

Managing Ethnic Conflicts: A Critical Analysis of the Orthodox Solutions and the Specificity of the African Situation

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Abstract

Africa's ethnic conflicts and crises have embedded in them catastrophic consequences and effects, especially with particular regard to the loss of lives and properties and the disruptions of governmental and political arrangements. The discourse in which the conflicts are embedded is further enveloped in all kinds of proposals such as outright dismemberment of some of the existing political and administrative units, the implementation of political reforms, and fundamental restructuring of the entire social settings in favour of accommodation of the minorities in particular. Against the backdrop that these conflicts and crises require management as a way of averting the aforementioned consequences, the article seeks to undertake a critical evaluation of the existing ethnic management models, theories and solutions in extant literature within the context of the prevailing African circumstances and conditions. Its central goal is to determine the extent to which these solutions and the contained technicalities in which they are expressed can indeed provide the much-needed frameworks for permanent political stabilities in the continent. The qualitative methodology seeks to question the existing assumptions in which these ethnic solutions are defined and their theoretical properties further amplified. With the additional use of critical analytical tools, the article finally seeks the re-formulations and refinements of the ethnic solutions as being referred to in extant literature. The findings revolve around the inappropriateness and lack of applicability of some of the embedded concepts and solutions to the perennial crises as a result of the lack of focus on the uniqueness in which the crises remain defined. The conclusion is hence that the solutions to the crises in the continent should not be wholly generalistic but rather situated within the local peculiarities of the divergent political systems of Africa.

Keywords: Ethnic Conflicts, Ethnic Management, Ethnic Management Models.

INTRODUCTION

Over the years, the understanding and consequent analysis of Africa have both received quite competing methodological frameworks of accomplishment that are often nauseating, at least going by the racist undertone of some of the much-celebrated explanations. However, following the appearance of the authoritative and incisive piece of Coleman and Almond (1963), the analysis of the African predicament has thus witnessed a developmental, analytical stint, especially with the emergence and further facilitation of quite remarkable theoretical formulations. An extension of the developmental influence (though couched in class analysis) which for example Nnoli (1978) provides in his groundbreaking work on the Nigerian political environment, coupled with that of Mazrui and Tidy (1984), Smoch and Bentsi-Enchill (eds.) (1976) in wider continental terms, and that of Chazan, et.al (1992), among others, still suggest the indispensability of the ethnic framework in both the understanding and analysis of modern African politics, thus further reinforcing the ethnic competition thesis provided by Barongo (1983). This is however little recognized by students of African politics perhaps because

of the overwhelming influence of class analysis which unfortunately beclouds the foundation of the main thrust of Barongo's thesis, which, by all indications, is an extension of O'Connell (1967).

Perhaps because of the intractable and protracted nature of the ethnically galvanized civil wars and the general recognition by researchers of the need to accommodate the escalating inter and intra-ethnic accusations of various forms within the framework of 'good governance' being proposed by the Carter Centre in the wake of Africa's "second chance" which some scholars have aptly described as the "second independence", there is that intellectual shift (though generally unknown) to the 'core-aspect' of ethnic management especially following the pioneering works of Ekeh and Osaghae (eds.) (1989), and Osaghae (1992), thus questioning very accurately and boldly to the continued relevance of *developmentalism* in the contemporary analysis of African government and politics. And this no doubt brings to sharp focus a critical analysis of the existing formulas and models of ethnic management, and by implication questioned the assumed theoretical validity and

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pragmatic relevance of the models of ethnic management provided by Lijphart (1977), Enloe (1977), Duchacek (1977), Horowitz (1985), Diamond (1990), and Henze (1990), among others. The main objective of this article is therefore to further situate the bearings of these theoretical formulations within the context of the specificity of the African situation. The general approach employed in this task is a theoretical extrapolation of the main components of the models vis-à-vis the actual situation of Africa.

Towards this end, the article is divided into three sections excluding the introduction. Section one address the embedded concepts within the context of African realities and historiographies with the view to engaging problems and issues in relation to the standardization of knowledge. Section two examines models of ethnic management of selected Africanists by questioning their pragmatic relevance within the broad framework of the peculiar features of African government and politics. The critique of each of the models is also examined within the context of the emerging global developments which undoubtedly have far reaching implications for social science research. Section three provides the conclusion to the article.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Models of Ethnic Management: A Critical Examination of Selected Works

The literature review here presented focuses on carefully chosen ethnic management models and further examined, discussed and analyzed within important knowledge parametres of assessment and evaluation in relation to the defining elements and properties in which the models in their individual and collective existence remain labelled and characterized. The knowledge parametres provide in clear terms the thematic framework of organization and scrutiny with the view to aiding the knowledge and understanding of the models for in-depth study and comparison.

Multi-Level Federalism Model - Ivo D. Duchacek (1977)

What is this model all about and particularly in relation to the management of ethnic conflicts? This immediately requires careful and painstaking examination and analysis of the embedded concepts/ideas that help to give the model its identity. And the concepts include: (1) "federalism", (2) "elimination of poly-ethnicity", (3) "discriminatory regulation", (4) "communal or quota systems", (5) "quasi-federal solutions", and (6) "international inspection and supervision". What really are they in relation to the model? Their understanding, as usual, should be placed within the author's idea and other ideas in literature. The submission, in the standard practice of scholarship, does not require any further debate and controversy.

Federalism, in the opinion of Duchacek (1977), is the adoption of federal principles and practices. His lack of specific understanding and meaning of "federal principles and practices" compel the question: What are federal principles and practices? Federal principles and practices can be broadly interpreted and explained to refer to: (1) a written constitution whose procedure of amendment is both rigid and complex, (2) structural arrangement of government into tiers, (3) division of powers between and among the tiers/levels of government and this codified in the constitution.

Elimination of poly-ethnicity, according to him, involves deliberate and conscious application of policies of politics,

law and administration targeted at eradicating the most likely consequences and effects of poly-ethnicity. And poly-ethnicity is the existence of multiple and plural groups and variegated interests along cultural divides relating with one another under the same political system of administration. The policies, according to him, take the following methods: (1) assimilation- such as denying the use of minority languages in schools, administration, courts, and mass media; (2) genocide- the physical elimination of a racial/ethnic group; (3) unilateral mass expulsion; (4) the exchange and swapping of ethnic minorities between and among poly-ethnic states and borders; and (5) the adjustment of existing state borders to allow for homogeneity.

Discriminatory regulation is the deliberate act of making some citizens to feel that they are either second or third class especially in the form of apartheid. It is a kind of institutionalized policy of discrimination and segregation foisted on some citizens on the ground of either ethnicity or racism. The fact that it is institutionalized and further backed with an enabling law makes any resistance against it illegal and punishable within the same provisions of the law. Communal or quota system is both the allocation and guarantee of a particular percentage of representation and placement of citizens in the composition of the decision-making processes and machineries of the state and other agencies and institutions in relation to its mandate and usually with nomenclatures such as federal character, ethnic balancing, etc.

Quasi-federal solution is a collective of policy: administrative, political, tactical, strategic and legal initiatives targeted at enhancing the continued existence of poly-ethnic groups by granting the right to self-rule/determination especially to the minorities. It is further a kind of semi-autonomous political and administrative arrangement allowing ethnic minorities in particular the opportunity for limited political independence with the understanding that they could, in the future, be autonomous unity. International inspection and supervision as a method of ethnic conflicts management encapsulate the accepted principles of international law especially the Universal Declaration of Human Rights as being espoused in the Charter of the United Nations Organization. It entails further passing of resolutions and the implementation of same especially in relation to the protection of ethnic minorities against massacres, physical liquidation, etc., in poly-ethnic states and systems of government.

Of what pragmatic relevance are the models of ethnic management being proposed by Duchacek to Africa and the peculiarities of her condition? This leads us to a critique of Duchacek's view-points. In the first place, Duchacek assigns too much responsibility to the ruling elites as the vanguards of the resolution of ethnic conflicts. This is no doubt understandable going by the character of the dramatis personae involved in ethnic conflicts worldwide. But the African elites are unable to channel irreconcilable conflicts to reconcilable ones. This further compounds and aggravates ethnic conflicts in the continent. There would not have been ethnic conflicts in the first instance if they were able to manage the stresses and strains of the different political systems that make the continent of Africa. His placement and assignment of too much trust and confidence in the elites on the subject matter of ethnic management help in the appreciation of the argument in relation to the peculiarities and uniqueness of Africa. The elites of Africa, the political elites to be specific, lack the

understanding of the essentials of modern day governance architecture and the associated basic rules, policies, processes and practices. Their behavioural traits are at variance with the democratic norms and are lacking further in political accommodation practices and other requirements of peace and stability especially in plural societies. Though united by corruption and the pilfering of state resources, they have, over the years, perfected themselves in strategies and tactics aimed and targeted at the entrenchment and institutionalization of authoritarianism through skillful manipulations of the agencies and institutions of government and politics for the elongation of their tenures. Constitutions have become amended and adjusted to give legal supports and backings to personal rule; and under the guise of stimulating and attracting foreign direct investments, Africa's domestic economies have become permanently tied to the metropolitan headquarters and the vicissitudes of international capitalism, just as multinational companies now provide intelligence and security services to regimes so as to be able to further cement the pilfering of state resources for the advancement of international capitalism.

Secondly, and if indeed the purpose and fundamental essence of ethnic management is to lessen ethnic conflicts and thus creates the basis for national integration, it is doubtful if, and as suggested by Duchacek (1977) whether: "genocide", "assimilation", "unilateral mass expulsion", among others, can help in the realization of the goal of ethnic management within the context of Africa. "Genocide", "assimilation", and "unilateral mass expulsion", among others, as suggested by him, are, in themselves, explosive devices in the multi-cultural and plural societies of Africa. Ethnic management models, properly labeled and described, should be capable of reducing tensions and the predisposing factors to violence and conflicts. Sub-ethnic nationalities as identity groups and para-political units would ordinarily resent attempts and policies aimed at wiping them off. The options, as put forward by Duchacek (1977), are recipes for permanent skirmishes and disasters and therefore lack the capability to reconcile the irreconcilable.

Third and final, it is here further being argued that the model with perhaps the possible exception of federalism inherently lacks democratic parameters and requirements of assessment and evaluation. Models, especially in relation to political organization, should, as designed, be capable of ensuring the much-expected harmony between and among the multicultural forces and factors in the existing competition for power. The requirement of democracy has the important advantage of ensuring that the competition takes place within the rules as specified in laws and acts. A constitutional democracy as an element of the design unarguably provides the required political and institutional mechanism for ensuring that the rules of engagement and competition between and among the multi-cultural groups are open and known and are further guided by the principle of equality of application. The inherent advantage is that it provides ample opportunities for negotiations and cross-cutting cleavages as political parties are formed and organized ideologically to capture political power by first and foremost winning elections.

Divide and Rule Model - Cynthia H. Enloe (1977)

The scrutiny of the model is here commenced by seeking first the meaning and understanding of the embedded ideas and concepts. So, what are these ideas and concepts? Divide

and rule as a model of ethnic conflicts management revolves around what Enloe (1977) identified as: (1) "displacement", (2) "political leaders", (3) "consociational democracy", (4) "federalism", and (5) "vanguard assimilation". As terminologies, how are they related to the explanation and analysis of "divide and rule model"? Before attempt is made to answer the question, there is the urgency to scrutinize Enloe's understanding and meaning of "divide and rule" and further in relation to the model.

According to Enloe (1977), "divide and rule" has its understanding and meaning as a basic political formula for the management of political tensions arising from ethnic skirmishes and antagonisms. It is a strategy and tactic which the "central elites" make use of "...not to isolate the several communities from one another, but to encourage them to think of themselves as fundamentally different in values and goals when they do interact with one another" (Ibid:148). What the latter suggests as a model of conflict management of the ethnic brand/type is that it is a deliberate and conscious effort of the "central elites/political leaders" to ensure that ethnic groups of the same political system and who further compete for the allocation of scarce resources under the same arrangement of political authority, are permanently maintained under a circumstance that both allows and sustains fundamental distinctions in terms of value orientation and political dispositions. The effort eventually becomes permanently institutionalized and embedded in the totality of interactions and political relationships of which the groups remain divided along ethnic considerations. "Political leaders" are simply the power elites, politicians and gladiators who assume the formal responsibility and duty of the organization of the state along the supposed principles and *raison d'être* for its existence

"Displacement", according to her, is a strategy used effectively against the most vulnerable ethnic groups and takes different forms including physical movement of the victims from their original locations, structural integration/"internal colonialism", etc. "Consociational democracy" means an instrument or formula of ethnic management that is capable of integrating politically competing ethnic groups into a framework of national consensus on extremely divisive matters.

"Federalism" as ethnic conflicts management formula takes the form of a political system that allows for ethnic groups to have control and authority over their territorial jurisdictions. And "vanguard assimilation" is the use of one ethnic group in a multi-ethnically segmented setting to perform the role of a standard bearer which the rest should emulate.

At this juncture, the question can now be asked: How useful are the models of ethnic management formulated by Enloe to Africa? In other words, to what extent can the models help in the amelioration of ethnic conflicts in Africa? The answer to the questions obviously leads us to a critique of the model whose accomplishment ordinarily should have been the identification of each of the models and giving them thorough and intensive examination and analysis. This is however compounded by the fact that a relationship exists between and among them and therefore has the potentiality of reducing the appreciation of the relationships because Enloe herself recognizes the existence of an embedded relationship between and among the models which she aptly described as: "The Coexistence of Multiple Formulas" (Ibid: 155).

The embedded assumptions and pre-suppositions lack direct relevance to the peculiarities of ethnic conflicts in Africa and the entire characterization of the constituting political systems. The political systems of Africa are so diverse and plural to the extent that the seemingly dominant ethnic groups can only deploy/utilize their dominance when they are ready to enter into alliances with the other lesser groups. This particularly suggests that the dominant group lacks all the requirements of full domination to the extent of being able to downplay the counterbalances and counter-reactions of the lesser groups. The assumptions and pre-suppositions have only succeeded in over-blowing out of proportion the capability of the dominant group, politically speaking. The implication further is that it creates and sustains a generalization that is lacking in comprehensiveness of knowledge about the subject matter thereby making the attendant theory-building deficient in precision and adequacy of prediction.

In addition, her uncritical acceptance of the embedded presumption as contained in the theory of consociationalism that politicians/rulers seek consensus among themselves as a way of accommodating the differences arising from their ethnic backgrounds lacks a practical and pragmatic relationship with the realities of African politics. The assumption by the proponents of consociational democracy that: "...the various ethnic groups are indeed communal enough, that they have internal consensuses and internal mechanisms for generating leaders with sufficient intra-communal support, that they can speak for the group at large in state affairs..." lack empirical validation. It is wrong to continue to assume that African ruling elites are leaders. They are indeed rulers that are only interested in predatory and primitive accumulation of capital. The experiences of Burundi, Angola, Mozambique, Liberia, and Nigeria especially following the annulment of the June 12, 1993, Presidential Election negate the description and characterization of African rulers as leaders. The African ruling elites lack consensus on important matters especially in relation to the organization of individual political systems and in the accomplishment and realization of the fundamental and secondary purposes of the state. The only thing that they share in common which should not be mistaken for consensus is the desire to wanting to loot on a permanent basis the resources of the state. It is puzzling to see African ruling elites openly attacking themselves and yet engage in banter during the board meetings of companies and other enterprises. The signal emanating from this is that politics rather than being an avenue for service to one's community and fatherland, is instead an arena for negotiating booties in both money and capital markets. Consociationalism cannot, therefore, be a reliable ethnic management model.

Furthermore, the argument can be made that Enloe's ethnic management model from the perspective of consociationalism has inherent in it some elements of incoherence, contradictions, and inconsistencies and therefore lacking in dependability and reliability especially within the context of Africa going by this important observation made by her. She noted that: "...it (consociational democracy) is an admittedly elitist formula. Its durability depends not only on the continuing ability of elites from the several communities to share enough in common to maintain a top-level coalition. It depends also on each ethnic group remaining immune from fragmentation..." (Ibid: 152). The conclusion emanating from the observation either indicates the lack of profound

reflection on the workability and relevance of consociationalism by Enloe, or the lack of profound appreciation of the realities of Africa especially in relation to the suitability of consociationalism as a reliable political mechanism for managing the skirmishes and conflicts that do regularly define and shape the allocation of scarce political resources.

The Democratic Model - Larry Diamond (1990)

The inclusion of the work of Larry Diamond in this article demands instant justification. The article of Diamond of which a critique of his work is based contains useful information that is crucial if we really want to understand what is here called the 'democratic space of ethnic conflicts'. Apart from Larry Diamond, there is no any other work of Western Africanist known to this author that treats or examines the management of ethnic conflicts within the overall framework of the global democratic establishment, consolidation, and sustenance of the 1990s. This is because apart from addressing himself with the problem of accommodation of ethnic cleavages which is the central preoccupation of ethnic management, he examines along with the above what he referred to as the "three paradoxes of democracy", which he identifies further as (1) the tensions between conflict and consensus, (2) the tensions between representativeness and governability, and (3) the tensions between consent and effectiveness. These contradictions have far-reaching implications for ethnic contestation and thus ethnic management. The implication perhaps made him suggest four principal mechanisms for managing ethnicity politically and within a democratic framework to include: (1) federalism, (2) proportionality in the distribution of resources and power, (3) minority rights (to cultural integrity and protection against discrimination), and (4) sharing or rotation of power, in particular through coalition arrangements at the center.

Larry Diamond's understanding of federalism as an instrument of ethnic management bears semblances with that of Ivo D. Duchacek and Cynthia H. Enloe. However, Diamond adds a more elaborative dimension to his analysis. According to him, federalism is particularly effective in managing ethnic tension because it makes use of varieties of mechanisms for reducing conflicts; and this includes (1) dispersion of conflict by transferring much of it to state and local levels; (2) fostering of inter-ethnic cooperation as states find the need to coalesce with one another in several ways depending on the issue at the center; (3) generation of cross-cutting cleavages; and (4) reduction of disparities by enabling backward and minority peoples to rise within their own state bureaucracies and educational systems, among others. Diamond further asserts, and quite categorically, that: "In principle, the purest way to present diverse social groups and interests, especially in deeply divided societies, is through proportional representation (PR)" (Ibid: 55).

Quite aptly, how does the idea of the "democratic space of ethnic conflicts" present itself as an ethnic management model? The question is important to enable us to undertake a critique of the model. The starting point obviously requires placing the model within the exigency and circumstances of Africa. Federalism and proportionality in the distribution of resources, within the context of Africa, require further detailed specifications beyond the stated accompanying preconditions and requirements as ably formulated by Larry Diamond. Consequently, what are these detailed specifications that Diamond (1990) either ignores or fails to provide? Federalism and proportionality as principles of

state organization and arrangement in Africa's plural societies are already duly recognized by virtually all the constitutions. The issue is not therefore about the absence of relevant constitutional frames. It is about the absence of the relevant behavioural traits on the part of politicians/state actors essential for building consensuses and forging alliances on a permanent basis. What therefore are these behavioural traits? What they require is both detailed specification and itemization, especially as a model for managing ethnic conflicts which Diamond either ignores or fails to appreciate. Again, the principle of proportionality, when carefully applied, has the potential of helping to address accusations and counter-accusations in relation to ethnic imbalances. There is, however, the assurance that the tendency for one ethnic group to dominate others is drastically reduced. But in reality, the political dynamics of the African situation are such that proportional representation can be abused or bastardized. Difficulties will arise from establishing the criteria that will in turn be used to determine the basis of representation. If for example, population is to be used, should majority and minority ethnic groups share the same number of representatives? This is further compounded by the absence of reliable census figures and their distribution across the composing ethnic groups.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

The qualitative methodological orientation of the article compelled its application within the subject matter of the article's engagement. The particular focus on ethnic management models consequently necessitated the initiation and accomplishment of the following steps in which the data collection procedure remains embedded: (a) a survey of extant literature on the broad examination and analysis of ethnic management models especially from the perspective of the ideas in which their existence remain defined as both conceptual and theoretical formulations; (b) a careful selection of the models that were considered close to the understanding of the realities of Africa particularly from the dimension of their relevance as explanatory and analytical frameworks of intellectual disquisitions; (c) a systematic critique of the contents of the models approached from both critical and rigorous determination of their usefulness within the larger framework of their contained advantages and disadvantages; (d) a comparative, step-by-step examination and analysis of the models with the view to determining their differences and similarities and the further study of the contained implication for scholarship particularly in relation to the subject matter; (e) the formulation and development of generalizations in relation to the identified differences and similarities; and (f) individual scrutiny of the properties of each model within the embedded peculiarities of Africa.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The materials and method in relation to the amplification of the methodology of the article both compel the equal amplification of the results and their discussion within the framework of the qualitative research genre. The results and their discussion are hence here accomplished from the dimension of situating the concepts of ethnic management and ethnic management models within the context of African realities and historiographies. The choice has its justification within the broad critical issues in the standardization of knowledge from the perspective of

critical social science analysis. In social science theorization and philosophy, the critical role of concepts as essential building blocks is what has been generally consented to as being primary and fundamental. It is not surprising therefore that the entire social science lexicon is loaded with concepts of varied manifestations and serving also diverse and quite often conflicting purposes and uses. With particular reference to political science, the use of appropriate and relevant concepts has not only been accepted as crucial to contemporary epistemological research endeavour, but specifying and defining what they are from the onset of any research undertaking has equally been made compulsory by the indispensability of conceptual framework of analysis, without which, research accomplishments or agenda risk epistemological collapse. Therefore, providing clear-cut definitions of concepts has assisted generally in the clarification of topical issues of global intellectual concern and critical value. Such a clarification also enhances the sophistication, theoretical elegance, and ebullience of research papers made possible through the process of concept operationalization. Concept operationalization is therefore a way of detaching prejudices (in wider terms) from associated or implied meanings. And because researchers and authors generally consider their works as being value-free and therefore make an implied claim to objectivity, there is that lack of general consensus on what concepts, strictly speaking, are, not only in different research purposes and agenda but also within the same paradigm of study. Consequently, democracy for example, means different things to different people. For this reason, researchers are usually empowered to let the whole world know what they mean by certain terms or expressions. Apart from serving the purpose of clarity of thought as earlier mentioned, defining or operationalizing terms also provides the basis for measurement or evaluation of concepts, and through this, the behaviouralists argue that precision can be attained leading then to reliable generalization and in turn to good theory.

But for the purpose of the article, what is ethnic management? Before any elaboration will be made, it is important to point out something that is hidden, but of stimulating interest. Two words make up this concept. And these are: (1) ethnic, and (2) management. It suggests therefore that any attempted definition should recognize the distinctiveness of the two. The word: ethnic, is suggestive of a myriad of things. At least four are important for the purpose of the article. And these are (1) ethnicity, (2) ethnic group, (3) ethnic groupings, and (4) ethnic competition. The second category of word i.e. management, is however open-ended. It happens or takes place in the entire space of social interactions. But for the purpose of the article, it is limited to social organizations. Something is further important to stress. Any conceptualization and consequent operationalization of management to refer to the outright absence of strains or stresses in social organizations is out of it. Therefore, it should be understood from the viewpoint of systemic sustenance. Meaning that it indicates not the absence of dysfunctionalities or abnormalities within systemic operations, but how such a system can progress given the presence of any associated lapses, real or imagined. In other words, the purpose of management is to ensure that system operation does not disintegrate or collapse. Notwithstanding the strength of the above, research neglect of an antecedent concept (ethnic conflict) is epistemologically dangerous. This is because if ethnic management is concerned with the resolution of

ethnic conflicts, how does it evolve? What informs its necessity? In other words, what are ethnic conflicts? An immediate research preoccupation with this will further assist in having a proper grasp of what ethnicity, ethnic group, ethnic groupings and ethnic competition are in interrelated terms. This is because knowing the social space of ethnic conflicts will assist us in knowing the character of the personalities involved and the specific historical circumstances under which ethnic conflicts take place. Before then, what are conflicts?

The Webster's Ninth New Collegiate Dictionary defines conflicts as: "competitive or opposing action of incompatibles: antagonistic state or action (as of divergent ideas, interests, or persons)"; "mental struggle resulting from incompatible or opposing needs, drives, wishes or internal demands", "fight, battle, war"; "to content in warfare"; "to show antagonism or irreconcilability". In political science, what constitutes conflicts is a primary preoccupation of its scope. This is why political science is often defined as the study of conflicts. This pre-occupation of political science is very crucial to it if the science of politics is to really worth its place as an academic field of study. This is because the entire process of authoritative allocation of values takes place within limited opportunities, restricted and confined scope. Hence the determination of who gets what, when and how is always crisis-ridden. And conflict, one should add, is usually multi-dimensional in scope and focus. It cuts across all facets of human development and interactions. For this reason, while some conflicts are religious and political, others are class-based, and the rest are ideological and or ethnic. It is here further added that the distinction offered above, in practice, might not be necessarily so. This is because any society is usually composed of overlapping or cross-cutting cleavages; therefore conflicts need not be entirely class-based or ideological. Ethnic conflicts, the concern/focus of the article, do hence acquire political and religious colouration. What then is ethnic conflict or what are ethnic conflicts?

According to Osaghae, (1992: 218): "Simply put, ethnic conflicts refer to conflicts between people from different ethnic groups which may arise from competition for control of State power, distribution of resources or non-material struggle for supremacy". He continues: "By their very nature, ethnic conflicts are exclusionary and zero-sum, even when coalitions and alliances are formed" (Ibid: 218-219). Brass (1985) has argued forcefully too that ethnic conflicts exist at individual, sub-group, and group levels, all of which are mutually reinforcing (cf. Osaghae, 1992). What is being described above no doubt captures the essence of ethnic conflicts, but in situations where there exists a lack of consensus on associated concepts, the simplicity and explicitness of what is being described becomes blurred. This is common in literature generally. This thus marks the distinction in and superiority of, Osaghae's definition over existing definitions in the literature. If really ethnic conflicts are conflicts that do happen or occur among ethnic groups, the most relevant question then is what is an ethnic group? Osaghae (1992: 218) observes further: "An ethnic group itself is a distinct human category whose members define themselves as different from others on the bases principally of language, the myth of common origin, territory, and culture". However, notwithstanding the outstanding nature of Osaghae's definition, his definition introduces through the backdoor a very fundamental epistemological issue. And that is: can description serve the purpose of definition? This is not an easy question simply because of the associated

research implication of what is being asked. Attempt to provide an answer to this question, therefore, brings in forms and purposes of definition.

The essence of definition, here recalled, is to ensure clarity of meaning and understanding, and to also ease the problem of categorization or classification. With particular reference to ethnic conflicts, what are the variables involved, how can they be grouped, and how can they be measured as well? These are no doubt intellectually tasking questions whose answers are difficult to attempt going by the scope of the existing article. On conflict, what are its universal characteristics? Though the above-cited Webster's Dictionary definition appears to be unambiguous, self-explanatory, and therefore convincing when given a social interpretation, problems of note emerge. Is it always true (especially as made to be believed by Osaghae) that ethnic conflicts are more often than not facilitated by the competition for state resources among the multiple ethnic groups? Can't ethnic conflicts occur without recourse to materialist gains? The question is no doubt philosophical. This is because a study of the history of ethnic conflicts worldwide, especially of the Third World experience, might validate the raised question. Interestingly too, when we study the genocide of the then Yugoslavia, the various skirmishes within the then Soviet Union, and currently that of the Russian Federation, and of the 2022 invasion of Ukraine, the validity of Osaghae's submission becomes questionable. It does appear that what is currently happening in the former Eastern bloc is more nationalistic than a struggle for the resources of the state. However, this is subject to further probe and inquiry. What is being pointed out is not entirely Osaghae's, but goes to confirm the wrongly held impression common in the literature that ethnic conflicts occur out of the struggle for the control of state resources. This is likely to be a Third World phenomenon. But the question still remains: can the Third World experience provide the basis for the emergence of a universally accepted definition? The latter is further justified by the recognized differences and distinctions between definitions and theories especially within the context of modern-day social science analysis.

As to forms of definitions, Hospers (1967: Cf. Jinadu, 1979: 14) has distinguished very brilliantly the differences between stipulative and reporting definitions, especially with particular reference to federalism or federal arrangements which, studies have confirmed, are more prone to ethnic conflicts. This is not to say that unitary systems or states are free from ethnic conflicts. The contrary is the case. The relevance of forms of definitions to the argument that is being raised in the article is to call attention to the fact that the existing definitions of ethnic conflicts in extant literature are essentially reportive in the sense that they serve just a segment of what definition is, and what its purposes are in relation to knowledge advancement. This is however excusable on the ground that a definition of ethnic conflicts that will encompass or satisfy both the reportive and stipulative requirements are very difficult to come-by simply because the presence of State resources is not a sufficient condition that people will have to compete for on ethnic grounds. If this were to be the case, ethnic conflicts would have been most likely limited only to the Third World. But the fact that ethnic conflicts occur as well in the developed political systems of the world, explains and justifies the basis for the argument. The imposed limitation is therefore that no author can scientifically specify or provide a universal condition that could warrant the

occurrence of ethnic conflicts. This is what perhaps explains the limited utility of what authors consider/describe as models of ethnic management. This shall be discussed fully in subsequent parts of the article. Furthermore, is it always a given condition that all conflicts have to involve the display of physical aggression either at the individual or group level? This question has become crucial due to the sophistication of ethnic conflicts in relatively advanced social organizations of the Third World, in particular the academia. It is incorrect, presumably, to describe what happened in Rwanda, Burundi, Liberia, etc., as ethnic conflicts, and dismiss the succession crises in universities, polytechnics, and colleges of education, especially in relation to the appointment of Vice-Chancellors, Rectors, Provosts, Deans, or Students' Union Offices as an internal struggle for power! It is for this reason that Osaghae's observation is worth citing here. According to him, "Ethnic conflicts may take several forms which can be classified as violent or non-violent. Non-violent conflicts include the articulation of charges of discrimination, neglect or domination, demands for redress through the press, ethnic leaders, political parties, law courts, and other civil methods of articulating demands. Violent ethnic conflicts erupt in places where the channels for articulating demands are closed. These forms range from riots to secession and civil wars which have been experienced in most parts of the continent, notably in Congo, Nigeria, Liberia, Sudan, Ethiopia, Rwanda and Cameroun" (Osaghae, 1992:220).

How have ethnic conflicts conditioned the political systems that are so characterized? Engaging the question will further assist in clarifying what ethnic management is and why it has to be a deliberate or conscious social policy meant to guide against the extinction of the human race from the globe. All political systems, whether developed, developing or underdeveloped, are characterized by two dominant and distinct features. And these are: (1) all political actors struggle for one thing or the other, and (2) they are of different ethnic backgrounds. However, where differences can be observed only in the means of competition which lead to differential degrees of consequences. The degree of consequence is generally high in areas of intense competition, especially in social organizations or societies where the state determines everything, and for this reason, the struggle for the paraphernalia of the state becomes a life-and-death battle. The reverse is the case where competition for the goodies of life is determined greatly at the individual level, with the state just providing regulatory guidelines.

The concern to set broad standards with respect to the discourse on the knowledge and understanding of ethnic conflicts and the associated concepts further requires relating the ongoing critique of the definitions so far provided to the African political systems for the thoroughness of examination, discussion, and analysis. To start with, it is here assumed as given the existence of a political system be it unitary, federal, military, or democracy, etc. In other words, the section of the article will not concern itself with those historical circumstances and conditions that informed whether a political system should be unitary or federal, military or democracy in Africa. Rather, the article's preoccupation shall be how ethnic conflicts have conditioned the developmental processes of political systems that are so characterized. Since the focus is on Africa, the section shall limit its analysis to the same. Contemporary Africa i.e. post-colonial Africa, it is hence observed, is generally a theatre of large-scale ethnic

conflicts and crises. Surprisingly, both federal, unitary, military and democracies of the continent are affected by ethnic conflicts in different degrees of potencies, intensities and consequences. In some areas, ethnic conflicts have led to secessionist agitations, successful and unsuccessful ones. Among the successful ones, the case of Eritrea is outstanding. In Nigeria, secessionist agitation led to an unsuccessful civil war between 1967 and 1970. Secessionist agitation was equally successful in Sudan with the excision of South Sudan, while the war in Ethiopia is still ongoing as secessionists wanted an independent Tigray Region.

Due to the ravaging consequences of ethnic conflicts or threats of ethnic conflicts, Africa has witnessed all forms of political arrangements meant for preserving, sharing or managing the exercise of political power. Especially following the emergence of the wars of democratization thus leading to the institutionalization of projects of democratic transition, Africa has thus witnessed novelties unheard-off or least anticipated in the history of political organization of societies and in particular, political theory. In Nigeria, such include transitional council, interim national government, diarchy, or 'doctored' democracy. In Chad, the memory of the government of national unity can be instantly recalled here. In West Africa as a whole, we have seen an essentially economic grouping being transformed into a form of military outfit for the sub-region. In Southern Africa, particularly in Angola and Mozambique, we see a marriage of incompatibles being solemnized and institutionalized. With special reference to South Africa, a national government backed up with social welfare provisions was instituted. In short, in Africa, we see "power maps" of various decorations, legally, socially and politically speaking.

The overwhelming consequences and critical nature of ethnic conflicts have in turn led to what has been termed as "mal-development" (Anise, 1993). According to him; "... mal-development, like its earlier parent, underdevelopment, is no more than African existential and experiential figments of imagination and psychic dissonance" (Ibid: 81). Therefore, a thorough and critical understanding of the implication of mal-development for the African existence can be accomplished, argues Anise, within the operations and dynamics of the triple imperatives of current African governance predicaments: (1) high debt burdens, (2) evangelical, western directed, democratic movements and reforms, and finally (3) the African economic recovery programs (Ibid: 81). The adoption of Anise's approach is informed by the widely known logic that ethnic conflicts create the feeling of insecurity on the parts of both the governed and the governor, hence the need to reinforce national security systems thus leading to the acquisitions of arms and the commitment of scarce resources to the neglect of agriculture and social services, among others.

The need to further situate the knowledge and understanding of ethnic conflicts within the context of Africa makes imperative the need to in turn situate such understanding and knowledge within the emerging global events beginning from the 1990s. Therefore, and arising majorly from the prevailing norm in the international system, especially following the demise of the cold war, the thriving structural adjustment regimes led in turn to the resuscitation of the age-long debate focusing on the democracy/development nexus, among others, now compel the imposition of Western directed conceptions of political liberalization as a way of resolving ethnic conflicts and other crises of note afflicting Africa. The technical point that is

being made is that contemporary Africa's predicaments emanate partly from the ravages of ethnic conflicts either existing alone or in combination with the threats made possible by the earlier identified factors which Anise (1993) described as the "governance predicaments". The events, altogether, continue to shape and influence the existing character of Africa's political systems. The consequences of the colonial integration of Africa into the framework of international capitalism created massive debt burdens which further translated to economic dissatisfactions and much later to ethnically inspired violence and conflicts. According to Anise (1993:81), the: "...magnitude of Africa's external debt in 1992 was between \$250-300 billion, and owed to Western governments, private investment and financial institutions, and multi-national corporations in addition to the Western controlled twin institutions of the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund (IMF)". A further exacerbation of the violence and conflict is the existing cost of servicing these debts. Most affected countries expended between 40 and 50 percent of their foreign exchange earnings to service these debts. By implication, limited resources are now made available for capital projects and the sustenance of inherited recurrent expenditures. The inability of African governments to continuously maintain and service the existing deplorable conditions of social services further compounds the problem of acute shortage and epileptic performance of this social infrastructure thus the frequent violence, demonstrations, strikes, etc. The failure further helps to ignite the potencies of ethnic conflicts especially between and among the tribes engaging in competitions for political power and authority. The disintegration of the then Union of the Soviet Socialist Republic (USSR) and the attendant collapse of socialism in the then Eastern bloc compounded the fear that the favourable investment conditions in these countries might favour the attraction and stimulation of foreign direct investments. The Bretton Woods Institutions (BWI) therefore advised African countries to pursue along with the existing programmes of economic recovery a deliberate programme of political liberalization of their entire socio-economic and socio-political settings. This perhaps informed the emergence of pro-democracy movements and the attendant democratic transition projects that were then implemented. And since most of the African countries on the threshold of democratization were hitherto dictatorial and authoritarian, the programmes of democratic transitions that were put in place failed to democratize access to political power along established rules of contemporary democratic ethos. The programmes only succeeded in the accomplishment of power-sharing arrangements between and among the elites, with either the inclusion or exclusion of one ethnic group against the other. So, rather than democratization leading to the building of hope and the encouragement of broad-based political participation, it has further dampened it by sustaining separatist agitations. As thus suggested by Anise (1993), the triple imperatives of current African governance predicaments have ethnically conditioned the political systems of contemporary Africa to the extent that all forms of formulas, models and frameworks of ethnic accommodation have been suggested as a way out.

Examining what these models, formulas, and frameworks are, necessitates critical discussion and analysis of what ethnic management is all about. And to have a proper grasp of what ethnic management is, it has become imperative that we first examine what management is within the

context of political science, and within the entire framework of authoritative allocation of values. What therefore, is management? To begin with, it has become important to note that the term has been so much over-used that there may not be a generally acceptable definition of it. But for the purpose of the article, management can be considered as both *art* and *science*. As an art, it simply refers to those processes of human relations which top-level managers use to make things happen; as a science (theory of management), it deals with the body of knowledge and the systematic study of the practice of making things happen (Obasanjo and Mabogunje, 1991: 76). Before a critique of this definition is ventured into, it has become important to identify the objectives of management. By objectives, we refer to both stated and unstated goals of management. With particular reference to African politics, the central objective of management includes the satisfaction of the needs of the multiple nationalities making up the political space of Africa. These needs can be categorized into two. They include physical or tangible needs such as food, shelter, health, infrastructure, education and training, employment, water, etc. While these needs are quantifiable, the second category of needs, the psychological or intangible needs are unquantifiable. They are mainly emotional and spiritual needs such as security, mutual respect, identity, freedom, and political will (Ibid: 77).

The above-cited definition, however, serves limited utility. In the first place, it limits or confines management to something that is essentially businesslike. This need not be the case always. Secondly, the impression being created that management deals with how to make things happen is mechanistic. Interestingly, these shortcomings are its strengths. As both art and science, management connotes a specific and conscious process of ordering of resources and accommodation of differences in order to achieve consensually agreed and collectively determined goals of societies. Here lies the political relevance of this definition. Ethnic management, therefore, involves the channeling of irreconcilable conflicts into conciliable ones, or keeping conflicts in check by eliminating conditions that bring them into being or heighten them (Osaghae, 1992: 220). Ethnic management has therefore become indispensable especially in multi-ethnically segmented societies simply because, according to Larry Diamond: "...ethnic cleavages do not die. They cannot be extinguished through repression or assimilation; however they can be managed so that they do not threaten civil peace and people of different groups are able to coexist in tranquility..." (cf. Osaghae, 1992: 220).

The concept of ethnic management has been attacked by critics of various persuasions. One overriding point that is being raised or that is common in most of the criticisms is that the concept negates social dynamics because it seemed to assume that ethnic conflicts are sacrosanct (Osaghae, 1992: 220). However, such an argument fails to see that ethnic conflicts in themselves are variable, ranging from complete disappearance at one extreme to all-pervading at another, that their *hows* and *whys* change quite often, and that a good measure of ethnic management is not how much it solves the problem once and for all which is impossible, but how adequately it responds to the changing character of ethnic conflicts (Ibid: 220-221). Ethnic management has been approached from the viewpoint of models, formulas, and framework construction. In some societies such as Nigeria, it takes both political and legal forms. Zoning and rotation of political offices are good examples of political practices, while the federal character principle is

incorporated in the 1999 Constitution (as amended) as a legal model of ethnic management. As here being approached, the presentation and analysis of the accompanying critique of selected ethnic management models require the mentioning of, and reflection on, the character of the average African. What therefore it is that characterizes or dominates the average African outlook? Providing an answer to this has become inescapable since in the informed opinion of Osaghae (1992: 222): "The essence of ethnic management is not however to merely prescribe models and formulas. To do so at the expense of an examination of the actual circumstances requiring management, especially of materialist bases of ethnic conflicts, is to be both mechanistic and spurious".

It is therefore natural to begin the aforementioned intellectual responsibility/assignment by raising the question: How was the emphasis on "self" incorporated into the social fabric of the African settings? Again, providing a useful and appropriate answer to the question requires researching into the history of the contemporary African setting. Even though there were scattered cases of pre-capitalist social formations such as the feudal mode of production that covered the entire Sahel region of Africa, such a mode of production was however pursued within the idea of being a brother's keeper (service to humanity). For example, the Islamic provision of *sakkat*, an injunction that says that all Muslims are brothers and sisters and should therefore take care of one another. However, with the advent of colonialism and the attendant introduction or establishment of colonial rule, the entire African setting was disrupted and polluted through the commoditization and monetization of the African economy. The policies had attached the consequence of having to place one-self and possibly immediate family members above matters and issues concerning the many. The leftovers from the subsistence economy which were originally distributed to clan members, friends, and neighbors were now offered for sale within what was originally a community. Colonial policies were thus patterned along liberalism, a focus on the individual rather than the entire society.

African elites who later became nationalists by virtue of their exposure to the colonial instruments of education both at home and abroad imbibed very profoundly liberal philosophical thoughts whose fundamental economic component emphasizes unrestricted individual access to both the means of production and that of distribution of goods and services. And for this reason, profiteering or profit seeking became the guiding principle of social conduct. The quick appreciation of the magnitude of resources which African countries are endowed with, and the realization by the nationalists that the accumulation of money is crucial to the tasks of social mobilization and the sustenance of the whims and caprices in their respective regional spheres of influence, led to a situation, especially after independence, where services to the community were turned to personal pursuits. The primacy of self therefore overshadowed that of the entire society. Predatory and primitive accumulation of capital became the order of the day. The conduct of the African political process therefore became a competition among groups and individuals for the resources of the State and the attendant institutionalization of corruption. Since winning of elections is necessary so as to be able to gain access to the State, perfection in electoral instruments of jobbery such as gerrymandering, disqualification of candidates without explanations, issuance of ballot papers and boxes before election dates,

falsification of election results, thuggery during election periods, etc., jointly become the accepted political virtues/norms. Control of the judiciary especially Elections Petition Tribunals, turns out to be a game that professional politicians have to master. And this they did (and still continue to do) through all forms of associational relationships based on class, religion, political and ethnic groupings. One thing that we must not fail to mention is the fact that since political legitimacy or support is crucial in the entire struggle, there was (and still is) the deliberate reliance on ethnicity to garner support. The end result has been the politicization of competition along ethnic lines and the consequent enthronement of ethnic antagonisms which later turn into a kind of "ethnic cleansing" of the apparatuses of the State by the new regime holders.

Scholars, especially Africanists, disturbed by the ravaging and damaging consequences of ethnic conflicts in the Third World have overzealously constructed models and formulas of ethnic management which, quite regrettably, lack bearings with the specific African social reality. And it is argued here that any model which fails to consider the specific condition that informed its construction should not in the first place be regarded as a model because models by any standard are depictions of social realities. What are these models and formulas that are common in literature? They are multitudinous, and for this reason, a decision is made to limit what these models are to three selected works of very outstanding scholars. The criteria for their selection are hinged on the comprehensiveness of issues raised, and the theoretical relevance of their works to the article.

CONCLUSION

The article has no doubt engaged itself with the problems and issues in relation to using African peculiarities to construct a framework for the proper understanding of the embedded concepts in relation to the academic discourse on ethnic conflict management and the associated models. Because ethnic conflicts have equally assisted in the accentuation of the various problems associated with contemporary governance in Africa, and further because the three selected works have revealed the lack of congruence between these orthodox models and the specific condition of Africa, there is therefore the imperative need to either ensure their re-formulation or complete rejection in line with the reason adduced above. The challenge therefore focuses on how to construct models that best reflect the specific historical, material condition of the African political environment. This is no doubt a difficult task perhaps because of the fluidity in the causes of ethnic conflicts, fluidity in the sense of variations in the potencies of the popularly identified factors, potencies which of course change from time to time and place to place. But the fact that the causes of these ethnic frictions and acrimonies are largely similar regionally suggest that the factors precipitating ethnic conflicts should occupy recognizable positions in any attempt at constructing models of ethnic management, and also that specific national models should have sub-regional and regional usefulness. However, the fact that there are profound national and sub-regional variations in political systems of Africa makes the imposition of particular models authoritarian and intellectuality risky. Be that as it may, the construction of ethnic management models should recognize the "democratic space of ethnic conflicts" as espoused by Diamond (1990). In other words and as brilliantly posed by Osaghae (1992: 228): "The

question that arises then is: how does it (democracy) facilitate ethnic conflicts and how best can it (democracy) facilitate their management?" Extended further, how can we strike a balance between conflict and stability? This suggests further that models of ethnic management should be able to strike recognizable balance between ethnic conflicts on the one hand, and the stability that they must engender on the other.

Accepted that there are sharp disagreements on the workability of federalism as an ethnic management model, evidence from the continent however still confirms its superiority by the simple reason that it accords the minorities their right to existence. It in addition allows and encourages cross-cutting cleavages and inter and intra-ethnic cooperation. Federalism, notwithstanding, still faces in Africa, the problem of political manipulation of the composite ethnic units because of the high premium being placed on the state as the facilitator of all kinds of political jobbery. Even though minority rights are well incorporated into the various constitutions, illiteracy however makes the usefulness of such incorporation insignificant. Apart from this, there is the lack of independent judiciary due to the increasing power of the executive arm of government which is not peculiar to Africa alone. What is remarkable in the African experience is that the state is still the facilitator of development, and for this reason, such a role confers on the executive unlimited power, at least politically speaking. What is important for scholars to focus their research energies on is how to ensure equal and adequate representation of the various composite nationalities making up various Africa's national political systems in the areas where public goods are being processed so that even if representatives occupying the decision-making apparatuses are apparently embezzling public funds, all ethnic groups must see themselves as participating in it, thus representing the peculiarities of Africa/the African situation that was earlier referred to.

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