugabe is, perhaps, Africa's most atrocious aristocratic tyranny. President Mugabe, a Jesuit-trained teacher with many academic degrees to his name, became prime minister of Zimbabwe in 1980 and has ruled his landlocked state ever since. During his first years, he showed promise, expanding educational opportunity for Zimbabweans and stimulating the local economy, but turned despotic. The frail-looking Africa leader now 90 years old, blocks democratic change and maintains a deadly grip on the country and sub-regional organisations that were supposed to serve as safeguards to internal and external sovereignty on the continent. The late Nelson Mandela was reported to have vilified Mugabe's Zimbabwe as a 'tragic failure of leadership' (The Africa Report, Aug-Sept., 2008: 9; Meredith, 1990). Similar trends obtain in Uganda. Milton Obote ruled Uganda twice (1962-1971, 1980-1985). Idi Amin Dada staged a coup d'état, took over power and ruled from 1971 to 1979. President Museveni acquired power through a coup d'état in 1986 and has ruled since then.

These so-called 'Africa's big daddies' seem to revel in delusion of grandeur, a self-conceived larger-than-life image. For instance, the late Muammar Ghaddafi, once boasted thus: 'I am an international leader, the dean of Arab rulers, the king of kings of Africa, and the imam of Muslims, and my international status does not allow me to descend to a lower level' (Tell, December, 2010: 24). He lacked public ethics and would stop at nothing to exert his misdemeanours. He was reported in the 2010 African Presidents' Index to have 'caused a scene at the African Heads of State Summit in Speke, Muryoro near Kampala, when he slapped one of his aids for taking him to a wrong venue of the meeting' (The East African Magazine, Dec. 2010-Jan. 2011: 29). In the Central African Republic, Emperor Jean Bedel Bokassa was not so lucky. Having toppled the regime of President David Dacko in 1966, and refused democracy to operate in the country, he held power in the country in a manner that was nothing short of a dynasty. He was handed the death penalty, which was later commuted to life imprisonment as a result of interventions from world leaders and international organizations.

In his seminal work, *Citizen and Subject: Contemporary Africa and the legacy of late colonialism* (2002), Mahmood Mandani argues that the leadership styles that have emerged out of Africa are inescapable legacies of colonial rule. He affirms that the varieties of despotism that exist in Africa are perpetuated because 'each regime [both democratic and military] claimed to be reforming the negative features of its predecessor'. Put differently, despotism assumes an inevitable back-and-forth movement because every regime change is packaged as an antidote to an earlier one. Mandani notes, 'the antidote to a decentralized despotism turned out to be a centralized despotism'. As each ambitious successive regime forcibly brings their predecessors' regime to an end, a vicious cycle of alternating absolute tyranny and benevolent despotism is perpetuated on the continent.

As a result, in the interval of thirty nine years between 1960 that Nigeria became independent and 1999 when democracy was instituted, at least seven military dictatorships held sway for more than twenty seven years, the darkest moment being the General Sanni Abacha regime (1993-1998). Although, the country celebrated fifteen years of unbroken democracy on May 29, 2014,

domestic and cross-border terrorism, widespread corruption among political and non-political leaders, as well as a breakdown of critical infrastructure threatens the gains of democracy (Galadima, 1998; Agbese, 2000; Fawole, 2003). The political situation in Ghana is similar to what obtains in Nigeria. For instance, since the country's independence in 1957, Kwame Nkrumah, ruled the country until his government was toppled in 1969 in a coup d'état for charges of corruption, poor economy and general loss of direction. Military dictatorship reached its peak in the country during the benevolent dictatorship of Jerry Rawlings (Chazan, 1992). Rawlings metamorphosed into a civilian head of state after 12 years in power (having ruled from 1981) through series electoral manipulations, before transferring power to a democratically elected government in 2001 with Mr. John Kufor as successor president. Even, Liberia, one of the oldest democracies in Africa, was not spared. In 1980, Samuel Doe, a military officer, seized power and killed President William Tolbert in a bloody coup. Doe ruled for ten years until he was brutally murdered by Prince Yormie Johnson, a rebel leader in 1990. Charles Taylor, the leader of another rebel group and the beneficiary of the toppling of Doe's regime, dragged the country into a

long civil war whose impacts were felt in neighbouring Sierra Leone (Centre for Democracy and Development, 2000).

While the foregoing survey compels a conclusion that African leaders are a liability to the continent, some publications and films have justifiably projected the image of an Africa that is hopeless. Given continued conflict in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), where about 5.4 million civilians have been killed in fierce civil wars since 1990; intensified anarchy in the Sudan, and elsewhere since 2003 in which over 300,000 Arabs and Africans have been slaughtered, culminating into splitting the country into Sudan and Southern Sudan in 2012; continued tension between the north and south in Côte d'Ivoire; terrorism in Nigeria, where oil wealth exists amid extreme deprivation; a war in northern Uganda, waged by the cultish Lord's Resistance Army against the governments of the DRC and Uganda; and piracy at sea and bitter struggles on land in Somalia, no verdict might seem more appropriate than style the sub-Saharan Africa as a tragic continent.

Even so, patterns and models of distinctly 'good'

Books: Jean-François Bayart, Stephen Ellis, Beatrice Hibou (Eds.), 1999, *Criminalisation of the State in Africa*, Bloomington: Indiana University Press; Tunde-Zack Williams, Diane Frost and Alex Thompson, 2002, *Africa in Crisis: New Challenges and Possibilities*, London: Pluto Press; Stock, R., 2004, *Africa South of the Sahara: A geographical interpretation*, 2nd Edition, London: Guilford Press; Williams, Reno, 1997, *Warlord Politics and African States*, Boulder, Colorado: Lynne Rienner; David Francis, 2008, (ed.) *Peace and Conflict in Africa*, London, New York: Zed Book; Films: *Dogs of War* (1980); *Black Hawks Dawn* (2001); *Blood Diamond* (2006); *Sometimes in April* (2005); *Hotel Rwanda* (2004); *The Rise and Fall of Idi Amin* (1981) etc.

leadership and forthright governance still abound on the continent. Two examples of leaders who have demonstrated striking features of transformative leadership with a strong emphasis on serving the society are Nelson Mandela of South Africa and Seretse Khama of Botswana. Mandela emerged from his Long Island prison in 1990 to demonstrate the power for good and best practices of democratic African leadership. Mandela's moral vigour as an iconic leader of an erstwhile apartheid South Africa, and dedication to inclusionary and participatory values suggest the power of individual agency to initiate positive revolutions for good (Mandela, 2010).

Until Mandela was freed, Botswana under the leadership of Seretse Khama, had for decades been the guiding principle of democratic leadership in Africa. Botswana began poor and literally had nothing at independence in 1966, but miles and miles of desert and a fledgling beef industry, until the discovery of the world's richest source of gem diamonds in the country in 1967. However, by 1975 the country became the world's fastest-growing economy. Since then, Botswana has used its new wealth for the benefit of the nation, not for a select few, and certainly not to enrich the ruling class. All of this was not a happenstance.

At a time when much of the rest of Africa was plagued with kleptocratic despots, Botswana has been steadfastly and uninterruptedly democratic. The rule of law is stable, and freedom is revered. Tolerance of diversity and of opposing political views is beyond average. Elections are intensely contested but fairly conducted and in good conscience. The first-rate leadership of Khama, the manner in which he had articulated a clear, political, social, and economic vision for his country, together with the forthright way in which his successors, Presidents Ketumile Masire (1980-1998) and Festus Mogae (1998 to 2008) had mobilised the people of Botswana behind democratic values show that positive, democratic, and 'committed leadership' when joined to moral values can provide an antidote to challenges of nation building.

AFRICA AND THE CHALLENGE OF NATION BUILDING: FINDING AFRICAN SOLUTIONS TO AFRICAN PROBLEMS

The greatest challenge of nation building on the African continent is lack of will power among African leaders to pay the price of nation-building, which is further 'aggravated by unethical leadership and bad governance' (Museveni, 2000; Mandela, 1994; Adamolekun, 1988:95). In his speech to the Ghanaian Parliament in Accra on July 11,

2009, regarding the trajectories of African development, President Barack Obama noted among other things that 'Africa's future is up to Africans'. That was not the first time Africa will be admonished to find home-grown solutions to her domestic challenges. Finding 'African solution to African problems' mantra has always been

there, but has become a cliché in African political discourses since the end of the Cold War, when erstwhile European colonies in Africa began to march toward political independence. Writing against the background of the 'divide and rule' tactics of the colonialists, Kwame Nkrumah (1909-1972), the first leader of Ghana, in his

book, *I Speak of Freedom* (1961), admonished that 'we must find an African solution to our problems', and that this can only be found in African unity.

To this end, in May 1963, representatives of thirty independent African nations converged in Addis Ababa, the capital of Ethiopia, to establish the Organisation of African Unity (OAU). A professed intention of the leaders at the meeting was to provide the continent with an independent voice in world affairs, retain the boundaries of the former colonies and 'respect the territorial integrity of every state and its inalienable rights to an independent existence'. Earlier in 1963, Julius Nyerere, first president of independent Tanzania and one of the most passionate of those who dreamt of a new and unified Africa, had declared:

Our goal must be a United States of Africa. Only this can really give Africa the future her people deserve after centuries of economic uncertainty and social oppression (Nyerere, 1963: 2).

Within the first two decades of the OAU, however, the dreams of nation building, a peaceful Africa, rapid economic transformations and hopes for sound continuing growth gave way to nightmares. More than seventy coups occurred in thirty two of Africa's

independent nations between 1963 (year of the first coup and assassination of Sylvanus Olympio, the President of Togo) and 1997 (when Zaire's President Mobutu was overthrown). The interval of thirty four years also witnessed ethnic pogroms, civil wars and the collapse of the hegemony of the state in Sierra Leone, Rwanda, Angola, Zaire, Uganda, Liberia, Burundi, Sudan, Nigeria, Congo, and Somali. The decades also saw the emergence of a new breed of 'leaders' and 'statesmen' schooled in the diplomacy of realpolitik, the so-called 'African Metternichs', such as Museveni, Kagame, Zehawi, Afewerki, Charles Taylor, among other warlords, visionaries, 'political entrepreneurs' and adventurers who, manipulating the vacuum occasioned by the decomposition of state structures both in their countries and sub-regions, transformed national politics, economies and security structures through a concatenation of anarchy, arms conflicts, proliferation of light weapons and heavy ammunitions, child soldiering, cross-border terrorism and banditry (Hutchful, 1998:8-9; Williams, 1997).

For Africa, the 1990s was a decade of high dreams and frightening nightmares. The descent of Africa into 'orgies of primordial savagery' was epitomised by incidences of failed states, ethnic cleansing, centralised and de-centralised despotism. Endemic instability constituted

a huge challenge to nation building. For instance, by August 1990, two armed splinter insurgent forces, Charles Taylor's National Patriotic Front of Liberia (NPFL) and Yormie Johnson's Independent National Patriotic Front of Liberia (INPFL), had converged upon Monrovia, Liberia's capital city, against Samuel Doe's Armed Forces of Liberia (AFL) to prosecute a civil war that would cost the country about 60,000 lives and widespread destruction. In 1991, Sierra Leone plunged into a ten-year civil war notorious for its brutality. Rape and amputation became weapons of war, children its foot soldiers. Nigeria experienced two coup d'états between 1991 and 1993. In 1993 alone the government and leadership of the country changed hands among three heads of state (Agbese, 2000). The horror of the Rwandan genocide in April of 1994 in which 800,000 Tutsi ethnic nationalities were murdered in 100 days by their Hutu fellow countrymen defies comprehensions. It was alleged that much of the atrocities had the patronage of some Rwandan church leaders and international non-governmental donor organisations (Howe & Urell, 1998; Mbanda, 1997; Maren, 1997).

Meanwhile, as conflicts engulfed Africa in the 1990s, Ali Mazrui bemoaned what he called a 'retreat from modernity' (Mazrui, 1995:1). Even so, as Rwanda descended into chaos, South Africa raised the hope of

The phrase is credited to a Barbara Crossette in the New York Times, 14 June 1998

Africans and, indeed, humanity. Nelson Mandela, the African National Congress (ANC) leader held in prison since 1964 by the apartheid regime in South Africa for treason had been released in 1990. On April 26 1994, free elections were held and, for the first time ever, the black majority of the country's 22.7 million electorates had voted. Mandela emerged as the country's first black president having secured a convincing majority in a multiracial parliament with a power-sharing government. In the aftermath of the contrasting events that occurred simultaneously in Rwanda and South Africa in April 1994, Wole Soyinka, the Nigerian Nobel Prize winner, in an article entitled 'The Bloodsoaked Quilt of Africa' wrote, 'Rwanda is our Nightmare, South Africa our dream' (cited in Reader, 1997:666-667).

As much as possible many African countries maintained a neutral posture toward the 'superpowers' during the Cold War, even though overtures were made to them. While the 'non-alignment' foreign policy thrust of many of the countries lasted, the question had been how Africa would re-build her broken nations under a condition of 'neutrality' from the Cold Warriors. The challenge, however, assumed a greater proportion after the Cold War. The superpowers, led by the United States (particularly after the humiliating casualties American

soldiers suffered from the hands of Somali clan fighters), 'temporarily' withdrew their interventions in conflicts in Africa and instead imposed 'conditionalities' for resuscitating collapsed economies on the continent through IMF's Structural Adjustment Programmes. Earlier in 1967, Professor Mazrui in *Towards a Pax Africana* (1967) had joined 'patriots' to echo the 'African solution to African problems' mantra and called for a 'Pax Africana that is protected and maintained by Africa herself'. In the 1990s Liberia proved an interesting test case for Pax Africana. While the Western superpowers declined to intervene, an ECOWAS multinational peace keeping force, nicknamed ECOMOG Monitoring Group (ECOMOG), landed in Monrovia in 1990. After series of false starts, ECOMOG was able to secure a ceasefire from the warring factions. Arguably, the perceived success of the action of ECOMOG in Liberia was repeated in Sierra Leone and Guinea Bissau (Atte, 2001)

George Ayittey, a Ghanaian economist and the President of the Washington-based Free African Foundation, problematizes and extends the discourse on 'African solution to African problems' in a paper featured in the *Harvard International Review* (April, 2010). In shedding light on two related African problems, he avers:

The first is the unnerving propensity of African leaders to seek foreign solutions to every crisis rather than look inside Africa for them. Second, though noble and well-intentioned, foreign solutions often do not fit Africa's unique political and socio-cultural topography, and have thus, failed' (Ayittey, 2010).

Ayittey's disdain for 'foreign solutions to every crisis' in Africa are reinforced by lessons learned from the politics of crisis response and humanitarian aids in Somali and Sudan. Conflict and post conflict interventions in the Horn of Africa have become symbolic of how impotent uncontrolled dependence on international crisis response systems might turn out to be. For example, aids officials have blamed the continuing cycles of violence in Somali and the legacies of war in Sudan on the inability of humanitarian aids agencies to strike a balance between 'political localisation and economic internationalisation' (Prendergast, 1997:106). For example, John Prendergast, the author of *Crisis Response: Humanitarian Band-Aids in Sudan and Somali* (1997) and a former director of the Horn of Africa project at the Centre of Concern in Washington D.C, faulted what he called 'the rhetoric of neutrality surrounding aid', and condemned how the United Nations (UN) mission in Somali through food aid diplomacy meddled in local politics and 'exacerbated the conflict'. He alleges:

Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) is a regional economic group. It was established in 1975 in Lagos, Nigeria to promote cooperation and development among West Africa countries.

The failure of the UN mission in Somali is to a large degree the extension of bankrupt donor policy which for decades supported overly centralised, unsustainable government structures in Mogadishu whose legitimacy came from the barrel of a gun... This greatly exacerbated the conflict, as competing militias positioned themselves for the potential spoils of a new aid-dependent state. In the process, the vast majority of Somalis and their local institutions have been ignored and further marginalised... Despite the rhetoric of neutrality surrounding aid; it often is one of the most important contributors to conflict (Prendergast, 1997:106-107).

As well, Michael Maren, an international worker, who criss-crossed Africa for two decades and witnessed at close range a harrowing series of famines, wars and natural disasters, deplored 'the ravaging effects of foreign aid and international charity', which he described as 'the last stage of Western colonialism' (Maren, 1997:iii). In his book, *The Road to Hell* (1997), Maren tells of how CARE (an NGO he represented in Somali), the UN, Save the Children, and many other international non-governmental organisations unwittingly provided raw materials (uncensored donor funds, food aids, arms smuggling etc.) for ethnic factions who subsequently promoted genocidal massacres in Rwanda and Burundi. He tells of how the influx of grant money into Somali

encouraged a flurry of local NGOs (such as The Somali Society for the Protection of Children, Somali Children's Aids, Action for Children etc.), whose decisions sometimes suggest that they have more to do with business than humanitarianism, as they compete for UN contracts or sub-contracts from foreign NGOs.

The exposés reveal that the tendency to not rely on external solutions to challenges of nation building in Africa is not imminent, because certain leadership predicaments that form the roots of the systemic challenges that imposed the condition of dependency in the first instance, such as widespread breakdown of state leadership apparatus, privatisation of security and the decomposition of state hegemony, exist side by side the supposed 'solutions'. In fact, sometimes, they thrive on both overt and covert patronages that are facilitated through the crisis response mechanisms. The compelling question is: Would the future of nation building in Africa continue to depend on relief fund and other externally initiated development packages and peace initiatives? Resolutions at the African Heads of State at the OAU summit of Heads of State and Government in Lusaka, Zambia on July 11, 2001 suggest otherwise. The most important decision at the summit was a resolution that ratified the establishment of the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD). Earlier in Addis Ababa,

specifically on May 26, the African Union (AU) had been launched to replace the OAU, but the revocation of the charter that established it would not take effect until July 9, 2002, when the AU was launched in South Africa. Whereas the OAU did accomplish its main goal of ensuring that Africa threw away the yoke of colonialism, it equally exhibited signs of weakness in facilitating quality of leadership that is required to drive nation building on the continent, particularly in the era of globalisation. Thus, among other principles, the AU was established to promote democratic principles and institutions, popular participation and good governance' on the continent.

NEPAD became one of AU's continent-wide nation building initiatives to achieve a holistic and integrated sustainable development for the economic and social revival of Africa (Ukeje, 2008). NEPAD embodies a constructive partnership between Africa and the developed world. Hence, it sets a number of goals based on the internationally agreed Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). NEPAD's optimal performance hinges on the effectiveness of the Africa Peer Review Mechanism (APRM), an inter-governmental watchdog mechanism. The underlying assumption for the APRM was that African leaders would operate in fidelity and respect for global standard practice in governance through fair and open democratic institutions. The 'Africanisation'

The Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) include: Eradicate extreme poverty and hunger; Achieve universal primary education; Promote gender equality and empower women; Reduce child mortality; Improve maternal health; Combat HIV/AIDS, malaria and other diseases; Ensure environmental sustainability; Develop a global partnership for development. The target date for the MDGs is 2015.

of NEPAD's watchdog mechanism could be justified as a means of proffering African solutions to African problems. Regrettably, as the race towards post-2015, the target date for the MDGs, heightens, the prospect of accomplishing them proves elusive as 'many countries remain off track to meeting them by 2015' (United Nations, 2008:7). The pledge among African leaders to work in partnership across a network of political and economic compromises is marred by poor governance and bad leadership, as shown since 2001 by several international development, governance and leadership indices.

Since its debut in 2002, the Ibrahim Index of African Governance, for instance, has not only provided window into African leaders' strengths and weaknesses, it has become a diagnostic tool that locates the areas of governance needing improvement on a country-by-country basis. The 2012 score card of the Index revealed the severity of the leadership crisis and governance to the extent that the Mo Ibrahim Prize for Achievement in African Leadership was not awarded (Ibrahim, 2012). Put differently, Africa is suffering from a dearth of ethical leadership with commitment to good governance (Agulanna, 2006). It also indicates a need for interventions towards ethical political leadership. To this end, a group of Africa's present and former leaders decided to take

action. Steered by Ketumile Masire, a former president of Botswana, they display determination to challenge Africa's crisis of poor stewardship through praxis and education. They established the African Leadership Council in 2004, developed a Code of African Leadership (named 'the 23 commandments of leadership') and proposed to train their successors in the arts of good leadership and government as contained in the so-called Mombasa Declaration on African Leadership Council. The Council's code and training programmes are attempts to consolidate African leadership capacity and aptitude. The Council intends its initiative to be transformative and to spur hesitant leaders to be committed to the needs of the people. There is little doubt that leaders who introduced the idea have the standing and honour to make a major difference. Evidences abound about how good leadership has transformed Botswana and Mauritius. Similar trends have begun in Ghana, Senegal and South Africa. It would not be out of place to spread the message and the lesson throughout the rest of Africa.

They include World Bank's Worldwide Governance Indicators, Transparency International's Corruption Perceptions Index, the United Nations Development Program's Human Development Report, Freedom House's Freedom in the World Report and the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa's African Governance Report, the World Governance Assessment conducted by the Overseas Development Institute, including the Ibrahim Index of African Governance etc.

CONCLUSIONS

In less than half a century, the dreams of Africa becoming a continent of peaceful, prosperous and united independent states with a powerful voice in global affairs so passionately professed in the 1960s seems to have evaporated and replaced with nightmares. There is little doubt that the challenge of how to find and nurture responsible leaders, leaders with vision, clarity of purpose, honesty of intent, and respect for the rights of the people for Africa is daunting. Most African countries, even among the so-called 'democratic nations', are still being 'ruled' by elected tyrants, whose mis-governance impacts negatively on the process of nation building.

Thus, Africa in 21st century, to use the words of John W. Stanko, portrays a classical example of an entity where there are, 'so many leaders [with] so little leadership' (Stanko, 2000). The challenge is that most African leaders, past and present, is highly 'transactional' and egregiously anti-people, squandering state resources on partisan and personal compensatory practices. They relish getting the power that accompanies positions, but ignore the price of leadership. The phenomenon has compelled the continent to make 'A retreat from modernity', and hence the challenge of nation building.

At the moment, there is no mechanical formula to reverse the ethical leadership crisis.

Even so, the rarity of first-rate exemplars of good leadership and governance need not suggest that effective, popular leadership cannot flourish in Africa. Like Mr. Tony Blair, a former British Prime Minister, founder and patron of Africa Governance Initiative (AGI) affirms, I believe, that:

Africa can become in this century an engine of prosperity as powerful as Asia became in the last [...] but it will only become a reality if Africa's leaders are able to drive the reforms their countries need, and their governments have the capacity to deliver them. For a new generation of African leaders, this means that having a clear vision for their country is not enough. They also need to transform the capacity of their government to deliver it [...] Aids alone is not the answer. Ultimately, Africa's future lies with the decisions of Africa's leaders' (Blair, AGI:3 & 9).

This is a tall order for contemporary Africa. Ethical leadership and committed governance will only emerge as 'the result of a tough and often conflict-ridden process

of institutional design' (Ackerman (2004:448), which is the essence of 'African renaissance'. It would entail a peaceful 'mental and structural revolution' (Ngwane 2003:1), with a view to modifying the system that has enabled unethical people to assume political leadership. And who says Africa has no bright future?

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ISSN 2308-6696