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Contents

Nigeria:
Decolonial Climate Adaptation and Conflict.
Evidence from Coastal Communities of the Niger Delta

Fidelis ALLEN

Abstract: The paper proceeds on the assumption that decoloniality matters in tackling the global climate crisis, conflict, and development at the community level across countries with high vulnerabilities. Africa remains one of the most vulnerable regions in the world. By examining what decolonisation means in climate adaptation and the experience of six communities in three states in the Niger Delta of Nigeria, this article contributes to the conceptualisation of the decolonial discourse of climate adaptation, development and conflict understood as conditions favourable to the crisis. I analysed qualitative data obtained from the coastal communities through observation, focus group discussions, and interviews. The results showed a reinforcement of positions in a segment of the literature on decolonial climate adaptation in communities in some parts of the world. Migration, alternative sources of livelihood, embarkment of shorelines, skills development, vocations, and infrastructure development are among legitimate adaptive measures local communities are adopting. At the same time, maladaptive measures such as piracy, kidnapping, illegal oil refining, and gangsterism are common. These antisocial behaviours lead to conflict and contribute to making climate change a very complex problem. Decolonial climate adaptation requires collaborative interventions at the level of the community, sub-national, national, and multilateral fronts. The fact that climate change is a global problem with unequal impact means that the capacity to respond well to it at the community, sub-national, national, regional, continental, and international levels is crucial in addressing the crisis. The role of decoloniality in the handling of the effects of climate change in the community may take the form of integration of local and western knowledge. The decolonial framework would appear to be elastic with a potential conceptual role of critical assessment of existing frameworks, outcomes, impact, and power relations. One of the striking messages in this analysis is the likely role of local knowledge

Fidelis ALLEN

Professor, Head of the Department of Political and Administrative Studies
University of Port Harcourt, Rivers State, Nigeria
Letsema Visiting Fellow, Institute for Pan-African Thought and Conversations,
University of Johannesburg, South Africa

Email: idelis.allen@uniport.edu.ng

in reducing the risk of social tension and criminal conflict, and the need to strengthen it to increase the resilience and well-being of people.

Keywords: Decolonisation, climate, adaptation, development, Africa, Nigeria, coastal communities.

Introduction

Decolonization of climate adaptation refers to the use of indigenous and traditional knowledge by people in communities as a means of combating the effects of climate change. I have argued elsewhere that decolonisation is both an ideology and a practice that seeks to dismantle unhealthy colonial values, structures, systems, and legacy in postcolonial states. This is also about a preference for alternative models of development where the processes and the outcomes can clearly show qualities of deep and sincere ecological concerns, fairness, justice, well-being, and human security.

Decolonisation is an important conceptual tool in the analysis of development in the developing world. It is a qualifier of the desired development model. Typically, the concept of development faces a crisis of ideological interpretations. The mere mention of colonialism, neo-colonialism or western development models can send different messages to people depending on their ideological leanings, in a world characterised by hegemonic and unequal power relations between northern and southern countries. Development should be seen as a change process in response to human security needs. As argued somewhere else, decolonial development models are desired for their adjudged capacity to fulfill this goal through a critical assessment of the existential realities and outcome of Eurocentric development models to strike a balance or make the preference for a model that is responsive to the human security needs of citizens (Allen & Amadi, 2022). Such a model or set of models must be seen to be holistic in approach, touching on all dimensions of human existence, including ecological systems.

Stories of how climate change affects communities are no longer new. For example, as shown in the table below, hunger in the Sudan Savanna region of Africa will escalate due to rising temperatures and unpredictable and decreasing rainfall. The World Food Programme reported in April 2022 that the number of hungry people in West Africa and the Sahel due to climate change was in the range of 41 million (UN News, 2022). Extreme weather events such as floods, droughts, unpredictable rainfalls, and erosion have become more frequent throughout the world and are reasons to worry about where all this will take Africa in the next couple of years (Pyhälä *et al.*, 2016). Whether in the Horn of Africa, West Africa, Southern Africa, Central or East Africa, the prevalence of these problems and their impact on the well-being of people, especially in terms of availability and affordability of food, are key concerns. Adapting to these problems is critical. The incidence and significance of decolonial ways of doing it, understood in

terms of traditional and indigenous knowledge and practices have been acknowledged in the literature (see, for example, Daszkiewicz, 2022).
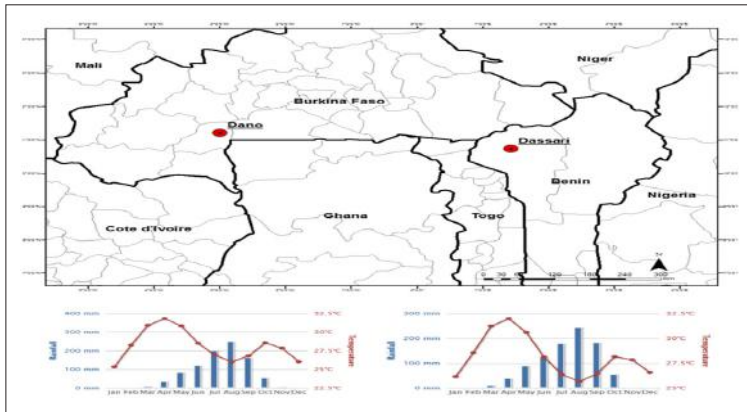
Figure 1: Sudan Savannah shows average temperatures and rainfall (Callo-Concha 2018)

The impact of climate change on food production, consumption, and hunger until 2050 in Africa south of the Sahara and Nigeria in particular shows a steep increase, as indicated in Figure 2. As food insecurity remains a key element of the characterisation of those in extreme poverty, this picture suggests a far bigger problem for Africa. The data show that among the regions of the world, Africa will be the most hit by climate change-induced food security problems (Brown & Crawford, 2008).

Figure 2: Impact projections on food production, consumption, and hunger in 2050

Source: International Food Policy Research Institute.

Like many regions in Africa, coastal communities in the Niger Delta of Nigeria remain vulnerable to chains of unsolicited consequences from climate disasters such as floods, unpredictable rainfall, erosion, and excessive heat. The economic, social, and environmental conditions that follow these disasters have implications for the broader s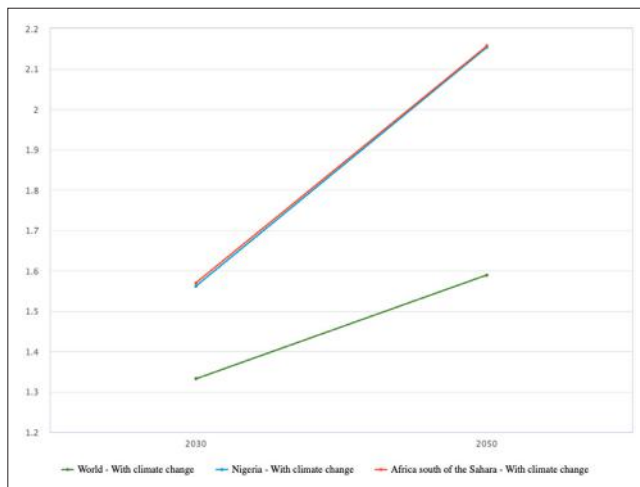ocial cohesion and development of communities and the region at large. For example, these conditions continue to fuel insecurity and conflict. The assumption is that the deployment and strengthening of local knowledge might be a vital component of what needs to be done for coping with these problems.

It must be noted that the idea of decolonising climate solutions in Africa does not in any way portray an uncritical rejection of western solutions. In other words, it does not mean blind rejection of Western-oriented models of dealing with the climate crisis and development in Africa. Instead, it means careful integration of western and indigenous knowledge or acknowledging and utilisation of indigenous models as alternatives when the processes and outcomes of western models have proved to be incapable of improving the living conditions of people in the post-colonial state. The concept of traditional or local knowledge is elastic and used in the analysis of non-African settings by non-African scholars (Chevallier, 2017). To be sure, scholars have highlighted how traditional and local knowledge systems are driving climate adaptation in several parts of the world. These efforts have hinted in a positive sense at the question of whether there is a decolonial approach to climate adaptation and development. However, the concept needs a deeper understanding within specific geographical contexts for wider applicability and acceptability. What do we know about its indicators in the case of the Niger Delta of Nigeria?

Literature review

As the issue of adaptation continues to echo in the discourse on the global climate crisis, communities in different parts of the world are increasingly identified with local coping and adaptive actions (Owusu & Andriesse, 2022; Ung *et al.*, 2016). Coastal communities in Cambodia are among these communities. The locals are using indigenous adaptive methods to tackle climate variability. These methods are not only being discussed in terms of development, but scholars are also highlighting the need to mainstream decoloniality in the broader efforts of authorities on the subnational, national, and multilateral fronts. Typically, these Cambodian communities are agricultural and fishing societies. Most locals in these communities depend on these economic activities and natural resources for livelihood.

It is important to note that scholars have used the concepts of coping and adaptation to convey different meanings, although they are interconnected. Adaptation refers to strategies deployed in response to climate change that aims to reduce harm and negative impact. These measures sometimes are even expected to provide new opportunities.

They can be anticipatory or proactive (Ung *et al.*, 2016). In contrast, coping measures are short-term and reactive. As Ung *et al.* (2016) have argued, adaptation can be viewed as the extension of coping mechanisms or the taking of coping measures to the next level. Both can be initiated by people in the public and private sectors.

As far back as 2006, the Cambodian government created the National Adaptation Programme of Action on Climate Change. Participatory principles were applied in the process that led to the establishment of this body in the sense that it involved local communities, policymakers, and stakeholders. It had to be that way because these are communities with high sensitivity to climate variability. To deal with the associated risks, people themselves needed to be adequately involved in the policy-making process.

A report by the natural disaster committee of that country estimated the cost of disasters such as floods, destructive storms, and drought at hundreds of millions of United States dollars in 2011. This was one reason for concern from the government and communities. Ung, Luginaah, Chuenpagdee, and Cambell (2016) used the self-efficacy theory to investigate the incidence of local knowledge and adaptive response to climate change and argued that there is a need to strengthen indigenous responses. Self-efficacy itself is a key conceptual tool in health research. Its key hypothesis is that when individuals assess their capacity to undertake a task in reaction to risk, to prevent or reduce impending harm, they would do it (Bandura, 1997).

The Vanuatu Pacific example is equally revealing. Its rich heritage of local knowledge on climate adaptation has been explained (Granderson, 2017). Granderson argues that local knowledge in this region can be used to strengthen the resilience of the community. Granderson's analysis of local perspectives on the Pacific Island points to the indirection of a legacy of application of local knowledge application to address the impact of environmental change (Bandura, 2011). Following are some identifiable methods common in the region: water and food storage, collective pooling of resources for problem-solving, the elevation of settlement, superstitions, and religious ways of life, and predicting climate variability (Granderson, 2017; 2014).

North-Central Vietnam is another region of the world that provides an interesting case study. Local knowledge occupies a key position in its development discourse. This owes much to a growing culture of participatory resource governance among locals and authorities. Typically, local knowledge in this part of the country has suffered disdain and relegation by adherents to modernity. The analysis by Bruun and Ngoc of the significance of indigenous methods to adapt to natural disasters in rural people is instructive (2018). As they argued, there is a parallel reality of indigenous and western adaptive responses to climate variability. The authors, however, mentioned a lack of requisite political context that promotes active resource management among locals. Vietnam will not be the last in this journey of identifying regions in the world where local knowledge is making contributions to climate adaptive measures.

Scholars have analysed the case of coastal communities in West Africa. For example, Amadou, Villamor, and Kye-Baffour (2018) tell the story of local populations in northern Ghana. This is an agriculture-based population, using land-use adaptive agricultural approaches to deal with climate problems. In the same vein, locals in northern Mali are using diversification of means of livelihood, migration, and institutional adjustments as strategies to adapt to severe ecological tragedies (Brockhaus *et al.*, 2013). These are communities that rely on natural resources for survival.

In Sudan's West African savanna, especially in Dassari, Benin and Dana, Burkina Faso, local adaptation to climate vulnerability are already underway (Callo-Choncha, 2018). But it takes much encouragement to achieve better results. This is even more so to help reduce the risk of conditions capable of triggering violent conflict for those whose adaptive measures are antisocial. Temperatures have increased between 0.5 and 0.8 since 1970 in West Africa. Similarly, rainfall has decreased by at least 10% since 1950 (Callo-Conha, 2018).

In these communities, farmers can forecast weather conditions to make decisions about cropping seasons. They adapt to technologies although often with a feeling of no real sense of ability to adapt to climate change without being able to read weather situations. This is what matters to them. They insist on a combination of local or western knowledge. The area in question is climate-sensitive agricultural systems that are known to produce cereal species as dominant crops due to their high tolerance nature.

Table 1. Ways in which local knowledge can support climate adaptation

Component	Examples
Biophysical and social exposure	• Integration of local and scientific observations of climatic change[3,49] • Indigenous weather forecasting to moderate the effects of variable rainfall[39,50,51] • Seasonal migration to minimize weather impacts[52] • Protection of water sources through taboos and designation of sacred sites[47] • Reducing exposure to environmental hazards[53]
Sensitivity to change and variability	• Management of common property[54,55] • Use of crop varieties and mixes that provide yields in a wide range of climates[56] • Traditional soil and water management and conservation systems[57,58] • Distribution of risks through social networks for food sharing[36,59] • Allocation of pasture for livestock grazing[40] • Local institutions for managing sudden influxes of migrants[60]
Adaptive capacity and adaptation processes	• Using indigenous observations in decision making[3] • Insights into changing attitudes toward the role of people's resource management, as 'destroyers of the environment' or 'custodians of resources' • Insights into social differentiation of vulnerability and adaptation, including socially conditioned responses to external stressors • Insights into communication needs, e.g., cognitive processes that determine the uptake of seasonal forecasts[61,62] • The significance of changing cultures and loss of traditional institutions[4]

Source: Naess (2013, p. 101).

Based on fieldwork experience in two villages in Tanzania, Naess (2013) identified three broad categories of components and examples of how local knowledge can support climate adaptation as follows: biophysical and social exposure, sensitivity and variability, and adaptive capacity and adaptation processes (See Table 1). The last component includes examples of the use of local observations in decision-making, perceptions of changing the behaviour of locals as defenders or destroyers of the environment, and insights into the importance of changing local institutions and cultures. Tanzania presents another case of how local knowledge can help climate adaptation, although it also has a challenging future here. Naess (2013, p. 101) explained the meaning of local knowledge as context-specific knowledge produced over the long term and utilised within the context. He addressed the question of whether this exists and how to use the Tanzania example. Used interchangeably with traditional knowledge, local knowledge has the potential to deliver power to communities relationally, in matters of environmental and institutional processes. Adaptive action aims to reduce the vulnerability of people to climate change. However, challenges include environmental susceptibility, political and political context, and capacity.

In the final analysis, Africa faces palpable climate-related disasters. Communities respond with adaptive and coping measures. But not much is known about how this is unfolding and how local knowledge can interact better with political institutions as a matter of decoloniality to increase its value in reducing the vulnerability of communities to the impact of climate change.

Methodology

The article focused on six coastal communities in three states of the Niger Delta, namely, the Bayelsa Rivers and Akwa Ibom. Both communities and States were selected to be easier and without adequate resources. In Bayelsa state, data was collected in Beletiama and Nembe in the local government areas of Brass and Nembe. In Rivers state, the study was carried out in Finima and Kono, in Bonny and Khana, respectively. The study used data collected by Health of Mother Earth Foundation Nigeria through participatory research methods in a study of 'climate change as a cause of conflict in coastal areas of West Africa' (Health of Mother Earth Foundation, 2022).[1] I participated in the research component of that project and give the necessary credit to the Health of Mother Earth Foundation for the data-driven insights in this article. The study deployed focus group discussion for data collection with a total of 60 participants selected through snowballing on a quota basis with 10 from each community. In addition, 12 participants were selected based on a quota of 2 per community using the snowball technique. These decisions were influenced by several factors, including

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1   The author was the lead consultant in that study. This paper benefitted from that study.

insecurity in these communities. The participants were drawn from fishers, farmers, women, men, youth, and community leadership. A meeting organized to form sense of purpose for an initial joint analysis of the data collected in the field with research assistants and some of the participants in the communities that attended helped strengthen the validity of the data due to the participatory approach of the study. Overall, data from transcripts of recorded discussions and field diary content were thematically analysed with ATLAS.ti.

The question of how people cope or adapt to climate change produced data that suggest the use of local knowledge or the decolonisation of solutions to the problem. They are adapting in the local sense based on their extensive awareness and knowledge of the environment and climate. The problem, however, is that policymakers do not pay adequate attention to local solutions to climate change at the community level. Despite the threat that climate change poses to the well-being of people in Africa and the role, that adaptation is expected to play in addressing the crisis, only little is known about local knowledge.

Bayelsa, Rivers, and Akwa Ibom are part of the nine oil-producing states of Nigeria, politically defined as the Niger Delta (See Figure 1). This has not always been the meaning of the region. In a way, it speaks to the importance of the oil industry in any definition of this region in contrast to the enormous and rich biodiversity and general coastal features that previously characterised the region as part of the entire Gulf of Guinea states of Africa. The region was a key destination for early European slave trading activities and the shipment of conscripted slaves overseas. Later it became a major centre for the
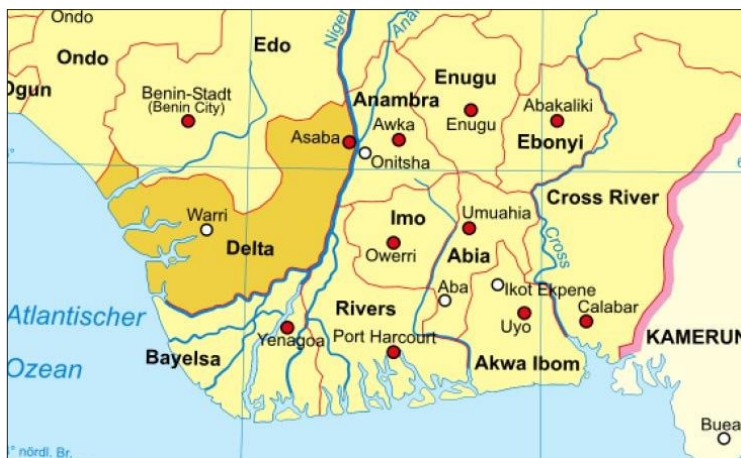

Figure 3: Map of the Niger Delta

Source: AllAfrica.https://cdn04.allafrica.com/download/pic/main/main/csiid/
00561522:7d1477902134c6b00360fbd0cd7b6ffa:arc614x376:w735:us1.jpg

purchase of raw materials for the industrial revolution in Europe. The establishment of a protectorate and colony in 1906, and the eventual amalgamation of the same in 1914 was the height of the appropriation of Nigeria by Britain under its imperial policy in the post-European Berlin-Conference era.

Bayelsa State

We fish in the ocean without a compass. We study the movement of the moon to know when to go out. Knowledge of the movement of fish is essential. Turbulence in the ocean is seasonal. It does not happen all the time. This was how a former fisherman and native of Beletiama in the Brass Local Government Area of the state responded to the question of how he was coping with changes in the environment. It immediately raises the question of whether locals know their environment, changes and how they are responding to continue to meet their needs.

There is a tacit portrayal of the ability of local fishermen to understand the environment of practice. Predicting the weather, no matter how inaccurately done, has a valuable positive impact on fishing and farming practices. It is a key aspect of the cultural and local knowledge infrastructure of the people which has not been explored in the face of difficult economic conditions climate change is bequeathing. Reading local weather and being guided by it for safety and fishing at the right time is certainly not an accurate system for decision-making by modern standards. Even so, there have been insinuations in many quarters of how this type of knowledge continues to assist fishing populations, especially those without the capacity for the modern fishing tools and technology needed for decision-making about practice.

The issue here is that climate variability is intensifying and posing threats, especially to the extremely poor. The resilience of local people who face the challenge of lack of adequate presence of state authorities in matters of climate change will not wait to be consumed by climate events where they feel able to do something about such problems with whatever knowledge they have. But modern knowledge systems discourage or fail to integrate it. They neither scrutinize local knowledge to determine its suitability for times in which people are in.

Like the rest of the coastal areas of the Niger Delta, the oil company activities in Bayelsa State contribute a significant amount of CO_2 emissions to Nigeria's total profile which stood at 115, 280 as of 2019.[2] This infamous testimonial of the Nigerian state is part of the cause of the global climate crisis. Greenhouse gas in the atmosphere is the cause of rising temperatures.

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2 https://knoema.com Nigeria domestic withdrawals media coverage weight in areas of score 3.5–4 was 0 in 2014 — the single year for which the data is available now.

Sea level rise, flood, unpredictable rainfall patterns, excessive heat, and erosion are severe climate change issues in Bayelsa State. Together, they pose a threat to the survival of the community people. Waiting for the government and non-governmental organisations to respond with adaptive programmes each time a disaster strikes, is reasonable, but that is inadequate and often too politically guided to yield good results. Fishing, farming, hunting, canoe carving and palm wine (local gin producing), are key legitimate economic activities threatened and affected by climate problems. The impact on the practice of these occupations unfolds in different ways. For example, the ability of fisherfolk to read the behaviour of the ocean is failing due to the unpredictability of seasons. Harmattan seasons nowadays are shorter than expected. They interfere with the rainy season period. Fishermen and farmers understand the implications of these changes for the practice of their occupations. The data showed evidence of frustration with the impact of these changes on livelihood activities.

The shift from fishing and farming to other trades comes with many challenges, such as the lack of financial resources and skills needed for that shift. Likewise, migrating, a common adaptive decision that people make comes with its challenges. People tend to leave their families behind when they first move. When floods and erosion are the issues, migrating due to the loss of living homes requires movement by entire households. These adaptive measures involve a cost that must be considered. The capacity of victims to bear the cost can affect the outcome. Resilience is the critical element for survival which the question of decolonisation of adaptation relates to. Improving the level of resilience of community people is essential for effective adaptation. As the data showed, one of the adaptive measures taken by some fishermen in the Niger Delta is changing from the use of local boats without outboard engines to those with engines. Outboard engines are not manufactured locally, but they make a good contribution to increasing the resilience of fishermen. This upgrade in equipment use represents a mixture of local knowledge and western knowledge. The move to distant seas for fishing was forced by the growing depletion of fish species in close-by water bodies due to overfishing or pollution.

One aspect of the changing climate in Bayelsa is the presence of nipa palms. These are subversive plants that locals believe to have no economic or ecosystem service-providing values. They are mostly defined by locals as destructive because they block waterways and mangroves. Mangroves, in contrast, are resources of great value for locals who see them as sources of medicine, fuel hoods, natural habitat for the reproduction of fish species, and much more, known to be.

The locals were asked how they coped and adapted to the effects of climate change. Their responses included the following: the use of outboard-powered seagoing boats, the installation of natural wisdom to guide when to fish, custom fishing nets, trading, poultry farming, skills development, and vocational training.

There are maladaptive measures people have taken as well. Most of them contribute to insecurity. Crime, in different forms including piracy, kidnapping, armed robbery, and cultism, is one of them. Many young people who chose these antisocial measures do so out of frustration with unproductive fishing and farming. The net result of all this, which includes unemployment, a lack of sufficient income during a period of growing food insecurity and a lack of government attention to the provision of basic social amenities, means that some would seek alternative means of livelihood through crime. Some have turned to illegal oil refining, a loathed business among those who value the environment more than money.

The Etiema, Agbakabiriyai, and Igbetaiwoama communities in the Nembe local government area have long-lasting cultures of wildlife conservation. The knowledge around this did not emanate from the west. They just know that this is valuable for the community's well-being in the long run. This practice has come under severe threat, as the maladaptive actions of many affected by climate change led them to disobey the community restrictions on economic activities in some parts of the environment. Flood, erosion, sea level rise, unpredictable rainfall, and heat waves, and their attendant resource scarcity, are specifically making some people pay lip service to regulations guiding fishing in specified areas weak. Although some of these rules have spiritual dimensions, their full implementation faces obstacles due to pressure from the changing climate. For example, commercial picking of periwinkle is forbidden, but people in neighbouring communities ignore the spiritual consequences of indulgently using it for commercial purposes.

Africa lacks resources to address the adaptation and mitigation of climate change. This was the point that the President of the African Development Bank, Dr Akuwumi Adesina (2022), recently highlighted at the Africa Adaptation Summit in The Netherlands. He disclosed that Africa needs a total of $1.3 to $1.6tn between now and 2030 to be able to tackle climate change. It needs about $118bn to $145bn yearly to meet its Paris Agreement and nationally determined obligations. In the past year, only about 3% of the $100bn pledged by countries of the north to support developing countries to fight climate change annually was redeemed. Africa does not even have a mechanism to track the level of commitment of these countries to meet their promise. African leaders should keep local solutions as part of their alternatives at the level of adaptation.

Rivers State

In Rivers state, the study was carried out in Finima, Bonny local government area, and Kono, Khana local government area. Locals face the problem of devastating floods, thunderstorms, rise in sea level, erosion, and invasion by seas on the land. Despite adaptive efforts such as people seeking alternative sources of livelihood, migration, landscaping, and makeshift drainage, coping has been difficult. The adaptive capacity of

locals must be built through interventionist financing of social amenities, and economic empowerment of the extremely poor from the perspectives of victims.

In Kono, locals are involved landscaping to check erosion and protect houses from collapsing. They are also involved in the planting of special grasses that can withstand floods. These responses work regardless of the degree of the result. As such, they have the potential to help many communities if awareness is created and encouraged through a more systematic and productive approach. This potential has to be explored and tapped, according to participants from these communities.

Figure 4: Submersible Planting as a Flood Mitigation Strategy in Kono

Source: HOMEF (2022)

We *"change the way we plant. Sometimes we allowed the farmland to stay for seven years, but this time for three years. We add fertilizer to cope up"* was how one participant expressed the resilience of local farmers, transiting from nature-based farming practices to the use of fertilizers. Seven years is a long time to wait for flood-affected land to build momentum for the next farming season amidst growing food security issues.

The Kono people have a culture of collective intervention. They raise funds through individual contributions to the construction of roads and drainages in the community as part of efforts to contain the impact of flooding. As also observed during the field study, there exists a deep-rooted culture of caring for one's neighbour in the community. For example, fishermen who return from the sea on specific days of the month can share part of their catch with neighbours. This is very comforting for people in the community struggling to cope with the impact of climate change.

The Kono Wiinua Mangrove Reserved Area is an amazing example of local initiatives in conservation. Logging and fishing activities are prohibited in this area. This practice is inconvenient for some fishermen who feel that the distances they have to go fishing are too long. Even so, the community seems to have long settled for this practice based on

Figure 5: Wiinua Mangrove Protected Area in Kono

Source: HOMEF (2022)

good knowledge of the long-term benefits for the community through the protection of fisheries species and guarantee of resources for future generations. In the words of one participant,

> *… we are farmers and fishermen, and you will find more fish around the mangrove area than you will find around the nipa palm areas. You find more fish, crabs, periwinkles, etc. So, we decided to preserve that area, let us see, and even if other areas have been devastated, let us keep it the way it is… When you look at the yield you get from the areas that have been devastated and this area that we protect, we will be able to draw a comparison… You get more from here, but in the nipa area — no, you don't get as much. The fish do not thrive as much in the nipa area.*

Likewise, in Bonny, *Finima Nature Park* is a protected area. The community is not permitted to fish or log in the area. But some fishers affected by climate disasters are not sure how this practice supports their livelihoods or benefits them in the short term. For example, they are unhappy with the impact of thunder and lightning and wish the area was not protected to prevent them from fishing. Finima is the *Thunder Belt* of the Niger Delta. *Thunder arrestors* have been provided by Nigeria's liquefied natural gas company operating there, but they were not functional at the time of this study. Their forebears had originally relocated from this location to where the natural gas company is located today because of thunder strikes. But they were forced back by the Nigerian government due to the location of the company.

In Bonny still, fishermen are enlisting as members of local fisherman's unions to allow them to articulate collective positions on issues related to wellbeing and communicate

the same to local authorities. Although there are yet no known substantial results from this development, signs indicate that this could be a way that fishermen could find a form of power to influence the responses of local authorities on occupation-related issues.

How is house demolishing an adaptive or mitigation action? Some houses are considered to be making the impact of floods in the community worse because they block roads and pathways for floodwater evacuation. The local government in Bonny and the community leadership in the case of Kono are driving this in the hope of reducing the impact of climate change and helping people cope better with the situation. But this has its side effects. First, those affected by demolition may have little or no capacity to provide the financial resources needed for replacement without adequate compensation. Even when the community is magnanimous enough to provide alternative land for the victim, building on it is a responsibility the community will not do or has the resources to do.

We observed the protection of the Bonny coastline on the beach provided by the community to prevent sea encroachment. As one participant noted, *"shoreline protection has helped to maintain the area... else, it would be gone by now... For years now since they did that thing, nothing has happened. The place has remained intact".*

The Rivers State government and the Nigeria Liquified Natural Gas company are currently constructing a road, Bonny-Bodo-Road, to connect Bonny Island to the rest of the state. This project is considered a mitigation and adaptation measure due to its accompanying design and fitting drainage system.

Akwa Ibom State

A). January to December... we need harmattan, but we cannot see it. B). The change in harmattan season is affecting us, especially in fishing in the sense that as fishers, we like the sea breeze because it brings fish. This one blowing now is the ocean breeze... C). We are suffering from water, and every time we have a great water season there is always flooding in the community that destroys homes and properties, especially those close to water.

There are four main issues conveyed in these comments. They were made by three participants in two communities in Akwa Ibom State. First, is the issue of delayed harmattan seasons, which locals associate with difficulties and a lack of opportunities for productive fishing. Second, their understanding of the character of the season concerning fishing and farming. Third, is their knowledge of the direction of the wind, and the availability of fish in specific areas of the ocean. Finally, what happened or how did they experience the impact of floods on their well-being?

In Okorette, Eastern Obolo Local Government Area of the state, the impact of flood, sea level rise and heat waves are severe on the local farming and fishing population. Fishing is the main occupation of the people. Farming should be an alternative means of

Figure 6: An interview with locals in Akwa Ibom State
by research assistants for the Health of Mother Earth Foundation.

Source: Health of Mother Earth Foundation (2022) Climate change as a cause
of conflict in coastal areas of West Africa project, *Research Report.*

income, but both can be affected at the same time in various ways. The story is the same as that of the Upenekang community in the Ibeno Local Government Area of the state.

Unpredictable rainfall is perceived by locals as an act of God for which they feel little or no real responsibility in terms of mitigation. They (the Okorette community people) feel the government must construct an embankment at the river shores. They also believe government should assist them with relief materials and funds to deal with problems caused by regular flooding. Floods typically cause havoc on homes and crops. They also believe that the government should provide potable drinking water, which is a big issue that locals believe is needed to cope with the social and economic consequences of climate events. Furthermore, channelling excessive water caused by rain and flooding through gutters is an expensive project that the government should handle.

Meanwhile, both communities face severe security issues such as piracy and armed stealing of boats with outboard engines. One of the coping methods fishermen have adopted to tackle the problem of low fish catch in close-by water areas is to move to distant sea and ocean, a step that requires better technology such as boats with outboard engines in contrast to canoes. Again, local canoes are not oceangoing vessels. These crimes, which are related to the impact of climate change through the maladaptive responses of perpetrators, pose a threat to the survival of fishers. To address these security issues, people in the community want more presence of both states (navy, police, and army) and non-state security actors (popularly known as vigilantes).

Discussions

A striking aspect of the analysis is that local populations use local knowledge to make adaptive decisions in the six Niger Delta communities examined in this study. In other words, local knowledge promotes adaptation and helps reduce vulnerabilities, even if the results have been negligible. Second, the adaptive capacity of these communities remains weak and leans toward unsuitable criminal components, worsening the climate change problem. The sustainability of benefits from the integration of local knowledge is a key concern due to the nature of existing political institutions and limited external support for the use of such knowledge. This corroborates the data obtained from the review of the literature, which showed that people in coastal communities affected by climate change have had a long-lasting mode of adaptive response from the point of view of local knowledge, defined in terms of decoloniality. Locals migrate to other locations, seek alternative sources of income, acquire new skills and vocational training, trade, or do several other things as forms of legitimate adaptation to climate change. Fishers and farmers, specifically in some communities, even pride themselves on knowing what to do in decisions about when and where to go for daily and seasonal fishing activities and planting and choice of crops that suit the changing environment. On the other hand, criminal activities such as piracy, kidnapping, the use of dynamite fishing techniques, armed robbery, illegal oil refining, and cultism or gangsterism are the main illegitimate adaptive areas of decision people tend to make (See Table 2).

Table 2: Examples of local adaptive measures in the Niger Delta

Adaptive Measures	Challenges	Components
Migration	lack of resources; conflict;	
Alternative sources of livelihood	Lack of resources, support from state institutions, lack of capacity of local institutions to support, and maladaptive actions.	Petty trading, poultry business, skills development, vocational training, work etc.
Maladaptation	Maladaptation	Illegal oil refining; Piracy, kidnapping, illegal logging of mangroves, use of dynamite fishing, armed robbery, and illegal picking of periwinkle.
Modern technology / local technology	lack of financial resources;	Modern farming techniques and the use of improved crop varieties; use of boats with outboard engines; planting of special grasses to combat erosion; fisheries; local observation and understanding of weather conditions for decision-making; local embarkment of shorelines, etc.

The debate on the decolonisation of climate adaptation and mitigation measures is not about blind rejection of solutions based on western knowledge. Instead, it includes the acknowledgement of the reality, possibilities, and value that local knowledge offers local populations. People's knowledge about their environment and changes, their definition of daily experiences, and methods of tackling the challenges resulting from changes are crucial decolonial perspectives for a proper response to the impact of climate change. Some scholars' attempts to define the decolonial approach to dealing with the problem of climate change in Africa and the rest of the developing world have suggested the integration of western and local knowledge. The analysis includes a rejection of the historical wrongs of northern countries against the planet through the transatlantic slave trade, colonization, and pillaging of African resources. All this drove the European industrial revolution and turned out to be the foundation of the current global climate crisis. Furthermore, decolonisation of climate policy is understood as the recognition of the context and unique situations of vulnerable communities with social, economic, environmental, or ecological concerns as critical elements of the survival and development of the capacity of communities to adapt to climate change (Daszkiewicz *et al.*, 2022).

The coastal communities of the Niger Delta where the study was carried out have one thing in common: locals understand that the environment is changing. They make valid observations about the environment, though they cannot be explained by the standards of Western knowledge systems. Their experience with the impact of the oil industry in terms of pollution greatly impacts their judgments about the environment. Despite all this, the local fishing and farming population continue to interact with nature in ways that support insights into the changing climate, though this happens mostly without their use of the concept of climate change. For example, they can tell the implications of delayed harmattan and rainy seasons for agriculture and fishing. They know the negative warnings about the environment when birds such as vultures are no longer sighted eating animal carcasses. They also read the direction of the wind at sea to understand when it is safe to go fishing, during which time they can also know where fish may be available.

It was very difficult for fishers to lose their bearing at sea before. Going nautical miles into the sea for fishing was safe with local knowledge of weather and direction for many. They had no modern compass, except natural local knowledge of time and direction. This wisdom may not always have been accurate, but it served these communities for ages when the climate started to take on more intense and unpredictable forms.

The impact of climate change on people in coastal communities in the Niger Delta manifests itself in various forms, including human insecurity through social, economic, political, and economic conditions that sometimes fuel or trigger conflict (Daszkiewicz *et al.*, 2022).

The Niger Delta represents a complex case of double tragedy. The establishment of oil and gas in Nigeria has posed a serious threat to creeks, air, mangroves, rivers, seas, and the ocean. Many coastal communities battling climate change effects also face the challenge of the destructive impact of oil facilities through regular spills. As a result, it is sometimes difficult to draw the line between oil-related and climate change issues. The additional burden these communities face now is the pollution arising from the activities of illegal oil refiners.

An interesting dimension of the decolonial discourse on climate change is rooted in the role of slavery, the Industrial Revolution, and colonialism during which periods countries in the north created the foundation for the pollution of the Earth with fossil fuels. The Industrial Revolution and colonialism were driven by the aggressive and unregulated quest and use of fossil fuels in Northern countries. Acknowledging and accepting to pay the debts arising from the pillage of developing countries by these countries has been argued to fit into the decolonial discourse. The net implication is that these countries should take the responsibility of financing adaptation and mitigation more seriously. It is instructive that in 2021 only 3% of these countries' commitment to their pledge of annual contributions of $100bn for the tackling of climate change in the developing world was realised. The lack of commitment on their part shows a lack of remorse for their role in the global climate crisis.

Conclusions

Overall, the article has examined the meaning of decolonisation of climate adaptation and development by exploring the literature to situate the experience of people in six communities in three states in the Niger Delta of Nigeria. The paper contributes to the conceptualisation of the decolonial discourse of climate adaptation. The analysis reinforces the position of the literature that local knowledge matters in climate adaptation at the community level. Communities are practising decolonial climate adaptation. Migration, alternative means of livelihood, local embarkment of shorelines, skills development and vocations, and community infrastructure development are among legitimate adaptive measures local communities are adopting. At the same time, these communities face many challenges. Maladaptive measures such as piracy, kidnapping, illegal oil refining, and gangsterism are common. They are part of the challenges because of their broader impact on the peace of society. They even pose severe threats to human security. These are anti-social behaviours with the capacity to trigger violent conflict, and many ways indirectly result in making the climate crisis a complex problem. Food insecurity, poverty, unemployment, and the risk of violent conflict are all indirectly linked or part of the maladaptive measures. At once, they are part of the challenges of decolonial climate adaptation, defined in terms of local knowledge to tackle the effects of climate change. The effectiveness of the role of local knowledge in

climate adaptation is a function of many factors. For example, the nature of traditional institutions, cultural practices, the character of political institutions, and the adaptive capacity of communities are critical elements.

Climate change is a global problem with an unequal impact on people. The ability of communities to respond with adaptation is crucial. Local, regional, continental, and international efforts must integrate local knowledge to productively serve the interest of people to cope with the impacts in ways that prevent conditions favourable to social tensions. The integration of traditional knowledge and political and economic institutions at those levels entails a critical assessment of western knowledge as a form of power. It means careful mixing of western and local knowledge systems and the strengthening of the same.

Climate adaptation requires adequate financing which countries in the developing world are fundamentally lacking. Countries in the north have failed to make good on the $100bn pledge in contributions annually in support of adaptation in developing countries. This pledge is a decolonial effort that has failed. Much worse for it is the new idea of "damage and loss" to remedy the damage inflicted on developing countries because the indicators and strategies for achieving it are yet to be properly defined. A decolonial approach will further mean de-emphasising problematic solutions such as markets and minimising investments in fossil fuels while boosting investments in alternative renewable energy. This requires individual country efforts at making energy mix a core national energy and foreign policy goal. In the same vein, regional economic groupings, continental organisations such as the African Union, and United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC). It requires the acknowledgement of decoloniality as a key element of ideas about the origin of the climate crisis, adaptation, and mitigation through participatory principles that capture the experiences and views of people in communities, climate justice networks, state authorities, and big companies.

In conclusion, the critical element in this analysis is the vulnerability of coastal communities and the financial attention needed for adaptation, strengthening of existing local approaches, and the integration of workable western ideas to support the resilience and well-being of people. Meanwhile, in the Niger Delta of Nigeria, maladaptation to climate change continues to take different shapes such as crime, gangsterism, political thuggery, illegal oil production and so on. These social conditions are contributing to conflict in communities and between communities.

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Ethiopia:
Federalism, Party Merger and Conflicts

Milkessa GEMECHU

Abstract: This article has a twin mission: examining the impact of party merger on the federal arrangement and its association with the current conflicts in Ethiopia. The 1995 federal constitution of Ethiopia devolves powers to regional states. Since then, each regional state was fused with its distinct ruling party that created a coalition at the federal level. This state-party fused federal arrangement faced serious challenges with the rise of intra-coalition disagreements since 2016 following the protest movements in the country, which further plunged Ethiopia into a devastating civil war since November 2020. This article asks what caused the conflicts. While recognizing the multidimensional roots of the conflicts, this article uses a political party-driven theory of federalism in order to identify the political processes that led to the conflicts. It argues that in a multiethnic federation such as Ethiopia where there is state-party fusion, a ruling party's metamorphosis from a coalition to a union may not only centralize power but could also result in both *de facto* merger of that fragile federation and conflicts. Delinking the state from the party through inclusive national negotiations and democratic elections within a federal arrangement might help transition Ethiopia to a stable country.

Keywords: Civil war, conflicts, political parties, Ethiopian federalism, Prosperity Party, power centralization, Abiy Ahmed.

Introduction

Conventional wisdom connects the outbreak of ethnonationalist conflicts and civil wars to the weakness of the government to impose central control over its territorial limits. Contrary to this assumption, "civil wars are more likely to erupt where the state exercises more control" (Koren & Sarbahi, 2017, p. 274). This is more so in multinational federations where regional forces vying for greater autonomy encounter a centralization policy that envisages

Milkessa GEMECHU

Visiting Assistant Professor, Department of Political Science, Albion College

Fellow, Institute of International Education-Scholar Rescue Fund

Email: mgemechu@albion.edu

to penetrate provinces and local communities. This article attempts to examine the relationship between power centralization and ethno-regional conflicts and civil wars relying on the case of Ethiopia. William Riker (1964), a leading scholar on federalism and party politics, establishes a firm association between the degrees of centralization in federations to the degree of centralization in political parties. Riker is known to have built the first systematic analysis of the political party-driven conceptualization of federalism. The dimensions of his analysis are the party's structure as well as its ideology across the federal and state governments. First, where a national party commands all federal and state governments [vertical union of party structure], the party/government leaders at the federal level will extend their control over the states, leading to a more centralized administration than what the constitution portrays (Riker, 1964). In contrast, where different parties command different levels of government in federations, state governments, in particular, could use their powers to resist any attempts of centralization (Riker, 1964). Secondly, the ideological orientations of political parties could foster a political atmosphere of competition or cooperation: "Ideological congruence is related to cooperation" (Thorlakson, 2011, p. 726). Both the vertical union of party structure and ideological homogenization, as will be discussed shortly, are the major outcomes of Ethiopia's ruling coalition merger in 2019 on a *medemer* ideology of Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed who dissolved all semi-autonomous regional state ruling partie's except that of Tigray where the civil war has been most devastating.

According to Ronald Watts (2008), the influence of the party system on the functioning of a federal system is more aggressive in emergent federations than in consolidated federal democracies. India in its early decades of independence, South Africa since the end of apartheid during the 1990s; Mexico until 2000, and other Latin American federations have been dominated by one-party rule in both orders of government and thus resulted in centralized policymaking and implementation (Watts, 2008). Daniel Elazar (1975) illustrated the importance of a noncentralized party system to federalism by contrasting it with "those formally federal nations dominated by one highly centralized party, such as the Soviet Union, Yugoslavia, and Mexico", in all of which "the dominant party has operated to limit the power of the constituent polities in direct proportion to the extent of its dominance" (p. 35). Similarly, John McGarry and Brendon O'Leary (2007) argued that "while its state structure was federated from the beginning, real power lay in the tightly centralized Communist Party of the Soviet Union, a totalitarian party that functioned in accordance with the principle of 'democratic centralism'" (p. 193). As a result of the subordination of federal values and constitutions to the party disciplines and institutions, many authoritarian federations violently crumbled following the end of the Cold War.

In Ethiopia, the end of the Cold War ended seventeen years of civil war and replaced a unitary system with a federal arrangement. More precisely, the Ethiopian Peoples'

Revolutionary Democratic Front (EPRDF) controlled state power by militarily over-throwing the Marxist-socialist military rule known as *Derg* (an Amharic term for committee) in 1991. After a brief transitional period, a new federal constitution was promulgated in 1995 establishing a multinational federation. The second most populous country in Africa with well over 118 million population, Ethiopia is home to no less than 80 different ethno-national groups, of which the major ones include the Oromo (35 percent), Amhara (27 percent), Somali (6.2 percent), Tigrayan (6.1 percent), Sidama (4.0 percent) and other groups (World Population Review, 2022).

The EPRDF was basically a coalition of four regional *member* parties: the Tigray People's Liberation Front (TPLF), the Amhara National Democratic Movement (ANDM), the Oromo People's Democratic Organization (OPDO) and the Southern Ethiopian Peoples' Democratic Movement (SEPDM), each were responsible for governing their respective regional states of Tigray, Amhara, Oromia and Southern Nations, Nationalities and Peoples (SNNP). The remaining five member-states, mainly pastoral regions of Ethiopia, were run by "affiliate" parties: the Somali region by the Ethiopian Somali People's Democratic Party (ESPDP), the Afar region by the Afar National Democratic Party (ANDP), the Harari region by the Harari National League (HNL), the Gambela region by the Gambela Peoples' Democratic Movement (GPDM), and Benishangul-Gumuz region by the Benishangul-Gumuz Democratic Party (BGDP), respectively. It appears that the ethno-national based party system evolved to fit into the state structure of the Ethiopian multinational federation. Each national-regional state had a corresponding ethno-national ruling party. The constitutional right to self-determination guaranteed for each national group in Ethiopia became the foundation for the national-regional states as well as their respective parties (Government of Ethiopia, 1995).

In practice, there was an unequal relationship between *member* and *affiliate* parties. Only *member* parties of the EPRDF coalition were able to form government at the federal level. The EPRDF leaders often argued that those "largely pastoral regions lacked the agrarian class structure that revolutionary democracy presupposed" (Gebreluel, 2019). Even within the member parties of the EPRDF, the TPLF was a senior and hegemonic party, accused of masterminding the creation of the remaining "member" and "affiliate" parties of the EPRDF coalition (Gudina, 2007).

The TPLF dominated EPRDF, using the party channels, prevented civil societies from flourishing, discouraged any democratic elements, and paralyzed the constitutional institutions of the federation (Fiseha, 2012). It centralized the federation by fusing the party and the state together in a way that the latter operates in subordination to the former. All regional ruling parties, whether they were members or affiliates, were fused to their respective regional states. It was difficult to conceive of decoupling, for instance, the TPLF from the Tigray region, the OPDO from the Oromia region, and the HNL from the Harari region. Despite their constitutional autonomy, the regional states

were all controlled from the center through the party line. This is so because, Assefa Fiseha observed, "the federation operates under the circumstances in which EPRDF controls not only the institutions of the federal government but also all the regional state governments in the federation either directly through its member parties or indirectly through affiliated parties" (Fiseha, 2012, p. 458).

After two decades of the authoritarian TPLF-dominated EPRDF rule, the Ethiopian public started to question the system and demand democratic multinational federalism. Popular protests and mass movements that began in 2014 in Oromia, spread to the Amhara region in 2016, and thereby caused disagreements within the ruling coalition, which changed the balance of power in favor of the protesting regions and parties (Lyons, 2021). As a result, the ruling coalition was compelled to appoint in April 2018 a new Prime Minister, Abiy Ahmed, with the aim of transitioning the country to a democratic multinational federation. Though the power transfer was historical and peaceful, it was an internal affair of the ruling coalition which does not in any way denote the "era of democratic transitions" in Africa's second-most populous country, Ethiopia (Huntington, 1991, p. 12).

In order to show his commitment to the public mandate bestowed on him, Abiy introduced political reforms by releasing political prisoners, opening up political spaces, encouraging press freedom, inviting exiled oppositions back home, and promising economic liberalization, particularly in the first six months of his rule. He also ended the 18 years of "no war, no peace" deadlock between Ethiopia and the neighboring state of Eritrea. As a result, he was overwhelmed by domestic popular support from across the country. Moreover, the international community was impressed by Abiy's political and economic reform agendas at home and his rapprochement policy toward Eritrea. As a result, the Nobel Peace Prize 2019 was awarded to Abiy, particularly "for his efforts to achieve peace and international cooperation, and in particular for his decisive initiative to resolve the border conflict with neighboring Eritrea" (Nobel Peace Committee, 2022). A year after this award, Abiy's international *peace pact* turned *a war pact* against Tigray region's ruling party, the TPLF. So, the question is what threw Ethiopia back into a civil war?

In September 2016, a group of reformists led by Lemma Megersa controlled regional party-state power in Oromia; and in November 2017 made a trip to Bahir Dar to discuss with Amhara regional party-state officials the possibility of Oromo-Amhara (also known as Oromara) alliance against the TPLF dominance. By April 2018, a man from the OPDO, Abiy Ahmed, has become the chairperson of the coalition and the prime minister of Ethiopia. Subsequently, in September 2018, the OPDO and the ANDM rebranded themselves as Oromo Democratic Party (ODP) and the Amhara Democratic Party (ADP) in order to change the *bad image* associated with their old names due to their surrogate positions under the TPLF rule. In December 2019, Prime Minister Abiy

Ahmed dissolved the EPRDF coalition as well as its member and affiliate parties, except TPLF, and announced the formation of a national party called Prosperity Party (PP). After the successful dissolution of the ruling coalition at the federal level and its member and affiliate parties in eight regional states, the former party structures, leaderships, individual members, and properties were declared as the structures, leaderships, individual members, and properties of the new party, PP. As will be argued later in this article, the process of the merger was more of a disbanding of the former parties' brand names and their political programs and a nationalizing of all of their institutions and members into the PP.

This article, however, argues that with the formation of the Prosperity Party by the merger of the EPRDF coalition and its regional parties, the Ethiopian Government led by Abiy Ahmed systematically embarked upon a political shift from accommodating ethnonationalism to a centralized Ethiopian nationalism as its fundamental principle of state-society organization and mobilization, aiming to centrally command the whole country. Because the party is fused to the state at both federal and regional levels in Ethiopia, the political action of merging (some say nationalizing) regional parties into an outfit national party resulted in direct central control of regional states. TPLF's resistance to this metamorphosis of the ruling coalition threw the country back into a bloody civil war. Though the major conflict has been raging in Tigray, there were also conflicts in Oromia, Benishangul-Gumuz, Gambela, Amhara, Afar and other parts of the country. As to the ideological menus regarding the political history of Ethiopia and its federal system, there are two competing blocs: "the nation-building/Ethiopianist camp" which advocates a more uniform set of policies aimed at glorifying the past to maintain Ethiopian unity; and the ethnonationalist camp which prioritizes the realization of the rights of ethnonational self-determination (Yusuf, 2020). Unlike the EPRDF coalition which had at least theoretically advanced the rights to self-determination, the Prosperity Party has pragmatically chosen the first ideological camp just for tactical reasons. "It should be noted that the balance of factors encouraging unity and regional autonomy is important not only in leading to the creation of federations," Ronald Watts warns, "but also in their subsequent operation" (2008, p. 64). So, over time, in the post-2018 Ethiopian case, the balance of pressure seems to have shifted from advocating ethnonational self-government to advancing power consolidation in the name of restoring Ethiopian unity (that is a highly centralized state). The creation of the Prosperity Party is one of the outcomes of, and key instrument to, perpetuating such an ideological shift. As a result, it would be logical to expect grievance, resistance, and rebellion from the side of pro-regional autonomy in the multiethnic, multireligious federation of Ethiopia.

This article examines intra-party-political processes that led to the current civil war in Ethiopia. To this end, it offers an analysis of the ideological and structural organization of the ruling party and its impacts on the functioning of the Ethiopian federal

constitutional institutions during the EPRDF (1991–2018) and the PP (2019–2022) periods. In the following sections, the article first briefly presents theoretical considerations on federalism, party system, civil war, and their interactions. Second, it elaborates on the emergence of federalism in the context of party-state fusion in Ethiopia. Third, the discussion emphasizes the birth of the Prosperity Party through the union of national-regional parties, the attempt to establish a centralized *de facto* one-party state, the collapse of the "federal pact" and the outbreak of the civil war. Finally, the article ends with a concluding remark.

Theoretical and Methodological Considerations

In this section, the concept of federalism and the impact of a centralized party system on the functioning of a federal system, and the genesis of civil wars are discussed. Michael Burgess (2006) distinguishes federation, "a particular kind of state", from federalism, "the thinking that drives and promotes it" (p. 2). In this distinction, federalism is approached essentially "not as a descriptive but as a normative term and refers to the advocacy of multi-tiered government combining elements of shared-rule and regional self-rule" (Watts, 2008, p. 8). Scholars of federal studies define federalism from different approaches. Daniel Elazar (1987), for instance, defined federalism as a covenant combining regional self-rule and shared rule. K. C. Wheare (1946) defined it from legal-institutional aspects; Carl Friedrich (1966) approached federalism as a process that evolves and changes over time. William Livingston (1956) defined it from a sociological standpoint: "The essence of federalism lies not in the constitutional or institutional structure but in the society itself. Federal government is a device by which the federal qualities of the society are articulated and protected" (1956, p. 1–3).

With respect to a federation, a more comprehensive definition is offered by Ronald Watts (2008): "Compound polities, combining strong constituent units and a strong general government, each possessing powers delegated to it by the people through a constitution, and each empowered to deal directly with the citizens in the exercise of its legislative, administrative and taxing powers, and each with major institutions directly elected by the citizens" (p. 10). In this article, federalism is seen from an integrated approach, and in Ethiopia, federalism is legal-constitutional, it is also a socio-cultural reflection of the multinational society of the country, and the functioning of this covenant has been affected by a one-party system. In multinational Ethiopia, federalism was adopted as an antithesis to the pre-1991 unitarist nation-building polity that shared elements of the classic French Jacobins unitarism. For the Jacobins unitarism, "federalism was regarded as part of the counter-revolution, hostile to the necessity of linguistic homogenization, a roadblock in the path of authentic, indivisible, monistic popular sovereignty" (McGarry & O'Leary, 2007, p. 184). Because federalism was conceived as a threat to national unity for the unitarist model, cultural assimilation was preferred

to cultural self-rule for diverse communities. As will be discussed, the formation of the Prosperity Party revived the unitarist nostalgia in Ethiopia.

Federalism in many cases has been employed as one of the major tools for managing cultural diversities, thereby encouraging national (or multinational) unity. According to Ronald Watts (2008), federations function well when the two opposing — centripetal and centrifugal — forces are placed in equilibrium: "Where one of these pressures is strong and the other weak, the result is likely to be either unitary political integration, on the one hand, or the independence of the regional units or at least a confederal solution, on the other" (p. 64). In maintaining a healthy balance of power in federations, political parties play significant roles. William Riker's (1964) party-based analysis of federalism, as discussed in the introduction, associates the extent of centralization of the party structure with the functioning of the federation. The association may ultimately lead to party-state fusion, interlocking party and state hierarchies which are common in authoritarian contexts like Ethiopia. Building on Riker's thesis, Ronald Watts (2008) examines four aspects of political parties that could particularly affect the functioning of a federation: "(1) the relationship between the party organizations at the federal level and provincial or state party level, (2) the degree of symmetry or asymmetry between federal and provincial or state party alignments, (3) the impact of party discipline upon the representation of interests within each level, and (4) the prevailing pattern of political careers" (p. 145).

If we argue that party institutions could influence the functioning of a federation, what about the converse of it? Meaning, political parties may have to organize their institutions, structures, political programs, and ideologies in accordance with the federal constitutional dispensations - party system fitting into the federal system. By definition, political parties are the product of modern representative democracies, which seek legitimacy from citizens as they attempt to occupy positions in government (Duverger, 1965). In this regard, William Buchanan (1965) argues that American political parties were built parallel to the coming-together approach of the establishment of the U.S. federation. Because federal ideas might have shaped the party system, he adds, both systems have shown enormous stability: "American parties have established a unique record of durability. Without change of title, or break in the continuity of leadership, they have remained on the political scene for more than a century. This, too, may be attributed to federalism. The national parties are loose aggregations of state and local parties, which have their roots in the compost of local politics" (Buchanan, 1965, p. 113). Local politics in this regard is federal politics. In the United States, therefore, ideological orientations of the parties do not fundamentally contradict the federal ideals and established institutions. Michael Burgess (2006) contends that while it is difficult to conclude either that particular federal institutions caused the decentralization of parties or that the decentralization of parties sustained a decentralized federation, "there was

a high probability that the two things go along together in a relation of reciprocal rein-forcement" (p. 151). From the preceding discussion, one can infer that in authoritarian federations, the ruling parties through their structures and ideologies subordinate and undermine federal constitutional institutions, and tend to close peaceful and democratic ways of dispute settlements. Thus, making violent conflicts and wars inevitable.

This logic explains the genesis of the civil war and conflicts in Ethiopia. For the pur-pose of this paper, an operational definition of civil war is needed: "A civil war is a violent conflict within a country fought by organized groups that aim to take power at the center or in a region, or to change government policies" (Fearon, 2007, p. 4). The government of Ethiopia regards the conflicts in Tigray and Oromia regions as "law enforcement operations", not a civil war. The major anti-government armed forces in Ethiopia, the Tigray People's Liberation Front-Tigray Defense Force (TPLF-TDF), and the Oromo Liberation Front-Oromo Liberation Army (OLF-OLA) on their side put that they are fighting to defend the self-determination rights of their respective peoples in Tigray and Oromia. According to James Fearon (2007), a major reason for the protracted nature of civil wars is that they have been hard to end: "Their long du-ration seems to result from the way in which most of these conflicts have been fought: namely, by rebel groups using guerrilla tactics, usually operating in rural regions of postcolonial countries with weak administrative, police, and military capabilities" (p. 4). One of the causes of civil war is a collective grievance: "Many of today's civil wars have an ethnic or nationalist dimension; and ethnicity, whether based on lan-guage, religion or other distinctions, is often a superior basis for collective action in contemporary conflicts in poorer countries than other social divisions such as class. In coalescing groups, therefore, present-day and historical grievances play a crucial part" (Murshed, 2002, p. 389).

For the grievances to be transformed into large-scale conflicts and wars, there must be other factors at work, specifically "a weakening of the social contract" (Murshed, 2002, p. 389). Historically too, "the failure of longstanding independent states to strengthen mechanisms of political representation, notably Ethiopia, Haiti and Liberia, also lie be-hind weak social contracts" (Murshed, 2002, p. 390). Interestingly, the Tigray People's Liberation Front (TPLF) and the Oromo Liberation Front (OLF), had also fought guerrilla warfare for seventeen years (1974–1991) against the *Derg* rule in Ethiopia and were able to topple it. While the TPLF had a history of ruling the country by being the dominant member of the EPRDF coalition, the OLF did not have that. Sadly, "civil wars rarely end in negotiated settlements" because the groups fighting civil wars tend to choose to fight to the finish (Walter, 1997, p. 335). This dilemma shows the importance of a third party, often a stronger party from the international community, to play a role in facilitating negotiations and enforcing peace deals. In order to write this article, various sources of data including political party documents and press releases, legal and constitutional

documents, party officials' interviews on media, relevant secondary documents, and my own personal observations have been used.

Ethiopian Federalism and One-Party Rule of the EPRDF

For the first time in modern Ethiopian history, the multinational, multicultural, multireligious character of the Ethiopian society was formally acknowledged by the 1991 Transitional Charter which later became the 1995 federal constitution. Founded as an empire-state in the last quarter of the nineteenth century mainly through wars of conquests, Ethiopia had been a unitary state, dominated by Amharic-speaking ruling class (Markakis, 2011). With a vision to create a homogenous nation-state of one language, one religion, and one cultural identity at the expense of the languages, religions, and cultures of the subjugated multitudes, the successive regimes of Ethiopia — the Imperial (1890s–1974) and the *Derg* (1974–1991) — implemented coercive assimilation policies (Markakis, 2011). This coercive assimilation policy led to the rise of social revolution and nationality questions in Ethiopia which overthrew the imperial regime in September 1974.

Even if there was a regime change from a kingship to a military dictatorship by the 1974 revolution, the nationality questions of the right to self-government remained unanswered. The movement also gave birth to various opposition parties for the first time in Ethiopia: "Ethiopia entered the era of party politics only at the eve of the revolutionary upheaval of 1974 that ended the country's *ancien* regime" (Gudina, 2007, p. 1). The Ethiopian Peoples' Revolutionary Party (EPRP) and All-Ethiopian Socialist Movement (MEISON) were the two oldest parties in Ethiopia which were direct offspring of the ESM. However, the revolutionary upheaval of 1974 brought the military rule of *Derg* to power. The *Derg* in a tactical short-lived alliance with MEISON swiftly adopted Marxism-Leninism as its governing ideology and abolished Ethiopia's long-established feudal landholding system by what was popularly known as the Land-to-the-Tiller decree in 1975. It also ended centuries of alliance between the state and the Ethiopian Coptic Orthodox Church and declared a socialist state. Despite these changes, the *Derg* was not only unwilling to resolve the nationality questions, but it employed violence against those struggling for autonomy and self-rule. As a result, different political parties and liberation fronts rose up in arms to fight for the right to national self-determination. The Eritrean People's Liberation Front (EPLF), the Oromo Liberation Front (OLF) and the Tigray People's Liberation Front (TPLF) were armed political parties already engaging in rebellions since the mid-1970s. These liberation movements fought a bloody civil war for seventeen years and defeated the *Derg* in May 1991.

Following the collapse of the *Derg* in 1991, the Transitional Government of Ethiopia (1991–1994) was formed by the Transitional Charter drafted by the victorious political coalition — the EPRDF. Although the OLF briefly participated in the Transitional

Government of Ethiopia, it was militarily pushed out in 1992 by the TPLF which was dominant at the time. The transitional process rather emphasized power consolidation in favor of the victorious TPLF party than power-sharing and in the process failed to transform the authoritarian state of Ethiopia (Aalen, 2020).

A federal constitution was adopted in 1995 reconfiguring Ethiopian polity into nine national-regional states (the tenth and eleventh regional states have been admitted to the federation in 2019 and 2021 respectively). Four regional states were directly governed by the member parties of the EPRDF coalition, whereas the remaining five regions were administrated by the affiliate national-regional parties. Therefore, for each of the nine ethno-regional states, there was a corresponding ethno-national party. Put differently, when the ethno-regional states federated to form the federal government of Ethiopia, the ethno-regional parties also 'federated' to form a ruling coalition at the federal level, but on unequal partnership. The TPLF was the single dominant party within the ruling coalition. Furthermore, the affiliate parties were neither equal members of the EPRDF coalition nor opposition to it. Even though national groups in Ethiopia were granted constitutional autonomy, the ruling coalition practically undermined it.

The constitution established a multinational federal democratic republic on the principle of the rights to national-regional self-determination including and up to secession. It also required democratically elected parties to run the governments at both levels (Government of Ethiopia, 1995). The member states of the federation enjoy constitutional autonomy to organize their own administrative institutions; legislate on cultural and language matters including primary education, arts and media; administer land and natural resources as well as exercise reserved powers (Government of Ethiopia, 1995). Moreover, state governments have the authority to implement laws and policies enacted by the federal legislature and by their respective state councils. Although the 1995 federal constitution grants broader rights of self-rule to regional states, TPLF's interventions have undermined regional states' capacity to determine their own affairs (Aalen, 2021).

From 1991 up to 2018, the EPRDF coalition was the sole ruling party of Ethiopia. This does not mean that there were no elections at all. There had been ritual elections every five years and the same ruling coalition always declared the winner. The recent national election, which was held after a one-year delay in June 2021, was no exception, and the successor of the EPRDF — the Prosperity Party (PP) established at the end of 2019 — was announced as the winner. The TPLF held its election in Tigray Regional State without postponement in September 2020 and declared the winner. During the EPRDF period, the TPLF had sheer dominance in the federal army, intelligence, politics and economy as well as influences over member states through the party channels. The EPRDF coalition had the executive council (*politburo*), central committee and general assembly at the federal level. Its member and affiliate parties also had similar party

structures and organizations at the regional level. These structures were fused into the federal and regional state institutions. Whatever policy formulated by the EPRDF *politburo* would flow down through party channels to get implemented in all regions by the member and affiliate parties. The latter will only do translations of the policies into their respective regional languages and contexts in order to implement them.

As a result, in Ethiopia, the party channel has so far been the dominant means of control and instrument of implementing policies than the state institutions. Lovise Aalen (2002) studied the first decade of the EPRDF rule and provided an analysis of the implementation of a federal system within a dominant party state which still resonates: "The overall conclusion of the analysis is that although the Ethiopian *de jure* model meets the requirements of a federal system, the *de facto* relations between the central government and the federal units are so centralized that the federal division of power is severely undermined. A major reason behind this is the centralized structure of the party system" (p. 100). Ronald Watts (2008) similarly observes that "an emergent federation with particularly unique features has been Ethiopia (1995). Ethiopia is particularly interesting in the way in which the ethnic basis of the constituent units is emphasized, but to date the federal policy process has been mainly channeled by and through the ruling political party" (p. 26). As a result, the EPRDF's metamorphosis from coalition to union destabilized the state-party fused system.

The party channel was constructed on the basis of *"maikelawinet"* (democratic centralism), a core value of the Leninist revolutionary democracy which was the sole guiding ideology of the EPRDF. It was sustained by an institutionalized system of self-criticism and party discipline known as "*gemgema"* which was extensively used to provide governance from the center (Lyons, 2021). The *maikelawinet* had brought structural cohesion, policy coherence, cooperation, and sharing of resources and staff between federal and regional party and state structures. However, the mass protests and protracted civil disobediences in different parts of Ethiopia (2014–2018) demanding political reforms created political cracks in the EPRDF coalition, reinforcing the argument that structural cooperation and flows of resources and services among the ruling coalition on their own "do not create sufficient organizational conditions for the development or maintenance of shared values that contribute to federal stability" (Thorlakson, 2011, p. 726). The political cracks within the EPRDF coalition, which brought the era of the TPLF-dominated EPRDF to an end, began when the regional-party-states of Oromia and Amhara formed an alliance and asserted their powers to disobey the TPLF between 2016 and 2018 following mass protests in both regions.

The Birth of Prosperity Party and the Outbreak of the Civil War

As a major step to consolidate his personal power, Prime Minister Abiy dissolved the EPRDF coalition members and affiliate parties to form a single outfit national party called Prosperity Party (PP) in December 2019. By this transformation from coalition to union, all ethno-regional states' parties were "nationalized" except TPLF, the ruling party of the Tigray region which was too powerful to be coerced by Abiy. The TPLF rejected the merger proposal first in November 2019 at the EPRDF coalition executive council meeting and repeated it at the central committee level because it did not want to lose its brand name, identity, ideological orientation, and autonomy (VOA, 2019). That was the last time the TPLF attended the EPRDF meeting in the capital, Addis Ababa. This led to the divorce between the Abiy-led EPRDF coalition and TPLF, which prepared the background for the war between the TPLF-led Tigray Government and PP-led Federal Government and his partners that began on 4 November 2020. As a result, Tigrayan's representation in the federal government was radically altered and TPLF's major federal leaders retreated to the Tigray region. The disconnection between the TPLF and the EPRDF/PP was in effect a disconnection between Tigray and Ethiopia because there is no intergovernmental institution in Ethiopia to bridge and facilitate cooperation between federal and state governments in the event of disagreements among parties.

In the process of the merger of parties, Prime Minister Abiy also paid emphasis on the ideological reconfiguration of former party institutions. Except the TPLF, all coalition member and affiliate parties of the EPRDF declared their dissolutions one after the other, and then their structures, leaders, members and properties automatically became the structures, leaders, members and properties of the new party. The process was a nationalization of eight regional parties. According to the party's political program, "*medemer*" (an Amharic term roughly translated as summation, synergy, or integration) is the ideological foundation of the Prosperity Party (Prosperity Party Program, 2019). *Medemer* is a personal belief and thoughts of Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed that he published in September 2019. It glorifies Ethiopia's past, criticizes Ethiopian federalism for promoting ethnic divisions, and imagines a very centralized Ethiopian state and national identity (Ahmed, 2019). It deemphasized a divided multiethnic identity and reemphasized a united "intermingled nature of Ethiopia": "In addition to moving beyond ethnic identity as the basis for political participation, the new party committed to pursue Abiy's *medemer* political ideology, which emphasized a kind of synergy and unity" (Lyons, 2021, p. 1060). Building on this, the Prosperity Party declared its social basis to be all Ethiopian peoples through Ethiopia-first nationalism, which competes with regional ethnonationalism. Ethiopia-first nationalism was an official party-state ideology during the *Derg* (1974–1991), when the Workers Party of Ethiopia (WPE) was legalized single party of the country. Thus, the PP, which shares similarities with the WPE in terms of political program, ideology and structure, was created on the graves

of ethno-regional parties. While the EPRDF coalition claimed to represent Ethiopia through ethno-national groups and the PP claims to directly represent all Ethiopian citizens. Goitom Gebreluel observed that "the most controversial reform, however, was Abiy's move away from the EPRDF's nationalist narrative" by formulating "an alternative history that de-emphasized ethnic oppression" (Washington Post, 2019).

A sudden shift of policy which led to the creation of a national party through the merger of regional parties sent political shockwaves among ethnonationalists and federalists; and "political leaders who emphasized federalism also condemned the move" (Lyons, 2021, p.1060). This radical and unprecedented move threatened to alter the multieth-nic character of the Ethiopian federation. Thus, the structural and ideological tension between the architecture of the new party and the central tenets of multinational federalism was obvious from the outset. In his presentation titled *New Paradigm, New Politics*, Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed lectured the central committee of his Prosperity Party, on 20 April, 2022. He explained his new paradigm as follows:

> We, the Prosperity Party, are patriots. We are not ethnonationalists. Patriots and ethnonationalists are two different things. Ethnonationalists are separationists, they are pro-autonomy. They glorify themselves by belittling their brothers. If you are an Oromo nationalist, your nationalism is founded on belittling Amhara, Gurage and others. Contrary to this, we are patriots, we love, we prosper and we die for our country, Ethiopia (Ahmed, 2022).

In an attempt to differentiate his "new politics" from the "old politics" of ethnonationalism, the prime minister has made it public that his political-ideological orientation does not fall within the federal model that accommodates ethnonationalism. It shows that his new paradigm contradicts the founding principle of Ethiopian federalism — national self-determination right. As Awol Allo observed, "at first glance, the demise of the EPRDF and the creation of the PP as a pan-Ethiopian party seems like a positive step towards uniting a long-divided country. But on closer inspection, it becomes clear that the architects of the move failed to take into account a range of constitutional, ideological and representational issues" (Allo, 2020). One of the reasons why Ethiopia adopted a multinational federal order was because there were politically salient ethnonational cleavages that have received theoretical and political articulations, particularly since the 1960s (Allo, 2020). The denouncing of ethnonationalism came about while "the central demands of Ethiopia's ethnic groups for political autonomy and cultural justice remain unresolved" (Allo, 2020). This suggests the ideological roots of the current conflicts in Ethiopia.

The creation of the PP seems to have worsened the problem of party-state fusion in Ethiopia through a vertical union of the party system. The EPRDF was accused of fusing the state and party institutions to centralize power through its democratic centralism

(Fiseha, 2012, Gudina, 2007). Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed repeatedly promised to decouple the party from the state and democratize the letter, but the problem went from bad to worse with the homogenization of party structure which was already pinned to the state structure. Indeed, the party president became the brain and the nerve center to dictate the government. Government bodies, including the judiciary, the army, and the security services, continue to operate as mere instruments or extensions of the PP. In the bureaucracy, just like during the EPRDF period, all civil servants are expected to be members of the PP, without which they would risk losing their jobs (Teshome, 2020).

Structurally, the PP has had an executive and central committee since its formation, but it did not have a general assembly until 12 March, 2022 (Ethiopian Monitor, 2022). Members of its executive and central committees are the top officials of the party and at the same time hold key governmental positions both at the regional and federal levels. The PP has a president and two vice presidents. The president of the party (the Prime Minister) has the ultimate power over all structures and members of the party at all levels. The party has one head-office and "regional chapters" in all regional states of the country, except in Tigray. The Secretariat of the PP head office, in consultation with its president, assigns the secretariats of regional chapters including the federally administered cities of Addis Ababa and Dire Dawa. "Accountable to the party's head office, regional chapters…shall be established" (Article 25), and "the head-office of the party is accountable to the president of the party" who is the prime minister of Ethiopia (Prosperity Party Bylaw, 2019, Article 24). This makes the Prosperity Party a unitary and extremely centralized entity both constitutively and practically than its predecessor. This party machinery is the key mechanism that the party president uses to control regional governments, distribute rent or punish any member anywhere with no checks. The chairperson of the EPRDF coalition did not command such absolute power over the regional parties, and the influence of the TPLF over the regional states and parties was from behind the scenes (Teshome, 2020). It was difficult for the historically dominant TPLF to accept another dominant group.

Moreover, the regional state autonomy was endangered with the control the PP exercises over regional governments by assigning a "coordinating committee" for each regional state. Out of the five members of the coordinating committee, the one assigned as its chairperson would automatically assume the position of the regional state governor. The main responsibility of this committee is to coordinate regional state political, administrative, security, economic, organizational, and party mobilization functions based on the directions by the PP head office. The other members of the committee hold the vice governor position in the regional government, and the party's regional branch office secretariat, vice secretariat (political affairs), and organizational affairs. The president of the PP, in consultation with the executive committee, assigns the co-

ordinating committee of regional states (Prosperity Party Bylaw, 2019). The party's executive committee is chaired by the president of the party to whom "the executive committee may delegate part of its duties and responsibilities" (Prosperity Party Bylaw, 2019). Therefore, the regional coordinating committee, in other words, the regional state government's senior leaders, are assigned by the president of the party through the party channel. In such a party-state fused situation, the regional state government is effectively controlled by the prime minister than by the regional legislature. The prime minister assigns, removes or replaces any regional state official through the party channel contrary to the constitutional autonomy of regional states. This undoing of regional self-rule — defederalization and thereby causing a constitutional crisis is what Murshed (2002) called "a weakening of social contract" (p. 390).

In general, the disagreements on the terms of the merger in the context of state-party fusion, the birth of the Prosperity Party (which excluded the TPLF), the *medemer* political ideology, the swift political centralization move endangering the federal system, and TPLF's war preparations coupled with immediate incidents such as the postponement of the 2020 national election by the federal government and TPLF's defiantly holding its regional election in September 2020 were the key factors for the outbreak of the devastating civil war in northern Ethiopia (Allo, 2020). The Oromo Liberation Army (OLA) launched its insurgency against Abiy's government in early 2019 even before the Tigray conflict. According to Human Rights Watch (2022):

> Western Oromia has been the site of a three-year-long conflict between federal and regional government forces and the Oromo Liberation Army (OLA), an armed group that broke from the political opposition party, the Oromo Liberation Front (OLF), in 2019. A federal command post in western Oromia coordinates federal and regional security forces in the area, including Ethiopian Defense Forces, Oromia special police, Oromia regular police forces, and administrative militia forces.

Therefore, Ethiopia's conflicts that began in the Oromia region escalated to a conventional war in the Tigray region, where the neighboring Eritrean forces intervened in the internal affairs of Ethiopia on the side of Abiy's government forces. As an immediate cause, the government accused the TPLF of attacking its northern defense command and launched an all-out war in Tigray in what it called "law enforcement operations" on 4 November 2020. The reality on the ground was that both sides were preparing for the inevitable war. With the help of Eritrean soldiers from the northern direction, in December 2020, Abiy-led military forces were able to control Tigray regional capital, Mekelle establishing a transitional regional government in Tigray. Subsequently, in May 2021, Ethiopia's Parliament proscribed TPLF and OLA as terrorist organizations. Moreover, the Amhara militia joined the war on the side of the federal forces and annexed the southwestern part of Tigray including Welkait-Tsegede and Humera

territories. However, in June 2021, the TPLF forces decisively defeated the federal forces in major parts of Tigray including its capital city except western and southwestern part of Tigray. In August, the Tigray Defense Force (TDF) announced its alliances with the Oromo Liberation Army (OLA) and began southward marches to Addis Ababa, the capital of Ethiopia (Aljazeera, 2021). However, with the help of extensive strikes by drones bought from Turkey, UAE, Iran, and China, the Ethiopian government was able to push back Tigrayan forces within the boundaries of Tigray (Mwai, 2022). After a year of a ceasefire, another phase of the conflict broke out in August 2022 and a ceasefire agreement, which is being criticized for not including Amhara regional militia and Eritrean forces, was signed in South Africa on November 2, 2022. On the other hand, the conflict between the government and OLA forces in Oromia intensified since April 2022 (Gebissa, 2022).

In nutshell, the political processes and effects of the formation of the PP, which could not strike balance between regionalism and centralism, exacerbated by the security dilemma posed by the considerable fears and suspicion of the PP-led Federal Government regarding the TPLF's military trainings and preparations triggered the conflicts in northern Ethiopia.

Conclusion

Federalism was introduced in Ethiopia as a means of managing ethno-regional diversity. The 1995 constitution of Ethiopia provided ethnonational groups with the right to self-determination, which became the core principle of Ethiopian federalism. On this principle, the original nine semi-autonomous regional states were established and two more regional states were later admitted to the federation. However, the party structure of the EPRDF coalition members and affiliates was fused to the federal and regional state structure that subordinated the state to the party for over a quarter-century (1991–2018). Despite this fusion, the very existence of regional parties and the EPRDF's coalition structure being less flat at federal and state levels had offered semi-autonomous status to each regional state. Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed, who came to power in 2018 and won a Nobel Peace Prize in 2019 for initiating political reforms in Ethiopia and ending the conflictual relationship with neighboring Eritrea, abandoned the political programs of the EPRDF coalition members and affiliate parties except that of the TPLF and replaced them with his *medemer* political program of the PP. The emergence of the outfit PP and the demise of ethno-regional parties resulted in the shift of emphasis from the accommodation of ethnonational diversity to the restoration of an extremely centralized Ethiopian state contrary to constitutional principles. Using the merged party structure, which is fused to the state, the PP's President is able to control members including governors of regional states. Therefore, the subordination of federal institution to the party institution went from bad to worse.

The party merger process and the attendant crisis of regional autonomy stand out to be the major cause of the conflicts in Tigray and Oromia. As William Riker sharply observes, the extent of centralization of power in a federation is greatly determined by the extent of centralization of the party system which proved to be the case in Ethiopia. Following the creation of the PP, as part of the centralization process, most opposition parties and independent media were systematically weakened; opposition leaders and members were arrested, and their offices were closed. The conflicts in Ethiopia can be explained in terms of the attempt to establish greater central control and resistance by regional forces vying for greater autonomy and self-government.

Ethiopia is a multinational federation in crisis. Any attempt to restore peace requires a feasible equilibrium and moderation between the centripetal and centrifugal forces. It needs democratic multinational federalism in which the party is separated from the state. The current *de facto* one-party state should give way to a multi-party democratic federation. Ethnonational autonomy should not be conceived as disintegration. In such a polarized situation, aligning one side and trying to impose a centralized state on regional forces that are fighting for more autonomy would further worsen the problem. Peace negotiations should be inclusive and practical, and redirect the country on the path of stability, democracy, development, and federalism.

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Pakistan:
Axing the Roots. Political and Economic Marginalization and Rise of Militancy in Pakistan's Federally Administered Tribal Areas

Solomon I. IFEJIKA

Abstract: Federally Administered Tribal Areas of Pakistan, a region lying on the boundary between Pakistan's North-West Frontier Province and southern Afghanistan, controlled by the Federal Government of Pakistan, has been in the public eye following the event of the United States invasion of Afghanistan in 2001. The spate of the rise of militancy and insurgencies in FATA currently poses a serious threat to the political stability of Pakistan and Afghanistan respectively. Relying on the documentary methods of data collection and analysis, therefore, this study argues that the major factor underlying the prevailing militancy in FATA is the deep-seated political and socio-economic marginalization of the region. The study thus recommends, among other measures, that the Government of Pakistan needs to expedite actions to initiate and implement deliberate and well-articulated holistic reforms to bring the region into the mainstream of Pakistan's socio-economic and political developmental agenda. The study concludes that the intentional and proper adoption and application of these measures would be a realistic way of ending the militancy and insurgency in FATA and achieving lasting peace in the region and Pakistan as a whole.

Keywords: Governance/Politics, Economy, Marginalization, FATA, Militancy, Religion.

Solomon I. IFEJIKA

Department of Political Science,
University of Ilorin, Nigeria
Email: solomonifejika@yahoo.com

Introduction

Since the incident of September 11, 2001, involving the heinous attack on the United States of America by the dreaded and notorious Islamic terrorist group, Al Qaeda, there has been consistent upsurge in the rise and spread of insurgent activities by Islamic extremists globally. Indeed, the incident has spurred the emergence of a

plethora of Islamic religious fundamentalist organizations whose rising spate of violence and insurgencies have come to constitute the most security concern of states, regions and the international community at the current time. Amidst the daunting task of finding lasting solutions to the numerous problems of humanity, inclusive of the issues of steady outbreaks of different types of deadly diseases, ozone layer's depletion, global economic downturn and rising poverty, the phenomenon of terrorism has come to present the most serious challenge to the global community. The internal security, peace and stability of most countries, especially in Asia, Middle-East and Africa have come under consistent threats due to the inhumane and violent activities of local Islamic insurgency groups, most of which are externally linked to more notable terrorist organizations, such as Al Qaeda and Al Shabaab. The operational capacities and tactics of these radicalized entities pose serious security threats not only to the national governments of the countries of their origins; in most instances their closest neighboring countries and entire regions also share the brunt, thereby spreading the devastating effects of terrorism across national borders. As such, terrorism has emerged as the greatest challenge confronting the international community at the present time.

The majority of Muslims decry the increasing insurgencies by the radical extremist groups in different parts of the world, and thus appear somewhat in support of the fight against terrorism and insurgency by the global community. Nevertheless, the U.S. intensification of efforts and demonstrable capacities in fighting terrorism in the affected zones in the aftermath of the 9/11 attacks, is perceived by many Muslims as a deliberate retaliatory measure against the Islamic world. Hence, enmity between the U.S. and its Western allies and the Muslim communities globally has speedily continued to heighten and deepen. Besides launching attacks against home governments and strategic points to cause mass casualties among unarmed publics, Western elements also form the prime targets of the extremist insurgency groups, particularly those with global influence and networks, for example, Al Shabaab and Al Qaeda. Apparently, "the global terrorist threat is largely stemming from conflict zones such as Iraq, Afghanistan, Pakistan, Somalia, Algeria, India (Kashmir), Russia (Chechnya) and China (Xingjiang) where Muslims are suffering" (Guranatna, 2009, p. 70). As the focal object of this study, the trend in the rise of violence and pattern of militancy and insurgency in the Federally Administered Tribal Areas (FATA) of Pakistan has seriously submerged the political stability of Pakistan and Afghanistan respectively. The situation in the FATA region seems to be a potential source of another form of 9/11 attack on the Western world or its surrogates in the regions (Nawaz, 2009).

The violence and insecurity in FATA, if not quickly and adequately addressed, has the tendency to spread to the Afghan and Pakistani mainland. FATA has quickly turned into a 'honeycomb' and a training ground for a multiple of radicalized extremists and terrorist groups that adopt Al Qaeda's ideology and operational tactics. Most possibly,

"the Afghanistan-Pakistan border will remain the epicenter of global terrorism, where Al Qaeda led and driven multiple threat groups will plan, prepare and mount attacks globally. At this point of time, mounting attacks in the West is within Al Qaeda remit in tribal Pakistan" (Guranatna, 2009, p. 69). Moreover, the ISIS also refers to the Afghanistan-Pakistan border as "Khorasan" (Khattak *et al.*, 2015). As it stands, the Islamic State has developed a ten-member Strategic Planning Wing to facilitate recruitment, planning, funding, and training of the militants under the banner of IS in Pakistan. A report by the provincial government of Balochistan shows that the IS militants have so far succeeded in recruiting as large as between 10,000 and 12,000 fighters from Hangu in Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa province, and Kurram Agency and some other areas in the Federally Administered Tribal Areas (Zaidi, 2014). Daesh also sits on the Afghanistan border with Pakistan, and quite a majority of the Daesh militants hails from Pakistan and they possess Pakistani identity cards (Mora, 2016).

The principal actors – the U.S., Afghan Government, Pakistani Government and Pakistan Militaries are now to renew plan and working strategies for tactically breaking-down terrorists' strongholds in FATA, or risk an imminent outburst of terror attacks by the varying global terrorist groups in the troubled zone. Previous measures adopted by the concerned actors to dismantle the terrorist infrastructures laid-down by Al Qaeda and the Pakistani Taliban in a bid to restore peace and stability in FATA have not yielded fruitful returns. This is mainly because those measures do not address the root causes of the uprising among the inhabitants of the Afghan-Pakistan border territory. This paper investigates and unveils the real causes of militancy and violent extremism in FATA, and suggests the most curative strategies for ameliorating them in the interest of peace and stability of, most especially, the Pakistani state and the world. The paper is collapsed into eight sections. The first section is the introduction. The second offers a brief explanation of the FATA. The third section is made up of the theoretical framework of analysis for the study. The fourth section is an overview of some of the major issues related to the militancy and insurgency in FATA. The fifth section highlights key developments pertaining to the 2016 FATA reforms. The sixth section explains the nexus between political and economic marginalization and militancy in the FATA region. The seventh section consists of the recommended measures for addressing the situation, while the eighth section is the conclusion.

Understanding the Federally Administered Tribal Areas of Pakistan

FATA is a location that covers about 27,500 square kilometers and lies on the border between Pakistan's North-West Frontier Province (NWFP) and southern Afghanistan. It is the habitation of over 3.5 million Pashtun (otherwise called Pakhtun) tribesmen, including some 1.5 million displaced persons from Afghanistan (Nawaz, 2009). Khan (2016, p. 8) recounts that, "it is a narrow belt stretching along the PAK-Afghan border,

popularly known as the Durand Line, named after Sir Mortimor Duran, who surveyed and established this borderline between Afghanistan and British India in 1890–1894". FATA is also seen as home to a host of Al Qaeda operatives, most particularly the numerous foreigners from the Arab World, Central Asia, Muslim areas of the Far East as well as Europe, who migrate to the troubled zone for training, indoctrination, and sometimes respite from repression at home. Since the event of the United States invasion of Afghanistan in 2001, realities in FATA have drawn global attention to the region (Nawaz, 2009). FATA is a traditional and tribal society, and development in the area is at infancy (Ahmad, 2013).

FATA is made up of seven agencies namely, Bajuar, Khyber, Kurram, North Waziristan, South Waziristan, Mohmand, and Orakzai, which are under the control of the central government of Pakistan through the governor of the North-West Frontier Province. With the exception of Orakzai, the rest constituent elements of FATA share a border with Afghanistan, and each has a dominant tribe, distinct economic base and physical features, which make it to differ from others. Towards the east side of FATA in the settled area of NWFP, there are six contiguous Frontier Regions (FR) that are also under the control of the governor but are administered daily by provincial representatives — FR Peshawar, FR Kohat, FR Tank, FR Bannu, FR Lakki, and FR Dera Ismail Khan. Adjacent to FATA and the NWFP to the north and west in Afghanistan is a group of nine provinces (from North to South — Nuristan, Kunar, Nangarhar, Khost, Paktika, Kabol, Kandahar, Helmand, and Nimruz), which are mostly inhabited by Pashtuns (Nawaz, 2009). Then number of large Pashtun tribes that occupy the lands of FATA is estimated to be approximately 60, and if all the sub-clans are counted, the number is around 400 (Norell, 2010). Other tribal groups are also present in some of these provinces, but the Pashtun is the largest. Instantly following these afore named nine provinces are the densely Pashtun provinces of Paktia and Logar (Nawaz, 2009).

The Pashtun tribes are Muslims, but "a small number of religious minorities, Hindus and Sikhs, also inhabit some of the tribal agencies" (Khan, 2016, p. 9). The Pashtuns of FATA and the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province were called the Northwest Frontier Province until early 2010. With their fairly large populations in Pakistan's Balochistan province and Karachi city in the Sindh province, the two agencies — Pashtuns and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa account for about 38–40 million people. In 1893, the Durand Line divided Pashtun tribes between British India and Afghanistan. This delineation has since then been viewed with great contempt and resentment by Pashtuns, which is the major ethnic group in FATA and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. The demarcation line has been a major source of tension between Pakistan and Afghanistan since the emergence of Pakistan in 1947 (Norell, 2010). FATA is generally governed by customs and traditions, and arms and weapons are considered common parts of men's dress whereas every house in some parts of it works like an ordinance factory (Ahmad, 2013). The

explanation for this lies in the fact that the Pashtuns have throughout history been subject to invasions. Ultimately, since history, the region, which includes Afghanistan and the North-West Frontier of Pakistan, have witnessed perhaps a greater number of invasions than all other countries in Asia, or in even the entire world. Thus, bearing of arms by men is because of accumulated experience of war and violence and the need to be at alert always in the defence of their territory (Norell, 2010).

The Mongols, under Genghis Khan and Timur Lenk subdued these areas. Since history, the region which includes Afghanistan and the North-West Frontier of Pakistan have witnessed perhaps more invasions than any other country in Asia, or in the entire world (Montagne, 1963). The pre-Islamic Pashtun code of conduct is Pashtunwali, which regulates the intra and inert tribal dynamics. The Pashtunwali is more of a set of principles than codified law. The constituent elements of this code are Nang (honor), Badal (revenge), Melmastia (hospitality), Nanawatay (forgiveness) and Hamsaya (neighbor). Absolute and undying loyalty to the tribe and fierce opposition to occupation are central to this tradition (Zaidi, 2010). The tribes in FATA are managed mainly through their Maliks, or the influentials, and the tribesmen themselves and the official Maliks, who are selected by the Political Agent (PA) of each agency, the official representative of the government who is responsible for local governance along with the Maliks, determine some of them. The Political Agent allots stipends to the Maliks according to their status as perceived by the government. The number of Maliks differs among the agencies. For example, there are about 1,600 Maliks in North Waziristan. The militants in FATA have assassinated more than 600 tribal Maliks. Militancy and insurgency is the prevailing order of the day in FATA, which serves as safe haven both for tribal terrorist cliques and for their cohort foreigners. It is believed that most of the followers of two major mujahideen commanders of the Afghan war against Soviet occupation in the 1980s are taking refuge among tribesmen in FATA (Nawaz, 2009).

Elements of Al Qaeda, the global terrorist organization have also continued to use FATA as training ground. In addition to the numerous tribal terror syndicates in FATA, the terror and militancy in the region has been aggravated by the emergence of a more sophisticated homegrown insurgency group, Terheek-e-Taliban-e-Pakistan (TTP), under the leadership of Baitullah Mehsud who hails from South Waziristan. The TTP aims at establishing a religious state in Pakistan based on its own interpretation of the Islamic law — *Sharia*, but more firmly tied to tribal custom (Nawaz, 2009). As Norell (2010) observes, "since 2001, the TTP has been building up a power base in the Northwest, much of it done by aiding ousted Taliban and international Jihadi groups from Afghanistan" (p. 21). The TTP has continued to engage the Pakistani state in fierce battle even unto the hinterland. It is believed that the group is behind some of the most horrific attacks inside Pakistan, including the killing of former Prime Minister, Benazir Bhutto in December 2007 in Rawalpindi and the bombing of the Marriott Hotel in September

2008 in Islamabad (Nawaz, 2009). Overall, the presence and activities of the TTP has significantly changed the security landscape of Pakistan as a whole in a negative sense.

Theoretical Basis

This study depends on the "Frustration-Aggression Theory", to drive home its argument in view of the subject matter of the research. Frustration-Aggression Theory remains one of the most prominent and useful tools often adopted by social scientists and scholars in the behavioural sciences for explaining conflict (Paki, 2011). The theory is based on a research work published in a monograph in 1939 at the Yale University Institute of Human Relations, by a group of scholars namely; Dollard, Doob, Miller, Mowrer, and Sears (Berkowitz, 1989). The theory offers a psychological explanation on the relationship between frustration and aggression (Paki, 2011). The progenitors of the frustration and aggression theory sought to give a condensed explanation for almost all human aggression (Berkowitz, 1989). In their 1939 book, titled *Frustration and Aggression,* Dollard, Doob, Miller, Mowrer, and Sears puts forward a proposition, explaining that "frustration can create aggression inclinations even when they are not arbitrary or aimed at the subject personally" (Paki, 2011, p. 10).

The main thrust of their theory thus is that, aggression is consistently the result of frustration (Dollard *et al.*, 1939). As they argue, "the occurrence of aggressive behaviour always presupposes the existence of frustration and, contrariwise, that the existence of frustration always leads to some of aggression" (Dollard *et al.*, 1939, p. 1). The majority of research into the causes and consequences of aggression in the decades after were, to a reasonable extent, hinged on the ideas portrayed by the Yale scholars (Berkowitz, 1989). Paki (2011, p. 10) apparently concurs with the foregoing position by arguing that some of the issues raised by their book have attracted considerable attention (Berkowitz, 1958, 1962, 1989; Buss, 1961; Yates, 1962; Davies, 1962; Gurr, 1970; Bandura, 1973; Baron, 1977; Zillman, 1979; Anifowose, 1982). For instance, Berkowitz (1962) and Yates (1962) suggest that the violent behavior is resulting from inability to fulfill needs; Davies (1962, p. 6) emphasizes the difference between "expected need satisfaction" and "actual need satisfaction", and Gurr (1970) addresses the issues of relative deprivation gap between expectation and capabilities.

It is important to state, however, that, here, frustration specifically implies the thwarting of a goal response, while a goal response means the reinforcing final operation in a present behaviour sequence. Sometimes, also, the word 'frustration' is adapted to suggest not just the process of hindering a person from attaining a reinforcer, but the person's reactions to such obstruction as well. Therefore, to be frustrated entails both that one is prevented access to reinforcers by another party or a given circumstance and that the person aggressively reacts to this disruption (Dennen, 2005). Frustration hence underscores all cases of aggression, and the frustration-aggression theory's

thesis implies that frustration is precipitated by environmental interferences in the organism's goal attainment (Paki, 2011). In other words, "an individual whose basic desires are thwarted and who perceives the importance of the desire is likely to react to his condition by directing aggressive behaviour to the perceived thwarting objects" (Paki, 2011, p. 1).

Some noteworthy criticisms are levelled against the frustration-aggression theory as a theory for explaining conflict in the human society. For instance, Bandura (1973) describes the frustration-aggression hypothesis as a drive theory, arguing that frustration merely creates a general emotional arousal and, that social learning determines how a person responds to this arousal. Zillman on his own attributes the occasional demonstration of aggressive responses to frustration, "to the involvement of supplementary factors such as personal attacks or instrumental value of aggressive reactions" (Zillman, 1979, p. 138). According to Zillman (1979, p. 139), "the blockage of a goal reaction, in and of itself…generally will not induce interpersonal hostility or aggression". Baron (1977, p. 92) is of the opinion that frustration "is not a very common or important (antecedent of aggression) and is probably far less crucial in this respect than has widely — and persistently — been assumed".

Notwithstanding, Baron (1977), as pointed out by Berkowitz (1989), believes that obstacles to the attainment of goals can produce aggressive reactions only when they were not expected. Regardless of these criticisms, the frustration-aggression theory is popularly regarded to be highly relevant and useful in understanding and explaining the causes of conflicts in the human society. Inevitably, the researcher finds the theory to be most appropriate and suitable for explaining the cause of persistent militancy and insurgencies in Pakistan's Federally Administered Tribal Areas. Given a deep-seated feeling of resentment against constituted authorities in the state of Pakistan, owing to long experience of socio-economic and political deprivation and neglect, the tribal people of FATA resorted to acts of terrorism and militancy as a way of expressing their aggression and grievances.

Militancy in FATA: An Overview of Some Major Issues

The explosion in militancy and extremism in Pakistan's Federally Administered Tribal Areas has drawn the attention of the entire world to the region. The tribal areas on the Pakistani border to Afghanistan have been in the international limelight since the U.S. ousting of the Taliban regime in Afghanistan in 2001 (Norell, 2010). FATA, in the eyes of many has become the epicenter of global terrorism and insurgency, which especially became highly disturbing during 2007 and 2008. The deplorable security situation in FATA holds unprecedented implications for international terrorism, the stability of the Pakistani state as well as for the effort by the United States to stabilize Afghanistan (Kronstadt & Katzman, 2008). The growing rates of acts of terror and insurgencies being

perpetrated by the various tribal militant groups in the zone have overtime continued to threaten the political stability of Pakistan.

This is coupled with economic crisis being witnessed by the country at the moment, aggravated among other things by the global inflation and the rise in the prices of oil and food that could seriously threaten the Pakistani state if they result to high inflation. Moreover, FATA, in the recent years has become a cause of disagreement and controversy between the United States and Pakistan, as the incursions of the U.S. into FATA have not only resulted to a verbal war but also led to open and direct confrontations between the forces of both countries on the border (Nawaz, 2009). There were evident indications during 2008 for more violence outbursts in Afghanistan and in the border areas of Pakistan, mostly in the form of attacks orchestrated by Islamic militant movements. These attacks were aimed at Western forces in Afghanistan and civilians, both in Pakistan and Afghanistan. This trend has continued for the past years, with increasing attacks including suicide attacks (Norell, 2010).

The year 2008 thus saw a grown influence of Islamist militants in large parts of Pakistan beyond the FATA, and this brought insecurity even to the North West Frontier Province (now Khyber Pakhtunkhawa [KP]) capital of Peshawar, which reportedly is in danger of being overrun by pro-Taliban militants (Kronstadt & Katzman, 2008). Pakistan alleges Afghanistan's involvement for the unrest in FATA, as for example, the Afghan Mullah Dadullah, popularly known as the father of suicide bombing in Pakistan, was a militant leader in South Waziristan before he was killed in a Predator attack. Qari Ziaur Rehman of the Afghan Kunar province is also the militant leader in Bajuar. The Pakistan government has seemingly lost the ability to fully control and manage FATA as it did in the past and the fight is persistently ongoing to regain the control of the region even unto parts of the NWFP, where home-grown militancy has led to the establishment of a parallel government of terror and insurgencies. Pakistan lost control of FATA and replaced its management with coercion. In spite of that, militancy has continued to spread like wildfire not only inside FATA but also into the settled district of NWFP (Nawaz, 2009).

The State Department's Country Reports on Terrorism 2007 noted that 2007 witnessed a sudden growth in the trend and sophistication of suicide bombings in Pakistan, as there was more than twice of many of such attacks (at least 45) as in the previous five years combined, and in 2008, the rates of such bombings increased tremendously (Kronstadt & Katzman, 2008). On account of this, in March 2008, the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) Director, Hayden, said that the situation on the Pakistan-Afghanistan border poses a clear and continuing danger to Afghanistan, Pakistan, the West as a whole, and particularly to the United States. He and other top U.S. officials believe that possible future terrorist attacks on the U.S. homeland would likely originate from that region (The Associated Press, 2008). As it is, "the Afghan Taliban and the TTP have concentrated

actions against the U.S. forces in Afghanistan or the Pakistan Army and civilian targets respectively" (Nawaz, 2009, p. 10).

One of the deadliest terrorist attacks in the history of Pakistan that provoked profound condemnation locally and internationally was the incident of December 16, 2014, involving the brutal massacre of 132 schoolchildren and nine staff of the Army Public School in Peshawar, by members of the Tehrik-e-Taliban, the Pakistan Taliban. While claiming responsibility for the attack, Terhrk-e-Taliban Pakistan argued that the group's murder of such a large number of innocent schoolchildren and their teachers was in revenge for the heavy military offensive against terrorist outfits in FATA called Zarbe-e-Azb (Bonne & MacAskill, 2014). Launched on June 15, 2014 by the Pakistani Government, Zarb-e-Azb means the 'strike of the sword of the Holy Prophet (PBUH)' used in Badr and Uhud, and it was full-scale military operation on North Waziristan Agency, one of the Federally Administered Tribal Areas of Pakistan. The Operation Zarbe-e-Azb was initiated in response to the attack on Jinnah International Airport Karachi. By it, the Pakistan Army aims to wipe-out all terrorist syndicates, both local and foreign, hiding in safe haven in NWA and to regain control of FATA and its adjacent areas (Javaid, 2015).

As it were, "the terrorist outfits used NWA as a base to fight a war against Pakistan that disrupted the national life; impeding her economic development and caused huge humanitarian and other losses" (Javaid, 2015, p. 44). The TTP claimed that the operation Zarbe-e-Azb had been underway in the tribal areas since summer and had caused the deaths of an estimated 1,000 militants and displaced tens of thousands of people. Mohammed Umar Khurasani, the Terhrk-e-Taliban Pakistan spokesperson stated that the group selected the army's school for the attack because the government was targeting their families and females, and thus they wanted them to feel the pain (Bonne & MacAskill, 2014). The mass killing at Peshawar's Army School and College represents the most barbarous aspect of the Taliban insurgency that has continued to plague the country for over a decade (Ali, 2014).

Whereas Pakistan had experienced several terrorist incidents since the last decade, the mass murder of faultless children clearly elicited momentous outcry at home and international fronts (Bonne & MacAskill, 2014). The people of Pakistan regard December 16, 2014, as their own 9/11. The Pakistan Prime Minister, Nawaz Sharif, described the awful incident as a "decisive moment" (Ali, 2014). World leaders unanimously condemned the violence on innocent children and showed solidarity with Pakistan over the horrible and despicable incident. The US President, Barack Obama said the attack was a heinous one, while his Secretary of State, John Kerry said it was "gut-wrenching" and "an unspeakable horror". Reiterating the comment of the Pakistan government and military, Kerry declared that the culprits must face justice (Bonne & MacAskill, 2014).

In his own words, the British Prime Minister, David Cameron described the odious phenomenon as "a dark day for humanity", stating that no belief system in the world

as a whole can actually justify the appalling act (Bonne & MacAskill, 2014). The gravity of the horror and agony that followed the massacre brought regional rivals together to express sympathy and support for the victims, as the Indian Prime Minister, described the inhumane act against schoolchildren as cowardly. The Minister added that it was an irrational act of horrendous brutality that had claimed the lives of the innocent young children in their school. Moreover, Afghanistan's President, Ashraf Ghani, who himself had engaged in a struggle with the Afghan Taliban, faulted the awful act, and asserted that the slaughtering of the innocent school children contravened Islamic doctrines (Bonne & MacAskill, 2014).

The December 16, 2014 Peshawar schoolchildren massacre sparked off the National Action Plan initiative launched by the Pakistani Government in January 2015. The National Action Plan on its own is a strategy aimed at cracking down on terrorist groups in Pakistan, in response to the Peshawar killing. The National Action Plan received unprecedented support from every segment of the Pakistani society, including the major political parties and the military, and it is believed that the twenty-point plan will eradicate terrorism in the country (Souciant, 2016). Whatever may be the case, the violence in the Pakistani tribal belt holds a potential danger not only for the political stability of the Afghan and Pakistani states and for the stabilization of the Afghanistan; it means much for global stability and security. The concern for these principal actors remains how to device more effective and comprehensive strategies for bringing the situation in the Pakistan's tribal region under close check and control.

Political and Economic Marginalization as Driver of Militancy in FATA

There is no doubt about the fact that FATA has swiftly grown into a fertile ground for militancy that has brought the stability of Afghanistan and Pakistan respectively, under severe threats, but the reasons for this development has to be equally substantiated. There is growing body of literature on the immediate cause(s) of the militancy by the tribesmen of the Pakistani FATA as well as possible solutions to the problem, but this study, like so many others, traces the origins of the unrest in the area to long term political/administrative, economic and developmental realities. These factors provide an ample basis for explaining and understanding the current odious state of affairs in FATA. Politically and administratively speaking, FATA has been largely sidelined and neglected, and this has resulted in popular discontent that has built-up for many years among the aggrieved tribesmen that inhabit the region. Nawaz (2009, p. 8) corroborates that, "FATA has suffered from lack of proactive and participatory governance mechanisms and has been subject to anachronistic, top-down administrative system that served the colonial British power but not suitable for a modern society".

FATA was accorded an autonomous status due to its unique features at the inception of the state of Pakistan, which it (FATA) assented to. Promise was made to the people of

FATA that the Pakistani state would not interfere with their ways of doing things and that they would continue to enjoy their freedom as they had always done in the past. To this extent, the people of FATA held on to their traditions and customs without much government intrusion. Their life affairs were rather regulated by age-long traditions and customs than the general law of Pakistan (Ahmad, 2013). FATA therefore retained the same status as it had under Britain. Even with the first constitution of Pakistan, being the 1956 constitution under which parliamentary system was introduced to Pakistan, FATA's political and administrative structures remained the same. Article 223 of the 1962 Constitution kept the tribal areas outside the jurisdiction of the central and provincial laws mainly because of the peculiar conditions and problems of the tribal areas. The governor of the province in which the tribal areas were situated was given special powers for legislation. The governor had powers to make, repeal, and amend any regulation or any central and provincial law for the whole or any part of the area based on the president's approval. Under Article 247 of the 1973 Constitution, the same arrangement was maintained for the tribal areas (Bangash, 1996).

Also, the Basic Democracy System was extended to FATA wherein representation was authorized in the Pakistani national and provincial assemblies. The system allowed only one member to be elected to the national and provincial assemblies from each Electoral College (Khan, 2016). Article 247 of the Constitution, puts the Federally Administered Tribal Areas under the executive authority of the federation. The Article extends the executive authority of a province to the provincially administered tribal area therein. The Ministry of States and Frontier Regions (SAFRON), which is answerable to the elected prime minister has both administrative and political control of FATA. Yet, at the level of policy implementation, this control is insignificant and less important as the president has the actual executive authority and control over FATA, which he exercises through the provincial governor. This is evident under Article 247 clause (2) of the Constitution where it is provided that the president may occasionally issue directives to the governor of the province regarding the entire or any parts of the tribal area under the province as he deems important, and accordingly, the governor would duly adhere to such directive (Wazir, 2017).

The administration of each agency is performed by the Political Agent assisted by an Assistant Political Agent (APA), who serves as the head of a sub-division (Wazir, 2017). Under the President's Order No.1 of 1975 which is called the "Preparation of Electoral Rolls (FATA) Order, 1975", the right to vote for every adult male and female over the age of 21 is denied to the tribes. In view of this order, only the Maliks and the Lungi holders are recognized as registered voters by the political agent and not the people, and with the consent of the commissioner, the political agent could transfer the status to his favorites (Bangash, 1996). The Frontier Crime Regulation (FCR) provides for the referral of civil and criminal cases to Jirgas by the Political Agents. After hearing the

parties involved in any disputes, the Jirgas are to ascertain guilt or innocence and then pass verdict based on rewaj (International Crisis Group, 2006). Nevertheless, the verdict of the Jirga is not final; the ultimate authority to decide rests with the Political Agent. Moreover, the FCR makes no provision for appeal against the decision of the Political Agent both to the Supreme Court of Pakistan and to the High Court (Wazir, 2017).

The FCR is too rigid and deficient in such a manner that it does not provide justice in its modern sense to the people of FATA (Ahmad, 2013). It is draconian in nature.

> Till very recently, political activities were not allowed in FATA and there was no effective political system at any level. Even the principle of direct election and universal adult franchise was introduced about a decade ago. Lack of political activities and related process has created a political vacuum in the area (Ahmad, 2013, p. 13).

FATA has suffered so much due to its exclusion from the governance process of the Pakistani state. Not until recently, precisely in 1997, FATA's representatives in Pakistan's National Assembly were selected only by the tribal Maliks. Despite the extension, in 1997 of universal franchise to FATA, it could only send representatives to the federal legislature. Currently, FATA has 12 members in the National Assembly of Pakistan and 8 senators, but it lacks representation in the Provincial Assembly of the NWFP. This is because FATA is not under the government of the province like the Provincially Administered Tribal Areas (PATA) (Nawaz, 2009). Hence, the introduction of Adult Franchise is almost of no use to the people of FATA. The local government system in FATA is merely nominal and is steadily under undue manipulation by the Political Agents of the agencies. The Local Government Ordinance of 2001 is yet to be introduced in FATA despite the yearnings and outcries of various civil society groups in the region (Wazir, 2017).

FATA is excluded from the application and operation of the Pakistan's Political Act. No political parties can operate within FATA officially despite the presence of many of their flags in many houses and strategic spots in the area. This has enabled religious groups that are associated with various political parties in Pakistan to use Friday prayers as a medium for appealing and sensitizing the people in their favor, that is, in order to broaden their support-base (Nawaz, 2009). As Ahmad (2013, p. 14) observes, "the existing political, administrative and legal vacuum provided a fertile ground for nourishment of insurgents on different pretexts". There is no political, administrative, and legal structure to effectively challenge and curb their activities once they rise. Existing political and administrative frameworks in FATA is not robust and adequate to pre-empt or prevent such threats at the local levels as they are manned by tribal Maliks, who are not properly recognized or respected by the people. In the event of coming-up with their insurgent and terror activities, the administrative set-up would collapse (Ahmad, 2013).

FATA relies on the poorly trained and inadequately equipped personnel of *Khasadar* Force for security. The force is incapable of facing the challenge from better trained and well-equipped insurgents. The absence of sound legal structure further gives room to Talibanization of FATA, as the various militant groups establish their own courts, which they claim provides the inhabitants with free and speedy justice in line with the teachings and principles of Islam or *Sharia* Law and the people embrace the idea (Amin, 2008). This, largely, is due to the widespread annoyance and weariness among the common people regarding the cruelties and oppressive tendencies of the tribal Maliks and the absence of well-structured legal, judicial and remedial system to help address their grievances. The people needed a system that would guarantee prompt delivery of justice, which is absolutely missing under the FCR. The insurgents often snatch people from the custody of the tribal Maliks and marshal-out justice to them based on *Sharia* Law. This way, the insurgents win the sympathy of the common people, which serves as a support base to the insurgents in challenging the authority of the Pakistani state in FATA (Ahmad, 2013).

Also, various governments of Pakistan used FATA as a buffer zone during the war between Pakistan and Afghanistan. The tribesmen were employed as a reserve force and were deployed for insurgency operations in Indian-held Kashmir (Nawaz, 2009). The tribesmen were made to believe that they were fighting in the interest and defense of Islam and enforcement of *Sharia* Law in Afghanistan after its independence from the occupation by Soviet powers. The Pakistani authorities did not only mobilize the local people under the purview of religion; foreign *Jihadists* were also mobilized and brought into the region, and afterwards, they were allowed to settle as permanent residents in the area. The Pakistani governments and authorities hardly envisaged the possibility of these elements rising against the state in future to demand the introduction and implementation of *Sharia* Law in their land. The government did not also make any efforts to integrate the already trained militants into the mainstream of society as a way of ensuring that they did not use their training or be galvanized by anyone against the very society they fought for (Ahmad, 2013). The political representatives of FATA have always shown solidarity and support for, and aligned with successive regimes and governments in Pakistan.

The exclusion of the area from the mainstream political process has created a sense of deprivation and alienation from the Pakistani state in the real sense. The people of FATA are not involved in the planning and decision-making process for their own affairs and development. Most decisions regarding the area are made afar and imposed on the people even against their wish. The state can no longer rely on the support given by FATA political representatives as the overbearing effects of the notion of religious-based politics has overtime transformed the society. The various militant groups among the tribes in FATA offer their own different interpretations of the Islamic religion, and that

serves as a uniting and legitimizing ground for their inhumane activities against the state (Nawaz, 2009). Considering the foregoing, therefore, past legacies, government short-sightedness and policies, as well as inadequate legal systems and disintegrative political and administrative frameworks, are certainly a key factor in understanding the prevailing situation in FATA.

On the other hand, hardly can the socio-economic situation of FATA be overemphasized as a critical factor for explaining the rising militancy and the spread of terror in the area. FATA's economic potentials have remained unharnessed. There are deposits of some natural resources including minerals and coal, but these have remained untapped. Due to little industrial development and a few job opportunities, most of the locals depend on subsistence agricultural to make ends meet (Wazir, 2017). In view of these degrad-ing conditions and share neglect by the successive central governments in Pakistan to develop the economy and polity of the region, FATA has continued to serve as a breeding ground for militancy and insurgency, threatening the stability of the state of Pakistan (Nawaz, 2009). FATA is known to be one of the most backward and underdeveloped regions of Pakistan due to subsisting government negligence; illiteracy, unemployment, poverty and underdevelopment are commonly identified as the major features of the area (Ahmad, 2013).

With respect to literacy, FATA has a very low literacy rate (Norell, 2010). The overall rate of literacy in FATA is 33.3 per cent, which is far below the Pakistani national average of 58.92 percent (Firdous, 2015). Women in FATA are the most badly affected when it comes to the issue of literacy. Indeed, "the patriarchal fabric of society and chronic illiteracy has left women seriously disadvantaged. Women are the most part restricted to household chores, and are excluded from decision-making role on any front" (Ahmad & Junaid, 2010, p. 57). Male literacy rate is 29 percent, while literacy rate for female is put at 3 percent, compared to 32.6 percent for female nationally (Wazir, 2017). The prevailing high rate of illiteracy would always make the common people of FATA to be susceptible to lures by the insurgents to support or even join them actively in their militant activities.

In FATA, poverty is rife and embedded (Norell, 2010). It is generally known and agreed that the level of poverty in FATA is comparatively higher than the rest of Pakistan (Zaidi, 2010). Although report has it that four out of ten Pakistan's citizens live in excruciating poverty, FATA is the region in the country with the greatest poverty level, where three out of four people (73.7%) are battling with acute poverty (Rana, 2016). According to Ahmad and Junaid (2010, p. 57), "poverty has, to a greater extent, made the population vulnerable to extremist tendencies".

Employment opportunities are very scarce, and the local economy is pastoralism, cou-pled with agriculture conducted in a few fertile valleys. Subsistence farming practice

and livestock dealings, or holding of small-size businesses, are the major economic activities of most families. However, it is only as small as about 7 percent of the total area of FATA that can actually be cultivated (Zaidi, 2010; Government of Pakistan, 2006). Hence, the population of about 3.5 million people has so little arable land that each acre of cultivable land has to be utilized for supporting at least 40 people (Zaidi, 2010).

In the absence of economically viable options to earn a living, therefore, the lure of engaging in illicit activities, such as smuggling of consumer goods and weapons and trafficking in drug, has become as difficult to resist as the call of extremist Islamist elements (Ahmad & Junaid, 2010). According to Aftab (2008), one relatively more comprehensive study on the Federally Administered Tribal Areas of Pakistan is the one by Shinwari in 2008. Shinwari amplifies the view that FATA is the most backward region in Pakistan, with 60 percent of the population living below the poverty line. Based on the revelations of the study, per capita public expenditure in FATA is one-third of the average for Pakistan (Aftab, 2008). Shinwari further observed unequivocally that, "employment opportunities are limited, and the main sectors of employment are agriculture, transport, (generally illegal) cross-border trade, small businesses, and arms and drug trafficking" (Aftab, 2008, p. 3). In submission, Shinwari sees poverty and lack of opportunity as a contributing factor towards growing militancy in FATA (Aftab, 2008). Evidence that FATA is the most backward and disenfranchised region of Pakistan has been captured thus:

> The remoteness from the developed centers of the country, difficult topography, harsh local traditions, and imprudent government policies provided unfriendly conditions for investment in commerce and industry. Lack of appropriate public sector attention and investment in related infrastructure contributed to massive illiteracy, unemployment and underdevelopment, which provided a suitable environment for the rise of extremism and militancy in the area (Ahmad, 2013, p. 15).

As it stands, electricity supply reaches just 62% of the entire FATA population, and on the average, the road density is 0.17 compared to the national average of 0.26 (Government of Pakistan, 2006). Health care providers and facilities in FATA have been, and are still inadequate. A study shows that there are 577 doctors available for a population of 4.285 million people and 280 Lady Health Visitors (LHV) (Khan & Kanwal, 2015), available for 1.8 million populations of women in FATA (Burki, 2014). It is reported also that the total number of hospitals in FATA is 33 with 302 dispensaries and 56 mother and child healthcare center for the 4 million population of FATA (Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Bureau of Statistics [KPKBS], 2011). Another study shows that, for every 2,179 people in FATA, there is only one hospital bed and one doctor for every 7,670 people (Zaidi, 2010). Talibanization and military operations in the FATA region have also worsened the situation of things with regard to health care provision due to exit of many residents of

the tribal areas to urban areas of KPK in search of refuge (Internally Displaced Person Vulnerability Assessment and Profiling [IVAP], 2013).

Disturbingly, the Pakistani Government reveals that, due to the security situation, the country already has a huge 60,000 internally displaced (IDPs) families from FATA (United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees [UNHCR], 2014). A Rapid Protection Cluster Assessment discloses that, "the vast majority (76%) of IDPs are currently living in rented accommodation, 7% with relatives and 5% with host community, while 12% are living in spontaneous settlements — mostly school buildings" (UNHCR, 2014, p. 4). Another study demonstrates that 75% of the IDPs lack access to clean drinking water (IVAP, 2013). In another report, it is disclosed that only 43 percent of residents of FATA enjoy access to clean drinking water (Zaidi, 2010). About 40% IDP families do not have access to a formal latrine at home, while 23% of the IDPs cover nearly 5 km to access health care facilities (IVAP, 2013). It suffices to assert, in the whole, that, "the underde-velopment [in FATA] also helps rising militancy in the region, as the insurgents are able to exploit the deprivations of the common people and promote their agenda without much interference or fear of state authorities" (Ahmad, 2013, p. 15). Indisputably, the socio-economic realities in FATA is obviously an important factor in explaining the remote causes of the phenomenon of militancy in the region.

FATA Reforms 2016 in Focus

In an effort to affect the destiny of the tribal people of FATA positively and guarantee them basic and fundamental civic rights (Times of Islamabad, 2016), the Pakistan's Government, on November 8, 2015, constituted a five-man committee headed by Pakistan's Foreign Affairs Adviser, Satarj Aziz, to undertake reforms in the Federally Administered Tribal Areas (Hassan, 2015; Butt, 2016). Other members of the committee include the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Governor, Sardar Mehtab, the Minister for States and Frontier Regions, Abdul Qadir Baloch, Prime Minister's Advisor on National Security, Nasir Janjua, and Member of the National Assembly (MNA), Zahid Amid (Hassan, 2015). The committee was mandated to come up with a set of comprehensive proposals to-wards ameliorating FATA's political, administrative, judicial and security ambivalences and the plights of the tribal people. Along with the rehabilitation and resettlement ex-ercise, the FATA reforms aimed at giving the citizens of the tribal areas a worthy future (Dawn, 2016). The thrust of the committee's responsibility was among other things, to determine whether FATA should be merged into Kybher-Pakhtunkhwa as a part of the Provincially Administered Tribals Areas or be restructured as a distinct province of the state of Pakistan (Butt, 2016).

Prior to the announcement of the proposals of the reform committee, the hope of the generality of the people, however, was that the reforms would not only produce an equi-table and effective social justice system for FATA, but would also lead to the abolition of

the Frontier Crime Regulation in the region. The Nizam-e-Adal system earlier proposed by the FATA Reforms Committee was generally considered as the best way of ensuring the provision of easy and rapid justice to people of the tribal areas. Majority of people in FATA, including members of political and religious parties were in support of the introduction of the Nizam-e-Adal system, as that has been the long-standing demand of the people of the region. It is considered that the imposition of Nizam-e-Adal in tribal areas would both lessen sufferings and difficulties among the people as well as guarantee the protection of their culture and traditions (Times of Islamadad, 2016). In carrying out its responsibility, the FATA Reform Committee was expected to hold consultations with all stakeholders before preparing and presenting the report of its recommendations (Hassan, 2015). The essence of this was to ensure that the reform's implementation process was sensitive to the legitimate needs and concerns of every community and quarters in the tribal region.

While the recommendations of the committee were yet unrevealed, however, accusations of non-inclusion of the tribal people in the consultation process had already risen from some quarters. To lend credence, notable personalities, such as Aftab Ahmed — the Qaumi Watan Pary Chief, Khan Sherpao and Ajmal Khan Wazir — a prominent tribal politician, had alleged the Pakistan's Government of neglecting the tribal people during the consultation exercise. They poignantly alleged that when the committee visited the seven tribal districts, it had deliberations with just a few tribal elders it selected who are mostly called 'Maliks' as against the popular expectations of the tribal people (Butt, 2016). Although this allegation was not investigated to find out the true state of affairs, it tended to create wrong impression in the mind of the tribal people about the reform process. The implication was that, even though the Government of Pakistan meant well for FATA by initiating reforms to respond to the long-standing wishes and yearnings of the residents, any feeling of any sort of deprivation, say for instance, the accusation of not carrying the directly concerned people along could have undoubtedly marred the whole reform effort.

FATA needs to be normalized so that it can subdue the accumulated experiences and legacies of the British Raj and the post-independent Pakistan. Thus, FATA in particular and the Pakistani state in general, could not have been able to bear the careless handling of the processes of the reform exercise (Dawn, 2016). As it were, FATA reforms had been proposed in the past, but the wheels of the state failed to turn when it came to implementation. In the recent phase, the political and military leadership worked together, giving hope that change was imminent. Notwithstanding that, the political leadership followed the overall direction of change sought by the military rather than the other way round, the fear remains that despite how good-intentioned the military leadership may be about change in FATA, political and social changes shepherded by a security-oriented institution can lead to lopsided outcomes (Dawn, 2016). Be it as it

may, on August 20, 2016, the FATA Reforms Committee announced its final proposals to the Pakistan's Prime Minister, Nawaz Sharif (Tribal News Network, 2016).

The highlights of the proposals as captured in the report of the FATA Reform Committee recommended as follows:

1. That the tribal areas be merged with Khyber Pakhtunkhwa;
2. That the Article 247 of the Constitution be amended and that the people of FATA should be given access to the higher judiciary;
3. That the "cruel" clauses of the Frontier Crimes Regulation including the collective responsibility clause be amended;
4. That the governor should launch a 10-year development programme in FATA and complete the process of repatriation of internally displaced persons by the end of the year 2016;
5. That there should be local government polls in FATA in 2017 and appointment of 20,000 more Levies and Khassadar personnel to improve law and order; and
6. That all the property of FATA be brought under the land record (Tribal News Network, 2016).

These key recommendations, to a large extent, represent the long-standing desire of the Pakistan's tribal people of FATA. Nevertheless, the onus now falls on the political leadership of Pakistan to both fully adopt and adequately implement the reform's recommendations. Largely, the reforms present an ample opportunity for the Pakistan's Government to improve the situation of the tribal region to an appreciable measure. Failure on the part of the Pakistan's political leadership will not only increase their distrust and confidence in the Government, it will produce unprecedented consequences for the tribal region in particular and the Pakistani state in general. This is true, especially with regard to the on-going effort at addressing the problem of terrorism and militancy in FATA. In short, the already traumatized tribal belt of the Pakistani state will remain at square-one in the event of failure of the recent reforms to better its lots. The people of FATA may likely regard any other reforms canvassed for the tribal region as share mockery of their fate, if the current reforms fail to address their plight through embracing and executing the recommendations of the reforms committee.

Suggested Solutions to the Problem

Although numerous studies conducted on FATA have proffered diverse possible solutions to the problem in that region of Pakistan, yet the position of this study is that more curative and effective measures are needed urgently to salvage the undesirable situation. In view of this, the contribution of this study to tackling the challenge of terrorism and militancy in the FATA of Pakistan is of utmost importance. In broad sense, therefore, this study holds that, besides the need for full adoption and adequate implementation of the recommendations of the FATA Reform 2016, there is the expedience of deliberate,

well-articulated and holistic reforms to end the widely perceived marginalization of FATA and bring the region into the mainstream of Pakistan's socio-economic and political developmental agenda. In addition to this broad view, the specific workable recommendations of the study are as followed:

1. The Pakistani and Afghan governments and the U.S. need to re-appraise their approach and method for engaging the insurgents and militants in FATA. Seeking dialogue with FATA tribesmen through their trusted religious heads and an "Amnesty Programme" can be better alternatives to the conventional military option.
2. The U.S. and the Pakistani governments need to evolve means of dismantling the existing Taliban and Al Qaeda infrastructures and hide-outs in FATA and systematically flush-out all foreign terrorist and extremist elements in the region to fast-track the achievement of the ultimate goal of riding FATA of the menace of terrorism and militancy among the tribal people.
3. The government of Pakistan needs to ensure adequate security and control of its borders in order to close all avenues for illegal trans-border dealings, particularly the inflow of arms and ammunitions as well as illicit drugs into the FATA region through the borders.
4. An "education for all" programme and intensive and extensive mass literacy campaign would help to redeem FATA people, especially the youths from the psychological effects of religious dogmatism and adequately equip them to resist pressures to indulge in militancy and insurgent acts. Vocational education should also be integrated into, and be made an essential part of the education programme.
5. The Pakistani government needs to develop the local economy of FATA and seek to maximize the employment potentials of the region. This is very important, as that would assist in directing the energies and strength of the youths towards more meaningful and economically worthwhile activities other than taking arms against the state and its authorities.
6. The Pakistani government should undertake the rehabilitation of the collapsed infrastructures in FATA, including hospitals, schools, among others, and the building of new ones, as a matter of urgency. This would substantially instill a sense of belonging in the inhabitants of the region, thereby increasing their loyalty to the government of NWFP and the Pakistani central government.

Conclusion

The unrest and militancy in the Pakistan's FATA, which became heightened and intensified after the U.S. "de-Talibanization" of Afghanistan in 2001, has made the region in particular and the state of Pakistan in general the world's biggest cinema of terrorism. Indeed, the attention of the world with respect to the fight against terrorism has properly been shifted to the Afghan-Pakistan tribal border area in the recent years. The trend has

especially brought Pakistan into international limelight, howbeit, in a negative sense, as "incubator" and "safe haven" for both local and international terrorists and extremists, including the most notorious Taliban and Al Qaeda elements. FATA also harbours extremists from Western and neighbouring South Asian countries who have considered the region a conducive environment for planning and executing their terrorist agenda against the West and the rest of the world. Most worrisomely, the uprising in FATA has seriously shaken and continues to threaten the political stability of the Pakistani state. This is in spite of the combined and sophisticated military approach by Pakistan, Afghanistan and the U.S. to apprehend the precarious situation.

The joint efforts of these principal actors have not made substantial positive impact as the trend of militancy has continued unabated and even tending towards consuming the Pakistani state in particular. The persistent rise in the spate and dimension of terrorist activities perpetrated jointly by the foreign terrorists and extremists and the locals in FATA apparently does not suggest unprecedented consequences for Pakistan alone; it is also a potential source of danger for Pakistan, Afghanistan, the U.S. forces' effort to stabilize Afghanistan and the world in its entirety. Obviously, from all indications, FATA might likely be the source of another type of 9/11 attack on the United States and the world as a whole. Pakistani authorities have virtually lost control of FATA to the insurgent tribal men and their foreign counterparts. Pakistan now serves as a typical example of a state that has almost failed or collapsed due to its inability to contain or bring the militant activities of the tribesmen in FATA under control.

Insurgents have continued to carry-out their campaigns of terror against civilians and state authorities almost uninterruptedly even in Pakistan's mainland, and this has been a source of severe threats to the peace and stability of the country. The prevailing circumstance presents a daunting challenge to the government of Pakistan and addressing the problem is important for the future of the country. This study has demonstrated that the rising militancy and insurgency in Pakistan's tribal areas can be attributed to certain remote causes. Key among these causative factors are political disintegration and economic deprivation of the tribal people of FATA by successive central governments in Pakistan. In light of this, the study submits that any meaningful efforts intended to be successful at curbing the menace of terrorism in FATA must be tailored, primarily, towards addressing the discontent among the tribal people on the political and socio-economic situations in the region. This can be adequately achieved if relevant stakeholders could fully adopt and implement the recommendations of this current study.

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Namibia:
Forgotten Conflict in the Caprivi Strip

Lucie KONEČNÁ

Abstract: The article focuses on the Caprivi conflict that took place in Namibia in 1999. This conflict was a short and low-intensity conflict. Besides, it meets the criteria to be described as a forgotten conflict. This study aims to explain and describe this conflict, to clarify the reasons why the conflict can be described as a forgotten conflict. A public opinion poll was conducted to confirm the hypothesis that this is a forgotten conflict. The results of this public opinion poll together with further media analysis confirm this hypothesis. The second part of the work focuses on the reasons why the conflict was forgotten. Several theories are applied to the case to provide a comprehensive explanation. In practice, it turns out that there are several reasons.

Keywords: Caprivi Strip, conflict, forgotten, Namibia, public opinion, violence.

Introduction

Until its independence in 1990, Namibia was occupied by various state authorities. In 1894, the German Protectorate was declared, with the Germans establishing control through the violent occupation of land (Britannica, 2021). In the following years, a bloody uprising of the indigenous people broke out, but it was suppressed and subsequently, between 1904 and 1907, the genocide of the locals took place (Olusoga, 2015). From 1915, Namibia was administered by the Union of South Africa. However, the Namibian people did not agree with the occupation and the government of the South African Union on their territory. Therefore, they also became involved in the conflict in Angola, against the South African Defense Forces (SADF) (Totemeyer, 2007). It was an instrument to express the disagreement with the South African occupation. The SADF supported the rebel revolutionary

Lucie KONEČNÁ

Academic researcher at University
of Defence, Brno, Czech Republic
Email: luciekonecna5@gmail.com

organization so-called the National Union for the Total Independence of Angola (UNITA — União Nacional para a Independência Total de Angola) and Namibian soldiers supported The People's Movement for the Liberation of Angola (Movimento Popular de Libertação de Angola — Partido do Trabalho — MPLA). The Namibians formed an organization called the South-West African People's Organization (SWAPO), which fought not only on the side of the MPLA in Angola but also against the SADF in Namibia (Williams, 2009). The fighting lasted until 1988, but that year Namibia's independence agreement (independence since 1990) was signed (Freeaman, 1991).

SWAPO became the official political representation in independent Namibia and was no longer involved in the war in Angola. However, even the newly independent Namibia was not united and formations arose in the Caprivi area that did not agree to the inclusion of this area under the newly formed Namibian state and demanded secession. Tensions in the new state gradually escalated and eventually resulted in armed conflict in 1999. This conflict lasted only a few weeks and in terms of intensity, it is a low-intensity conflict (UCDP, 2021). However, in this case, there is a connection with the events in neighboring Angola. One of the goals of this research is to describe this conflict in detail and analyze its reasons. The scientific community has not paid much attention to this conflict so far, so it can be described as a neglected conflict. The main goal of the research is to find out what the Namibian public thinks about the conflict, whether they know their history and know about this conflict or not. The study aims to answer the research question: *Is the conflict in Namibia a forgotten conflict and if so, why?* This research question was based on the hypothesis that the Caprivi conflict is indeed forgotten. This is based on an analysis of the literature. In databases such as Web of Science, Scopus or EBSCO, only one article is dealing with this topic. Besides, the author conducted a preliminary study during her studies in Namibia in 2018, where she interviewed 20 students and university professors about this conflict and only three of them knew about it. This led to the hypothesis that this conflict is forgotten. To answer the research question, an online public poll was conducted during 2020.

The article has the following structure. The theoretical part describes the definition of conflict and the definition of forgotten conflict. The methodological part defines the goals of the research and the research question. At the same time, it describes how the public poll took place. This section is followed by a chapter dealing with the description and analysis of the Namibian conflict. The following is an analysis of public opinion and the reasons why this may be considered a forgotten conflict. In the end, the main research findings are summarized, the research question is answered and all ambiguities are clarified.

Theoretical Framework

Over the years, the definition and classification of conflicts has been discussed by several authors. In the most general sense, a conflict can be expressed as a state of competition between two or more actors who have incompatible interests. However, not every dispute or tense situation can be considered a conflict. A conflict has certain characteristics. According to Holsti (1991), a conflict must have actors, with at least one of the actors being a state actor, a definable area of conflict, tension, and action in the form of measures and actions taken by the parties of the conflict. The criteria mentioned by Smolík and Šmíd (2010) in their book are also frequent. They divide it into qualitative and quantitative criteria. Based on these criteria, national conflicts can be considered a war when at least one of the armed forces is subordinated to governmental power, with a visible controlled organization, a set strategy, and continuity of operations. The quantitative criterion of 1,000 deaths per year determines the most intense type of conflict — war (Smolík & Šmíd, 2010). Based on the number of victims in one year, conflicts can be divided into low, medium, and high-intensity conflicts. Low-intensity conflicts have no more than 100 victims in one year, medium-intensity conflicts have 100–1,000 victims, and high-intensity conflicts have more than 1,000 victims (HIIK, 2021). Based on this division, the Caprivi conflict in Namibia can be defined as a low-intensity conflict.

The term forgotten conflict is most often used for frozen conflicts, which are conflicts that are stuck in a deadlock and have been going on for a long time. The most frequently cited examples are the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict and the Palestinian-Israeli conflict (De Waal and Von Twickel, 2020). Darcy and Hofmann (2003) use this term forgotten conflicts for conflicts that the international community has essentially ignored or gradually neglected over time. In general, it is a matter of fact that these are conflicts that do not receive enough attention, whether from the media or important international organizations such as the World Bank (Nielson, 2002). This usually includes ongoing conflicts, but it can also include conflicts that have already been resolved and which have not been addressed. This is a case of the conflict in Namibia, which has not received much attention in the media nor the scientific community. There are only three brief reports in the BBC archives on this conflict and no records in the CNN archives (BBC, 2021).

There are several reasons why some conflicts are neglected or forgotten. According to Nielson (2002), attention is not paid to forgotten conflicts due to the length of conflicts and little media interest. Conflicts that are too long or very short lose public interest. Little media interest, even at a time when the conflict is taking place with the greatest intensity, is influenced by the interest of readers. It is difficult to maintain public interest in protracted crises in distant places. According to the author, a large part of Western press organizations closed foreign offices and reduced the coverage of non-Western news by 75% (Nielson, 2002, p. 4). Therefore, attention is paid only to conflicts in the immediate vicinity of the EU and the US and to conflicts that have some connection

with 9/11 and terrorism. Very popular topics are the Middle East topics, especially Afghanistan and Iraq. On the contrary, not much attention is paid to "unknown" African states. Tisdall (2019), who describes the neglect of African conflicts, takes a similar view. Narang (2016) describes also other reasons. According to him, the political-strategic interests of the permanent members of the UN Security Council (P5 — Russia, USA, China, UK, and France) are important. If the state where the conflict is taking place is not a former colony of one of the P5 or there are no oil fields, it is not getting attention within international organizations. The geographical distance from the P5 states also has an effect, which, if it is not within a maximum horizon of 400 miles, negatively affects the interest of the states important. This lack of interest of international organizations and the largest powers is also related to the lack of interest of the Western media. Some authors state that other factors also affect the interest of the powers in resolving conflicts. Gartzke and Jo (2006) cite affinity as a reason for help and interest. However, this term is quite general and may be related to similar cultural or ideological values. This explains the lack of interest of some actors but it does not explain the lack of interest of all actors.

Ciobanu (2004) describes the influence of the so-called Russian factor on forgotten conflicts in the post-Soviet states. From his work, it can be concluded that the spread of misinformation may also affect the interest of the Western media. The dissemination of misinformation may also affect how the conflict has been presented in the media. In the case of the conflicts that took place in the 1980s and 1990s, at a time when the information was not readily available anywhere on the planet and conflicts in remote and unknown areas about which disinformation was spread could have given a completely unfamiliar impression. At the time, it was even more difficult to find out what was true and what was happening on the other side of the planet. Some authoritarian regimes may seek to present violence against residents or insurgents in their territory in a completely different form. Currently, this is the case of Rohingya violence in Myanmar (BBC, 2017). These four theories explaining why conflict can be forgotten are applied to the case of Namibia in the analytical part. This includes the theory of lack of media attention, the theory of lack of interest of international organizations and P5 states, the theory of affinity, and the theory of misinformation and misinterpretation of events.

Methodological Framework

This research is based on the hypothesis that the conflict in Namibia is forgotten. Attention was not paid to the conflict even at the time when the conflict took place. There are no records of this conflict in the CNN archives and only three short reports in the BBC archives (BBC, 2021). Namibia was a German colony for a long time, so the archive of one of the largest German newspapers (Der Spiegel) was examined. It contains only one article on this conflict (Spiegel, 2021). In these cases, quantitative content analysis, looking for the number of articles that describe the conflict, was used. There

are also just a few articles related to this topic in databases of scientific journals such as the Web of Science or Scopus. In 2018, the author of this article studied in Namibia, where she conducted a preliminary study involving 20 students and professors, and only three of them knew that there were armed clashes in Caprivi. All this information confirms the hypothesis of a forgotten conflict.

The hypothesis assumes that the research will confirm that the conflict is forgotten. The main goal of the research is to find out whether the Namibian conflict is forgotten or not. In the case that the hypothesis is confirmed, find the reasons why it is forgotten. The research question is defined as follows: *"Is the conflict in Namibia a forgotten conflict and if so, why?"* For these reasons, an online survey of Namibian public opinion has been conducted. When the Western public media and the scientific community hardly wrote about this conflict, what is the awareness in the state where the conflict took place? For these reasons, an online questionnaire was created. The questionnaire contained questions related to the age or employment of the respondents and two questions related to the aim of the research. The closed question asked the respondents whether there had been any armed conflict in Namibia since independence. The second, open-ended question arose when respondents chose option yes and asked what respondents knew about the conflict. Based on the answers to the second question, the answers were categorized. The answers were divided into four categories: *no specific information* (people did not know anything specific about the conflict), *a few details* (people knew the year or area where the conflict took place), *detailed knowledge* (people knew the names of organizations, fighters, date, etc.) and *wrong knowledge* (people described a completely different conflict). The survey was attended by 200 respondents, mostly from universities. Respondents were encouraged to complete it via emails, social networks, websites, and internal communication among several Namibian universities. Interviewing took place during the year 2020. To evaluate the results, quantitative descriptive research is used, which is a kind of survey, thus showing what percentage of people (sometimes divided by other criteria such as age or gender) think, feel or see things in a certain way. It aims to describe what percentage of Namibians know about the conflict and what they know.

One of the limitations of the questionnaire is that it produces results that are only of a short-term nature. It cannot be argued that the conclusions are valid for decades. This is not such a problem, as this research aims at the current knowledge of the people. Another limit for this research was the unwillingness of the Namibians to cooperate in completing the questionnaires. Even though the author addressed a wide range of individuals and dozens of institutions, a large part of these people did not respond. For these reasons, the sample of respondents is not ideally large. The sample of respondents was largely composed of students and people coming from the university environment, but people from other professional fields were also involved. Therefore, the sample

cannot be considered fully representative. Participation of all participants in the research was voluntary. All participants were informed in advance about the purpose of the research. The completion process was completely anonymous, especially because it was completed online. This also guarantees greater anonymity and openness of the respondents. Only the author of this research has access to the results through her account on the website, so the data cannot be misused by a third party.

As only a very limited number of publications on the conflict in Namibia have been written so far, it is also one of the aims of this article to describe this conflict. Descriptive-analytical techniques are used to outline the conflict but also to analyze why the conflict is forgotten. Based on the four theories described in the analytical part of the work, the small interest of the media and the scientific community and other factors that may contribute to the fact that this conflict is neglected are analyzed. These four theories are applied to the Caprivi conflict with the help of analytical-descriptive methods. The last fourth theory deals with the dissemination of misinformation. In this case, we can expect misinformation from SWAPO, which has determined power in the country since independence. In the past, SWAPO was responsible for imprisoning hundreds of people without going to court (Amnesty International, 2015). From this, it can be concluded that there has been a violation of freedom and human rights without a clear and open course of action. Therefore, content analysis is also used to examine articles related to the Caprivi conflict published in the largest Namibian newspaper, The Namibian. The aim is to determine whether or not this conflict was reported in the newspapers, whether the information published in the articles was true and what terminology the articles used.

Conflict in Namibia

The Caprivi Strip is an area located in northern Namibia. Climatically and ethnically, this area is very different from the rest of Namibia. Germany incorporated it into their colony in Southwest Africa to have better river access to the Tanganyika colony, which was located in East Africa (today's territory of Tanzania) (Harring & Odenaal, 2012, p. 5). The people in this area come from two ethnic groups, MaSubia and Mafwe, and in the past were part of the Kingdom of Zambia. The MaSubia people have been favored by the government since the beginning of Namibia's independence and therefore mostly support the ruling SWAPO. In contrast, the Mafwe did not have as many economic opportunities and the government disadvantaged them from the beginning, so instead, they supported the local opposition party Democratic Turnhalle Alliance (DTA) (Nangoloh, 2013). Some of the DTA members were dissatisfied with the situation in the Caprivi region and therefore in 1994 formed an organization called the Caprivi Liberation Army (CLA), which since its inception has pushed for a violent solution to the problem in the area to achieve complete secession in the Caprivi (Boden, 2009).

The CLA longed for the liberation of all Lozi people, ethnic groups located in the Zambezi River basin, in the states of Zambia, Namibia, Angola, and Botswana (IRIN, 1999). Subsequently, these areas inhabited by Lozi were to be united and a new unified state was created. The Lozi group also includes two main ethnic groups in the Caprivi stripe — MaSubia and Mafwe. CLA was active mainly in the 90s of the 20th century, its most famous member and leader was Mishake Muyongo, other well-known members include Steven Mamili, Martin Tubaundule, Thadeus Ndala, and Moses Mushwena (IRIN, 1999). The second primary actor in the conflict was the governing SWAPO party, which was established in 1960 and took part in the fight against SADF during the administration of the South African Union in Namibia. Since 1990 (independence of Namibia), it is the main state party that regularly wins elections and controls power in the country (Sakeus, 2017). The party helps to achieve this also through non-democratic means and violent campaigns, especially in the countryside. Corruption, clientelism, and nepotism are also typical for this party. In its beginnings, it was a communist organization, and even today the party is left-wing, but not as radical. One of the founders of the party is Sam Nujoma, who was also the first Namibian president in 1990-2005 (Sakeus, 2017).

In the 1990s, the CLA recruited men from the Caprivi area and trained them to fight in several camps hidden in swamps on the borders with Angola and Botswana (Boden, 2009). These were allegedly camps in the Bwabwata and Sifuma area, which were built by SADF units in the 1980s and then under UNITA control in the 1990s. In 1998, Mishake Muyongo, a former SWAPO member and president of DTA, who was head of the organization from 1991–1998, joined the CLA (AllAfrica, 2018). In the same year, the Namibian Defense Force (NDF) discovered one of the CLA training camps. There was a shootout, but the numbers of casualties are unknown. Subsequently, a large part of the CLA members (more than 100) fled to Botswana and Angola, and the civilian population left the area. 2,500 people from the Caprivi area have applied for asylum in Botswana (AllAfrica, 2018).

On August 2, 1999, the CLA launched an offensive against Katima Mulilo, the capital of the Caprivi region (IRIN, 1999). CLA units attacked several facilities, an army base, a police station, and a state radio station. During the fighting, 14 people died and more than 3,000 people were relocated to neighboring Botswana (UCDP, 2021). A state of emergency was declared in the province and the government began arresting all alleged CLA members. More than 300 people have been arrested, more than half of whom have been released in the next two years, but 132 remain in prison without trial (Amnesty International, 2015). Those released were reported inhumanely by the police. There was torture, threats, and rape. During August and September 1999, there were several other armed clashes between the CLA and the NDF. The last one took place in mid-September and three CLA rebels died during it (Forrest, 2003). Major CLA members, including Mishake Muyongo, fled to neighboring countries, most notably Botswana (Melber, 2009).

Some of them have been granted asylum in European countries. Since these events, there have been no further armed clashes.

Analysis of Public Opinion

In 2020, an online questionnaire survey was conducted in Namibia. 44% of all Namibian respondents were people between 16 and 24 years old. The largest group, 49%, was people aged 25 to 45 years old. The smallest group, 7%, was represented by respondents aged 46 to 60 years old. 56% of all respondents were men and 44% were women. Whether or not they know about the conflict in Namibia, 43% of all respondents answered that they know about the Namibian conflict and that there was a conflict in the past. The rest, 57% of respondents said there was no conflict in the recent history of Namibia (since gaining independence in 1990). If we apply age criteria to this question, we will not find any big difference based on age. Roughly 39,7% of all respondents in the 16-24 age group know about the conflict, while 60.3% do not. In the 25–45 age group, 45,9% know the conflict and 54,1% do not. For the last category (age 46–60), 42,8% know the conflict and 57,2% do not. No large differences were noted between the genders. 42% of women knew the conflict and 58% did not know about the conflict. 43,7% of men knew the conflict and 56,3% did not know about the conflict.

Interestingly, these numbers regarding conflict awareness cannot be considered final. Nearly 14% of all respondents who said that there was indeed a conflict in Namibia described a completely different conflict in the open-ended question. They described how some men took part in the fighting in Angola, mentioning UNITA or other Angolan organizations. From their answers, it follows that they described the civil war in Angola (1975–2002) (Brinkman, 2003). Some Namibians, including members of SWAPO, did take part in the civil war in Angola. They have been involved in the war in Angola since its inception. On the one hand, there were SADF government units, which were made up mainly of the inhabitants of today's South Africa, but there were also several Namibians in these units. On the other hand, a much larger part took part in the fighting on the side of the MPLA, which was supported by the revolutionary Namibian organization SWAPO (Williams, 2009). However, after gaining independence, both SWAPO and SADF withdrew from Angolan territory. SWAPO began to focus on events in its new state, the first elections, the creation of a constitution, and the consolidation of power. Respondents mistook the civil war in Angola for the Caprivi conflict. There are certain temporal connections and personal connections between these conflicts. The Caprivi conflict took place at a time when there was still a civil war in Angola (1999). Besides, some sources say that there was cooperation between CLA and UNITA fighters. The CLA received mainly weapons from UNITA (Prendergast, 1999). The mistake is therefore logical but the Angolan Civil War and the Caprivi conflict are two different conflicts. Based on the analysis of these answers, it can be concluded that only 37% of all respondents knew about the Caprivi conflict, while 63% did not know about the conflict.

The answers to an open-ended question that focused on what respondents, who answered yes to the previous question (in the history of independent Namibia — since 1990, there has been some conflict in Namibia), knew about the conflict were as follows. 14% of respondents' answers were categorized as *wrong knowledge*. These respondents described the civil war in Angola, not the Caprivi conflict. 37% of responses were categorized as *no specific information*. These respondents stated that they knew nothing more about the conflict. Alternatively, their answers were completely irrelevant and did not provide anything more detailed. For example — yes, there really was a conflict or my parents or friends told me something about it. 45% of respondents' answers were included in the category *a few details*. Respondents mostly knew that the conflict
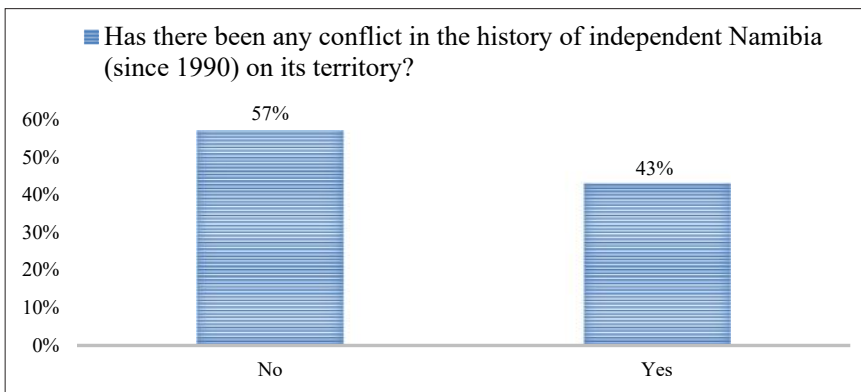

Figure 1: Public Poll in Namibia, First Question.
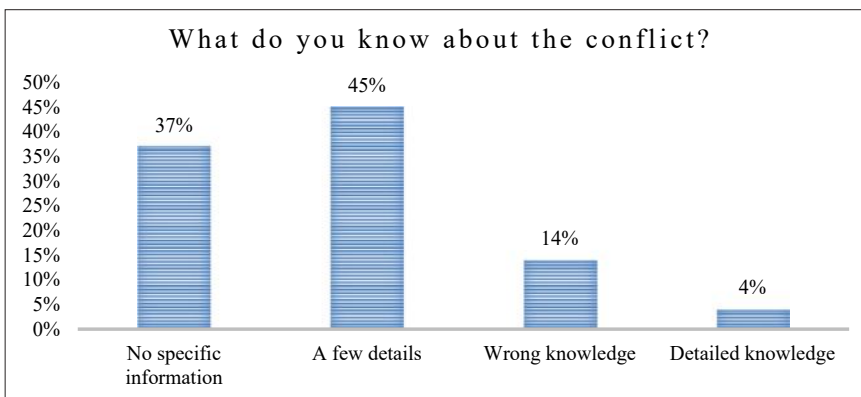
Source: Own survey.

Figure 2: Public Poll in Namibia, Second Question.

Source: Own survey.

took place in the 1990s, that it was a short conflict and that it took place in the north/ Caprivi area. Only 4% of respondents knew more information related to the conflict, so these answers were included in the category of *detailed knowledge*. They mentioned the Caprivi Liberation Army or the name Mishake Muyongo. From the answers it can be concluded that even the majority of respondents who know that there was a conflict in Namibia in the 90s do not know anything more about this conflict, it represents 59% of these respondents.

Reasons Why the Namibian Conflict is Forgotten

Although the Caprivi conflict is not a typical forgotten conflict, as it is a short and not ongoing conflict, it can be considered a forgotten conflict for several reasons. The Caprivi conflict lasted in the 1990s, specifically in 1999 for only a few months (Melber, 2009). A typical forgotten conflict usually lasts for several decades, and it is often the so-called frozen conflicts that are stuck in a stalemate. These conflicts do not receive enough attention in the media or through international and non-profit organizations. The conflict in Namibia was hardly mentioned in the world media even at the time of the conflict. There are no records in the CNN archives, only three records in the BCC archives and one in the Der Spiegel archives (Spiegel, 2021). Compared to other short conflicts of the 1990s (their duration did not exceed two years), these conflicts received at least five times more attention in the same media. Examples are the Republic of the Congo civil war (1993–1994), Yemen civil war (1994), the war in Abkhazia (1992–1993), South Ossetia war (1991–1992), Kosovo war (1998–1999), or Guinea-Bissau civil war (1998-1999) (Smith, 2015). Likewise, the Caprivi conflict has not received attention from international organizations (Amnesty International, 2015). The public opinion poll which was carried out in Namibia during 2020 only confirmed these conclusions. As a result, 63% of Namibians did not know about the conflict (including those who described a completely different conflict) and only 21% of all respondents were able to provide some information related to the conflict. Most Namibians have forgotten about the conflict, even though it is a conflict of modern history.

Why is the conflict in Namibia forgotten? There are several explanations. The first explanation relates to the theory of low media attention (Nielson, 2002). According to this theory, the attention of the Western media is focused on conflicts that last for a short time and in remote areas only to a very limited extent. This is also the case of the Caprivi conflict.[1] The conflict took place in a remote area (due to the European states

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1   It is sometimes stated that the conflict took place from 1994–1999, as already in 1994 the CLA was formed and one shootout occurred (Harring and Odenaal, 2012, p. 5). However, at that time it was not a classic conflict, as there was no continuity, organization and regular violence or struggles. It was only in 1999.

or the USA), which was little known because it had recently gained independence. The violence phase alone lasted only three months, which can be classified as a very short conflict (UCDP, 2021). The location and nature of the conflict thus negatively affected media interest. At that time, much more attention was paid to events in the Balkans. In Africa, the focus was on the second civil war in the Democratic Republic of the Congo and events in Somalia.

The second explanation relates to the lack of interest of international powers and organizations. Based on this theory, most attention is paid to states that were colonies or administered by any of the P5 states (Narang, 2016). Namibia was first a German colony, then under the administration of South Africa. It was never under the control of Russia, China, France, the USA, or Great Britain. Also, Namibia is not in the geographical vicinity of any of these states. The closest of these countries is France. However, France is still very distant, 4887 miles (7,865 km) (Distance Calculator, 2021). It is therefore far from being within the required perimeter of up to 400 miles, which negatively affects the interest of these states. However, the interests of the powers may be aroused by states in which large deposits of oil and gas are located (Narang, 2016). Nevertheless, these natural resources are not found in Namibia. The country is rich in diamonds, gold, copper, and zinc (Gaborone Declaration, 2022). These resources are not promising enough to attract the interest of the powers. Certainly not on the scale of oil.

Another explanation relates to the theory of affinity. According to this theory, states are close if they share certain values (Gartzke & Jo, 2006). These are primarily cultural and ideological values. Namibia has no common history with any of the P5 countries since it was a German colony but it maintains good relations with Germany, mainly based on trade cooperation (Federal Ministry for Economic Development, 2021). In the case of Germany, it can be argued that relations with European states are much closer and more important (Kappel, 2014). Namibia is a semi-presidential republic, which is considered a democratic state, but with shortcomings. It is rated as flawed democracy and ranked 64th in the overall assessment of the level of democracy in the world (The Economist, 2017). There are several reasons why the country is classified in this way. National elections are not totally free and fair, due to the intimidation campaign of SWAPO. Another problem is underdeveloped political culture. Democracy values are much lower than in the EU or US, whose average is around 8 points (full democracy), in contrast to Namibia, which has an average value of around 6.5 points. From this, it can be concluded that democratic values are not entirely identical. On the other hand, it is closer to these states than to China or Russia, which are considered authoritarian regimes (The Economist, 2017).

The latest theory focuses on the dissemination of misinformation (Ciobanu, 2004). In this case, as no interest of P5 states was noted, it cannot be assumed that these states would be responsible for the dissemination of misinformation. However, it is certainly

appropriate to focus on SWAPO, as it has been repeatedly accused of human rights abuses during the conflict by Amnesty International (Amnesty International, 2015). The Namibian constitution guarantees and protects freedom of the press. In general, the media in Namibia are freer than in many other African countries, but SWAPO's pressure on the media is clear (Press Reference, 2021). This influence has been stronger in the past than at present, especially in the 1990s, which includes the period of conflict (Mwilima, 2008). The government tried to control the media in the country through various prohibitions and restrictions. A well-known is a ban from 2001, which prohibited the largest newspaper in the country, The Namibian, from presenting and publishing all advertisements (Ifex, 2011). It can therefore be assumed that there was also some pressure on how the conflict was presented in the media by SWAPO. For these reasons, the content analysis of The Namibian was conducted.

When we look at the archive of The Namibian articles, the vast majority of articles related to this conflict use terms such as separatist movement, attempted secession, and secessionist movement. Some use other terms such as public violence or surprising attack (The Namibian, 2021). The term conflict does not appear in the articles in the vast majority of cases. There were only two articles out of hundreds of articles related to the Caprivi conflict that used the term conflict (The Namibian, 2021). This terminology may have affected public perception. In some cases, the public probably did not recognize the Caprivi conflict as a conflict, only as a limited and short-lived attempt at secession. On the other hand, articles by The Namibian seem relatively objective. The names of the actors, cities, or descriptions of events are clearly stated. Some articles point out that the lawsuits are lengthy or have not yet taken place. There is a large number of articles that describe some information related to the Caprivi conflict. From this information, it can be concluded that there was no major press censorship in Namibia. The only explanation is therefore related to the terminology of the articles. This only partially explains why 63% of respondents said that there was no conflict. Other reasons can only be hypothetical. It may be influenced by the fact that the conflict took place more than 20 years ago and the vast majority of respondents at that time were small children. As this was a low-intensity conflict, some of them may not consider these events to be a conflict. Education and other factors can also have an impact.

Concluding Remarks

Namibia is a relatively new state that gained independence in 1990. SWAPO took over the decisive role in the new state, trying to consolidate its power during the 1990s. Marginalized groups in the north of the country did not like it and therefore began to form an armed resistance. The conflict itself took place in 1999. This conflict was very short and, in terms of intensity, it is a low-intensity conflict. It ended with the escape of the main representatives of the Caprivi Liberation Army abroad. The rest of the CLA

members have been arrested and thus the conflict officially ended. Minor skirmishes continued in the following years (roughly until 2001), but these events cannot be described as a conflict, as there was no unified insurgent group.

The Caprivi conflict can be considered a forgotten conflict because it meets the definition of Darcy and Hofmann, who use the term for conflicts that the international community has essentially ignored or gradually neglected over time (Darcy & Hofmann, 2003). Neither the world media nor the world powers have paid attention to this conflict. Likewise, very little attention has been paid to the conflict among the scientific community. It is also interesting that the vast majority of the Namibian public is unaware of this conflict or does not consider the events of 1999 to be a conflict. Of all respondents who participated in the online survey, 63% did not know about the conflict (including those who described a completely different conflict). Only 21% were able to provide some more detailed information related to the conflict and only 4% of respondents provided specific information including, for example, the names of organizations, leaders, date, or city names. From these results, it can be concluded that the conflict is relatively forgotten, even among the Namibians themselves. This is certainly influenced by the fact that the conflict ended relatively quickly. On the other hand, it must be borne in mind that the end of the conflict was due to mass arrests, human rights violations, and the exodus of the population, which the international community overlooks.

There are several explanations why this conflict is forgotten. Almost all theories related to the explanation of the forgotten conflict have been confirmed in this case. There was low media attention as the conflict took place in a remote area and a relatively unknown state. The conflict was very short and non-intense, which negatively affects the interest of the foreign press. The interest of the powers and international organizations was also low, as Namibia has no common colonial history with any of the P5 states. From a geographical point of view, it is a state that is very distant, it is not in a perimeter of 400 miles from major world players such as the US, China, Russia, UK, and France. The country is not interesting in terms of natural resources, there are no large deposits of oil such as in Iraq, Libya, Angola, or other states where the war took place. All these facts negatively affect the interest of the powers. From the point of view of the affinity theory, in this case, also no significant closeness can be observed between Namibia and the already mentioned P5 states. Namibia is considered a flawed democracy, but all P5 states are classified differently. European states and the USA are more democratic, while Russia and China are more authoritative. The culture of these states is also very different. Thus, we can find a certain affinity only in the case of Germany, which has a common history and tries to maintain above-standard relations with Namibia.

The last theory deals with the spread of misinformation. Due to the low-interest powers, it cannot be assumed that they were involved in spreading misinformation related to

Namibia. However, as the government and the military violated human rights several times during the conflict (mainly related to arrests and imprisonment without charges and trials, violence, and torture), it can be assumed that they tried to obscure these facts and present the conflict differently (Amnesty International, 2015). Based on the analysis of the contents of The Namibian archive, it can be stated that a lot was written about the conflict, but the events were not classified as conflict, but mostly as an attempt at secession or a surprising attack. It certainly greatly influenced how people perceived these events, some of them may not consider it a classic conflict. The extent to which SWAPO has influenced the content of media reports is not entirely clear. According to some authors, there was indeed pressure on the media and human rights violations (Horn, 2009). For these reasons, events should not be forgotten. In the future, it would be appropriate to try to analyze in detail the public opinion of the Namibians and focus mainly on the analysis of why the public has a relatively low awareness of the Caprivi conflict. In this case, this research provides only a limited explanation related to the terminology used in the Namibian media.

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