



Understanding Micro and Macro Conflict in Africa for Improved Individual and Social Transformation

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Abstract

In this study, conflict for the African, is explored both at the micro (individual, ethnic & national) and macro (international) levels. This study delves into conflict as a fundamental aspect of human experience, exploring how it unfolds in Africa at both individual and communal levels, as well as on an international scale. Conflict arises from clashing interests, values, or goals and takes various forms, such as struggles within oneself, between individuals, within groups, or between groups. Africa, recognized as the birthplace of humanity and a continent rich in natural resources, is poised to play a significant role in the global workforce of the future. Yet, it remains trapped in economic stagnation, widespread poverty, violence, and corruption. This research seeks to understand how conflict undermines Africans personally and regionally, contrasting this with regions like Asia and Latin America, which have turned similar challenges into opportunities for progress despite histories of slavery and colonialism. Through an analysis of African media, governance issues, and insights from other regions, the study singles out identity and poverty as key drivers of conflict at the personal and community levels, while natural resources, climate, and geographic location fuel larger-scale disputes. The consequences are severe—human rights abuses, loss of life, and displaced resources—all stalling development. Rather than attributing Africa's struggles solely to external forces like slavery, colonialism, or unfair trade agreements, this work emphasizes the continent's inherent strengths. It proposes that conflict, rather than being a mere obstacle, can be a tool for self-liberation and growth. Drawing from Asia's focus on family-based social support and Latin America's emphasis on critical thinking and transformation, the study suggests rethinking African socialism and ethnic-driven entitlement. By fostering inclusive, accountable governance, Africa could transform conflict into a force for enhancing individual lives and societal well-being, breaking free from cycles of division and underdevelopment.

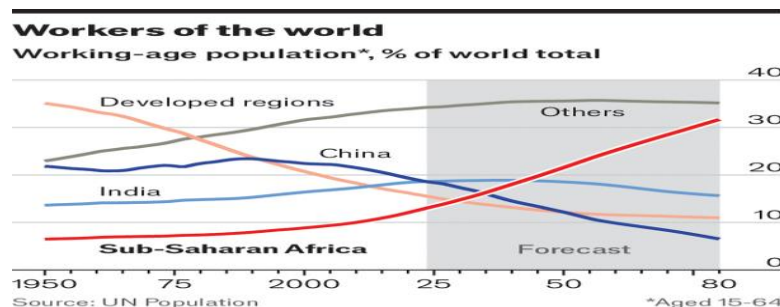
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Introduction

Conflict is looked at as an inherent and innate universal experience of/and in all life forms (Dennen, 2005). On that note, organisms, the human being included, are bound by/in “multiple-configurations and coalitions” (p. 2), that make conflict realizable in nature and nurture. Nevertheless, the dynamic nature of conflict (Karen & Elizabeth, 2001) as well as its logic (Lempp, 2009), grant it an individualized and localized paradigm. In this study, conflict for the African, is explored both at the micro (individual, ethnic & national) and macro (international) levels. This study seeks to understand how conflict is experienced by the African at the individual and communal level including at the family level and in other social interactions, as well as at the international level (macro). It goes further to shed light, on causes of conflict (micro/macro), before addressing the effects of the conflicts. The study also seeks to determine ways through which the African could leverage on conflict towards the improvement of the self, and of social interactions within the region and with the outer world. The leveraging is informed by strategies in Asia and Latin America.

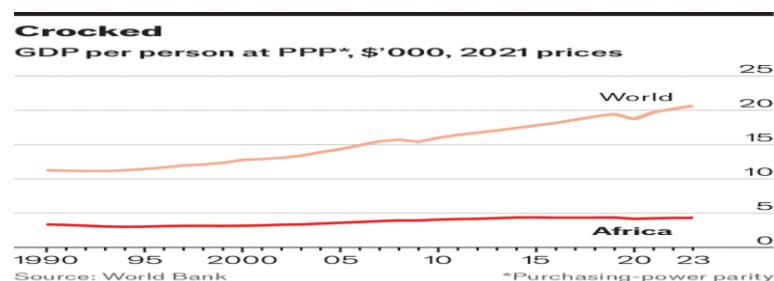
Justification and Gap Leading to the Study

Africa is on history as the origin of mankind (Turkana Basin Institute & Stony Brook University, 2022). Early civilizations also allude to origins in Africa (Hani, 2023). In addition, scholars on natural resources point to Africa being at the epitome of wealth (ADBG, 2016). Studies on population, point to Africa as the projected source of human capital, and so a key determiner of future world economic trends (*The Economist*, quoted in *Special Report*, 2025, p.1).



The prior premise is based on the fact that, “By 2030 half of all new entrants into the global workforce will be from sub-Saharan Africa” (*Special Report*, 2025, p. 2).

Despite these advantages, Africa continues to not only lag behind the rest of the world in economic standings, but also to record minimum growth compared to other regions (*The Economist*, Source World Bank, quoted in *Special Report*, McDermott, 2025, p. 1).



Together with the increased levels of poverty, Africa is an also known home to violence (Cilliers, 2018), human rights violations (AI, 2020), corruption (UNEC for Africa, 2016), among other vices. What exactly ails Africa when it comes to efforts to leverage on her advantaged pedestal? In relation to this study, how is the African conflict, working towards disadvantaging her individuals, and the region?

This position is contrary to other regions, that appear to manage and leverage on conflict, and hence move towards development and improved human wellness. Notable studies on Africa, blame slavery (Nunn, 2008), colonialism (Rodney, 2018), and even international World trade treaties (Winters, 2000), for the tribulations facing Africa. While these studies have their justifications and findings, this current study delimits its focus to the strengths of Africa. It seeks to explore the trajectory of leveraging on Africa's strengths towards self-emancipation, despite the challenges. In so doing, it seeks to borrow from recent world best practices, among them sections of Latin America and Asia, localities that despite going through the epochs of slavery and colonialism, are on record as being on the right development trajectory (Kohli, 2009). The study narrows down its focus on conflict, seeking to find out how Africa can take advantage of, rather than blame, conflict, and use its experiences for growth.

Methodology

Following continued reading and engagement with African media, the researcher engages with literature on issues of conflict and governance in Africa. There is also a mini literature search from Asia and Latin America, with a view to soliciting best practices practiced in the regions. Throughout the study, the researcher interrogates why Africa is poor despite her natural resources. The study does not settle at blaming slavery, corruption and "uncomfortable" international trade treaties. Rather constant engagement with literature on corruption and negative ethnicity opine the two vices as key contributors to Africa's challenges.

What Is Conflict?

Conflict is looked at as an incompatibility of interests, goals, values, needs, expectations, and/or social cosmologies (or ideologies) (Dennen, 2005). It is also seen as a clash, competition or mutual interference of opposing or incompatible forces and qualities (Webster's Dictionary). The incompatibility can be malignant (destructive and disruptive) or benign (creative and progressive). Additional information on the incompatibility of values presents fronts within which values operate: – economic, political, educational, religious, ethnic, and racial. When individuals or a group does not agree on any of the values, they are termed adversaries, and violence may result in order to "protect [each of the individuals or groups] against the extreme threat represented by the other" Dennen, 2005, p. 4).

Conflict Differs from *Competition* Which Is the "Active Demand by Two or More

individuals for a resource or requirement that is potentially limiting". The term is also different from the term "*scramble*" that is realized when "each participant attempts to accumulate and/or utilize as much of the critical resource as [one] can, without regard to any particular social interaction with [the] competitors" (Dennen, 2005, p. 8). Conflict also differs from *aggression* where an individual, through threats or fights, is "induced to surrender access to some resource [that is] important to [one's] fitness" (Dennen, 2005, p. 8). Finally, the same scholar (2005), differentiates conflict from *contest*. The latter refers to the ability of an individual to obtain a resource and maintain its sufficiency and ability to multiply, while denying others its access. Contest often includes aggressive behaviour.

Types of Conflicts

Toncheva-Zlatkova (2023), singles out four main types of conflicts:

Intra-personal conflict: this is when an individual realizes that the goals assigned to him/her are not compatible with his/her personal capabilities and goals. As a result, strong feelings, inner emotional state and volitional processes develop. This conflict is in the psyche of the individual.

Interpersonal conflict: This type of conflict develops when two individuals “express disagreement about goals, actions, decisions, outcomes (Toncheva-Zlatkova, 2023, pp. 256/7). The two individuals are said to have different perceptions, motivations, learning and assessment styles, hence the conflict.

Intra-group conflict: The conflict develops following “intellectual differences” resulting in behavioural differences between group members. It comes as a result of among other things, emotional reactions. Group norms, requirements and values play a significant role in determining and managing this conflict.

Intergroup conflict: This is where a dissatisfaction is expressed in different groups (formal or informal). The expression leads to opposition. In this conflict, each group tries to achieve its goals.

The same author also discusses *conflict of interests* where there are incompatible aspirations aimed at limited resources. In conflict of interest, there is competitive behaviour between participants, each striving to gain at the expense of the other(s). This situation easily gives rise to enmity and fighting.

Another discussed type is called *cognitive conflict* or the conflict of ideas. This conflict arises when individual participants in a problem-solving situation have different views, a situation that gives rise to inconsistencies in situational assessments, that leads to specific behaviour. Toncheva-Zlatkova (2023) goes on to present three derivatives from cognitive conflict: “*Attitudinal conflict* - refers to the biases of the disputants; *Value conflict* - due to different social experiences, culture, moral and normative system, paths of socialization, etc.; [and] *Psychological conflict* - due to the peculiarities in characters, to the discrepancy in the dynamics of mental processes, to the differences in intellect, in upbringing, etc.”

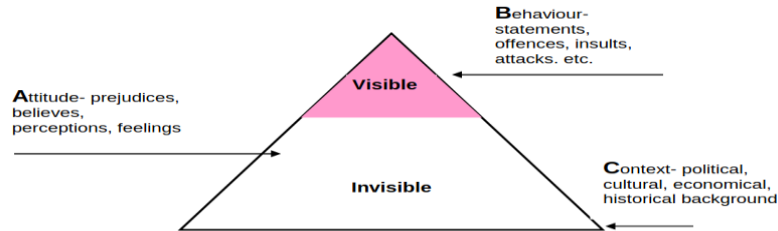
The last types of conflict discussed under *organizational conflict* is relationship, task and process. Karen and Elizabeth (2001), point out that the last two are majorly in organizations: “awareness of differences in viewpoints and opinions pertaining to a group task (task conflict), and awareness of controversies about aspects of how task accomplishment will proceed” (process conflict) (pp. 238/9). The most important for this study is however, relationship conflict. This conflict includes the affective components of the individual (feelings of tension and friction). Other feelings such as annoyance, frustration, and irritation are also considered. These inclusions, enrich the study’s understanding of the types of conflicts at the individual and community level. After this understanding on conflict, the next section looks at different dimensions of conflict.

Different Dimensions of Conflict

Dilemma is intra-individual conflict which in French is referred to as “*l’embarras de choix*”. Dilemma occurs where an individual consists of incompatible motivational or behavioral tendencies “(approach/approach, avoidance/avoidance, and approach/avoidance conflict” Dennen, 2005, p. 3). In this study, dilemma could be realized at the individual level or at the communal one. The second dimension of conflict is at the *social* level. This is seen as “a struggle over values and claims to scarce status, power and resources in which the aims of the opponents are to neutralize, injure or eliminate their rivals” (Coser, 1956 quoted in Dennen, 2005, p. 3). In the social dimension of conflict, the main oppositions are in the realms of “individuals, sexes, ages, races, nationalities, sections, classes, political parties and religious sects” (Dennen, 2005, p.5). The two dimensions of conflict pave way to the conflict process.

Conflict Process

Conflict Process is best represented in the conflict triangle



Conflict Triangle (n.d).

The conflict triangle incorporates the relationship involving attitude (one's prejudices, beliefs, perceptions and feelings), behaviour (verbal and non-verbal) as well as the context (political, cultural, economic, historical and even environmental). In the African context, the religio-spiritual context is also important. In understanding the conflict process, there is need to explore the conflict itself through the following questions: What exactly happened? Who was involved? When did it happen? Where was it? How did it happen? What reasons contributed or led to its happening? In these questions, one may require also to know (what, in the process, is incompatible?). In the triangle, it is also important to look at the conflict *attitude*. This entails the prejudices, beliefs, perceptions and feelings of all those who are involved. Attitude is an inner disposition that influences how individuals view issues and also how they react. This inner disposition, largely contributes to the conflict triangle. Finally, the conflict *behavior* is critical. This refers to what was done in relation to people's reactions and how that is interpreted in the political, cultural, economic, historical and even spiritual *context*. A critical question in addressing behaviour is whether the actions were or aimed at being destructive due to frustration as the parties tried to subdue the conflict. It is worth noting that as Galtung (1965, quoted in Dennen, 2005, p. 3) states, destructive conflict behavior tends to become self-reinforcing. In addition, it is prudent to also interrogate one's thought processes in order to understand one's ideas.

Propositions on Conflict

Simmel-Coser sheds light on propositions on conflict (Simmel, 1903; Coser, 1956, quoted in Dennen, 2005, pp. 6&7). Ten propositions that help understand and explain conflict are given. Due to their clarity and importance, the study takes them verbatim:

1. Conflict serves to establish and maintain the identity and boundary lines of societies and groups.
2. Conflict with other groups contributes to the establishment and reaffirmation of the identity of the group and maintains its boundaries against the surrounding social world.
3. Patterned enmities and reciprocal antagonisms conserve social divisions and systems of stratification.
4. A distinction has to be made between conflict and hostile or antagonistic attitudes. Social conflict always denotes social interaction, whereas attitudes or sentiments are predispositions to engage in action.
5. Conflict is not always dysfunctional for the relationship within which it occurs.

6. Social systems provide for specific institutions which serve to drain off hostile and aggressive sentiments. These safety-valve (*Ventilsitten*) institutions help to maintain the system by preventing otherwise probable conflict or by reducing its disruptive effects.
7. Aggressive or hostile 'impulses' do not suffice to account for social conflict. It has often been pointed out (Bernard, 1951, among others) that hostile stereotypes, prejudice, threat perception, general hostility, and aggression (however conceptualized) are more likely to be the result of conflict than its cause.
8. Antagonism is usually involved as an element in intimate relationships. A conflict is more passionate and more radical when it arises out of close relationships.
9. Conflict with another group leads to the mobilization of the energies of group members and hence to increased cohesion of the group.
10. Groups engaged in continued struggle with the outside tend to be intolerant within. Rigidly organized struggle groups may actually search for enemies with the deliberate purpose or the unwitting result of maintaining unity and internal cohesion.

In the propositions, several issues emerge. The first is the importance of conflict in securing and maintaining identity among individuals (no. 1) and in groups (no. 2). Number five states that conflict is not necessarily negative. This study goes a step further to reiterate the importance of conflict in combating complacency and thus in nurturing development. This is the quest of the current study in relation to Africa; how can conflict leverage on her development?

Experience of Conflict at a Micro Level

The study looks at the individual as both the instigator as well as the recipient and beneficiary of conflict. This means that the individual, is inherently conflicted and also conflicting. From a biblical perspective, there is the mention of the Original Sin, where the individual has an inherent desire to sin; do wrong (Gen 3 & Ps 51:5). There is also the mention, "Fill the earth and subdue it...Have Dominion" (Gen 1:28). Might this explain the continued desire of the human being to be competitive and thus give reason to the acts of slavery and colonialism?

The alluded human competition is associated with high stress levels (Cohen, Janick-D., & Miller, 2007; Shalev, Koh, Ebstein & Chew, 2018) and with increased depression and suicide (Windarwati, et al., 2022). Other scholars link increased stress to family conflicts and violence (Nart & Batur, 2014; Noviat, 2016). At a slightly higher level, human conflict is expressed at the clan and ethnic community level (Oliver & Bosco, 2024). In Africa, negative ethnicity, is experienced during elections (Ackermann, Awaworyi & Russell, 2024), and in the nepotism experienced when allocating resources and job positions (Jimoh & Thomas, 2021). These pathways interfere with the region's development, since rather than getting the best in terms of development, the region tasks those from one's ethnic community (Amobi et al., 2019). The wave thus doubly interferes with the region's growth: on the one part, the region is served by not the competent, but rather by those put in place by their god-parents, the demagogues (Abbas et al., 2021). Also, on the other part, the region's citizens, are discouraged due to the unfairness in competing for positions of delivery (Nadeem et al., 2015). In addition, those in positions of delivery due to nepotism and ethnic appointments have their allegiance to their "god-parents" rather than to the public whose resources they use for self-enriching (Corruption Watch, 2020; Transparency International & Equal Rights Trust, 2021), hence the title political sycophants. The vice that is here-in linked to the inherent nature of the human person therefore, is seen as explaining conflict at the micro level. The vice also points towards explaining why Africa continues to be in the vicious cycle of corruption, human rights

violations and subsequent poverty and under-development, among other vices. Yet as noted, conflict is not necessarily negative. How then can the conflict be utilized for development?

Experience of Conflict at a Macro Level

Traditionally, the measure of conflict was armed violence. The World has had two major Wars (Smith & Lee, 2022). These periods remain on record as having been foot to world's highest devastating epochs, as a result of human instigators. There were also world divisions between the East and the West, increasingly escalating into wars among them the Vietnam War (Cirafici, 2021) and that involving Cuba (Bernstein, 1980). In the more recent times, among other phenomena that rocked the world was the attack on the Twin Towers (Azofeifa, Martin, Santiago-Colón, Reissman, & Howard, 2021) and the subsequent war against Iraq and Afghanistan, in addition to other wars in the Middle East (Thannhauser & Luehrs, n.d). Currently, the wars between the Israeli and the Palestinians (Kapshuk, 2020), and that between Russia and Ukraine (Seth, Joseph & Michelle, 2021), continue to devastate humanity.

In Africa, the violent conflicts took the faces of slavery (Bertocchi, 2015), colonialism (Kohn, 2011) and the subsequent fighting for independence (Beresford, Berry, & Mann, 2018). While in the first face, human resource was largely robbed off the region, in the second face, resources were again shipped away (Rodney, 2018). Other ugly epochs bring on record the genocide in Rwanda (Evelina, Jonas, Thorsten, & Miri, 2020), Xenophobic attacks in South Africa (Ngcamu, 2025), Post Election violence in Kenya (Ochieng, Matanga, & Iteyo, 2023), and the militia onslaughts in Nigeria with Boko Haram (BBC, December 24, 2015), as well as Somalia with the Al Shabaab (ACLED, 2023). Other violent epochs have also been experienced in North Africa with the wars against their dictatorial regimes (Ndiloseh, 2024), and in Ethiopia among the Tigray and the Amharas (Weldu & Kiingati, 2025). These wars, have and remain on record as bringing conflict that goes a long way in being bed to human suffering. Africa, like the rest of the world experiences conflict. Nevertheless, while other regions appear to leverage on their conflict, how come the same does not happen to Africa?

According to Kaldor (2013) there is also the New War Theory. Conflicts and wars occur in other parts of the world too but are more common in Africa because of her natural resources, climate, and location (Koubi, 2019; Busby, 2021, Bakamana, 2021a). Africa may be said to suffer conflict partly due to her resources. Rather than Africa profiting from the resources, it thus continues to be a covert and overt war zone, leaving her populations in increased human rights violations, loss of life, poverty and under-development. Evidently, while it may suffice for some to blame outsiders, this study ascribes to the position that Africans continue to be the regions worst enemies, in that in their selfish interests, permit and facilitate the outsider, in impoverishing the region (Freeman, 2010, June 20). While the elite momentarily appear to profit, and so are enticed to continue the practice, the public prepare and sustain the platform on which the elites thrive (Bakamana, 2020). They do so, by among other things, choosing to bury their heads in the sand of metaphysical serenity realized in religious extremism (Orogun, & Pillay, 2021) and witchcraft (Kakwata, 2018), as well as in false hopes of an illusion-based ethnic profitability (Kivoi et al., 2022). This discourse sheds light into current conflicts in Africa. Though not explicitly stated, it may point towards the causes of the current war involving DRC/Rwanda (Maddocks, 2025). Yet the question still lingers, are there ways in which Africa could take advantage of conflict towards her development?

There are also epochs where human beings have had pestilence-related conflict. Such moments include the periods of epilepsy and leprosy, and even plague (Piret, & Boivin, 2021). In Africa, diseases such as cholera, Tuberculosis and Malaria, among other tropical diseases have continued to plague the continent (Moyo, Mhango, Moyo, Dzinamarira, Chitungo, & Murewanhema, 2023). In the contemporary times, COVID-19 and the continued Cancer devastation cannot be ignored (Ezenwankwo, Nnaji, & Moodley, 2022). Among these diseases, malnutrition and hygiene related ailments (FAO, ECA & AUC,

2021) continue to cripple Africa. Other issues related to conflict include addictions, both behavioural (among them internet gaming and betting) and substance abuse (Kiingati, 2022). Road accidents cannot be ignored (Lagarde, 2007). How have other regions dealt with the pestilence-related conflict as not to devastate their development?

In addition, there have been environmental-related pandemics. In Asia the unforgettable Tsunami (Pierre & Florence, 2011) wreaked havoc in the region. In America, there have been fires among other disasters (AON, 2025). Europe has not been left behind in the area of recorded disasters (Jonathan, Eleanor, Robert, & Jan, 2020). In Africa, according to ARC (2024) continued droughts leading to famines have been recorded. With the continued change of weather patterns, Africa has also had issues of heavy floods leading to deaths of large numbers of people. These happenings have and continue to cause conflict in the world, to which Africa belongs. Largely, the study is on Africa with the realization that the region continues to largely struggle with diverse armed conflicts, as well as with pestilence related conflicts that negatively affect development, but also largely endanger human survival. In addition, the change in weather patterns continue to threaten the world's development at large and Africa in particular. While conflict remains part of the human person and development, how can Africa leverage on it, towards individual and social transformation?

Causes of Conflict (Micro): Identity and Poverty

While there are other causes of conflict in Africa, this study chooses to focus on two to allow for an in-depth analysis. The select on poverty is also informed by the propositions of conflict given by Simmel (1903) and Coser (1956) where identity came out strongly. The focus on poverty, is founded on the realization of this study that it is a significant indicator of lack of human wellness, and thus a significant contributor to conflict.

Identity: Fusion in understanding one's identity is looked at as a source of conflict. Studies on identity borrow from Kopytoff (2005, quoted in Kiingati, 2019a, p. 12). Identity is the "persistent sameness with oneself, and the conception of the individual self in relation to others". At the individual level, identity can be understood from an inner psychological level. Freud (Solms & Turnbull, 2011), shares on childhood experiences. Depending on how one's childhood was handled, one may be going through innate conflicts that if not dealt with, interfere with one's world view and progression. Other scholars that look into one's developmental stages include Piaget (Kendra, 2014): -cognitive development) and even Kohlberg (1981): - moral development). Notable also, on developmental psychology is Erikson (Schwartz, Zamboanga, Wang, & Olthuis, 2009) who presents the psycho-social developmental stages of an individual. Each individual is at a specific level of development and each stage comes with its challenges, that when un/mal-approached, an impasse that would then be cradle to conflict, ensues. The innate developmental conflicts and the way they are handled, determine the individual's amiable/non-amiable social interactions.

In addition to the innate dispositions, social interactions are also influenced by existential identities (gender), that are rather intrinsic and immanent (Silberschmidt, 2015, quoted in Kiingati, 2019a). In addition, from a structural symbolic interactionist perspective (Stryker, 2008), the individual is also understood (by the society) from the roles they play hence social identities. These roles resonate with role-based identities (Thoits, 1991; Lutters & Ackerman, 1996; Oyewumi, 2005; Watson & McLanahan, 2009). Identity is thus expressed through verbal and non-verbal cues. The level of awareness of one's identity, informs one's inner serenity, and also determines one's amicable interactions. This study queries whether low awareness on identity, has a correlation to the levels of conflict.

For the African, "We are therefore I am", is a common pedestal (Warren, 2017). The African therefore views the self from the ethnic community to which they belong, which is at times brought lower to the level of the clan. Actions and decisions carried out by the clan/ethnic community, are thus carried

out by the individual indiscriminately (Oliver & Bosco, 2025). At a secondary level, and still in an attempt to identify with, the African, belongs to a social group which may be religious based. On that note again, the African is inclined to follow and act as per the religious group (Weldu & Kiingati, 2024). In these identity-related activities, the African may find themselves in conflict as an individual and as a group. How can the African, leverage on identity-related conflict, towards self and societal transformation?

Poverty: In a society, where individuals are struggling for the basics (*food*:-something to fill the stomach; *housing*-money to pay for rent; *education*:- fees to allow the child to remain in class; *health*:- fees to cater for basic medication, among other life-threatening basic needs) (Sen, 2004), the proliferation of corruption and negative ethnicity easily become a norm (Kivoi, Yogo, Luseno, & Malicha, 2022). In addition, continued dirty politics for survival (Kivoi et al., 2022; Bakamana, 2021c), societal injustices including human rights violations (Transparency International & Equal Rights Trust, 2021), and inconsideration for the rule of law (Fombad, 2018; Bakamana, 2021d), easily mark the identity of such a society. As the vices continue, on the one part, the perpetrators, majorly the elite, pursue the trajectory, in an attempt to get themselves and those close to them out of poverty. On the other part, the public in these societies tend to cling on to negative ethnicity (Kivoi et al., 2022), and to metaphysical solace realized in witchcraft and religious extremism (Kakwata, 2018; Orogun & Pillay, 2021). At the level of the elites, conflict as they struggle to remain in power and thus protect their wealth is experienced (Dollbaum, 2017; Raleigh & Wigmore-Shepherd, 2020). At the level of the public, continued conflict, as each struggle for basic survival, is witnessed (Noonan & Bosco, 2024). For both the elite and the public, conflicts nurture vice and reduced development leading to a continuation of the vicious cycle realised in criminal activities, corruption, negative ethnicity, human rights violations, violent conflicts, and increased poverty, among others (Bakamana, 2021a). How can the African break away from this vicious cycle? What does the African need to learn and borrow (with amendments) from success stories from Latin America and Asia?

Causes of Conflict (Macro)

This section reiterates the earlier mentioned conflict at macro level. Koubi (2019), Busby (2021) and Bakamana (2021a) enumerate natural resources, climate, and location, as causes of conflict at the macro level. Looking into current wars outside Africa, the Israeli Palestinian war, has among its causes, territorial expansion (Global Conflict Tracker, 2025). In relation to the Russia/Ukraine War, there appears to be a desire for dominance and control (Davis, & Slobodchikoff, 2022). In Africa, a study by Noonan and Bosco (2024), involving the Dassanech (Ethiopia) and the Turkana (Kenya), the convergence at meeting grounds in search for pasture and fishing grounds, points to a cause of conflict. The current conflict in the North Eastern part of DRC bordering Rwanda, is a case in mind where conflict is associated with border lines (fighting for expansion of the land resource), and also linked to the wealth in natural resources in the region (Cannon, 2025, Bakamana, 2021b).

In almost all regions that border Sub-Saharan Africa, starting from Ethiopia to the East, Sudan and South Sudan, Central African Republic, French and English Cameroon, Nigeria, Ivory Coast and even Burkina Faso, conflicts have been documented (Harris, n.d; Bakamana, 2021a). These conflicts appear to have a religious under-tone in some regions more overt than others (Ludovic, 2014). There are also cross-border conflicts (Shikuku, Okoth, & Kimokoti, 2020), where ethnic communities were arbitrarily divided and consequently belong to different countries, courtesy of the Scramble for Africa. In Kenya cases of the Maasai (Tanzania & Kenya), Somali (Somalia & Kenya), Oromo (Ethiopia & Kenya), are such examples. Yet as reiterated prior, while the rest of the world apparently surmounts their conflict and develop, Africa continues to grapple with underdevelopment. What lessons does this region require?

Effects of Conflict (Micro)

Human Rights Violations: Largely, due to their physical strength, the males are involved in perpetrating violent acts of conflict, while the women and children remain victims (AI, 2020). Examples of such violations on women are sexual harassment and rape, often targeting women of all ages. With the women, young boys are also subjected to child labour and recruited as under-age soldiers (Child Soldiers Global Report, 2004). These violations are discussed at the individual level since the individual largely becomes the victim.

Loss of property and time: Individuals who are involved in conflicting situations, more so where violence is central, not only lose time but also their properties. In conflict, properties are lost, and persons suffer injuries, thus having to spend resources that would otherwise have been spent on development (Olaosebikan, 2006). The consequences are often increased poverty. How then have other parts of the world, managed to go through moments of conflict and still nurture development?

Loss of life: This loss is at the epitome of human devastation (Frankl, 1992). The loss is both to the individual who is denied the opportunity to enjoy life and be productive, but also to the dependents, some of whom are widows (Kiingati, 2019b) and orphaned children (Subbarao, Mattimore, & Plangemann, 2001). In the two World Wars, 35.2 million civilians and 24million combatants lost their lives (Cormac, 2024). In the case of Rwanda, between 500,000 and one million Tutsis and Hutus died (UN 1994); this was about 77% of the Tutsi population at the time (Verpoorten, 2005). The loss of life during conflicts is at three levels: denial of one's most basic right: - the right to live; loss of bread winner to the dependents; loss of human capital. What lessons can Africa pick from individuals in Europe, America, Asia and even Latin America, on ways to surmount and leverage on conflict that leads to loss of life?

Effects of Conflict (Macro)

- (i) *Displaced human resource:* Due to violent conflicts, the human capital is denied the opportunity to actively participate in production (Hoeffler, 2017). The areas that are prone to violent are often avoided thus interfering with the opportunity to positively exploit the natural resources. Also, due to lack of peace and thus hope for the future, displaced populations seek asylum in apparently more peaceful countries. With mass migrations, the original country within which conflict is experienced, loses human power. On the contrary, the countries that offer asylum to refugees may also struggle with increased dependents and thus an imbalance in resources.
- (ii) *Displacement of developmental resources:* Resources that would otherwise be used for investment and subsequent wealth creation, are used for sustenance. This is a result of displacement; familiarity with one's home locality, is meant to allow one to explore ways of positively exploit the available resources (IEP, 2021). While the African, has spent centuries in their localities, what are some of the hindrances that have ensued in relation to their inability to positively exploit the rich resources?
- (iii) *Destruction of societal wealth including shared infrastructure:* Infrastructure is highly destroyed during violent conflicts (Gates, Hegre, Nygard & Strand, 2015). Common places are lost to wanton destructions, leaving the subsequent resources being used to sustain or even rebuild the destroyed shared infrastructure. For instance, the DRC portrays a country marred with conflict, corruption, lack of rule of law, amidst other political governance issues which have repercussions on development (Bakamana, 2021e). This is the situation in Africa and in other regions. The study seeks to find out how these other regions have managed to get over the devastation, and thus develop.

(iv) *Loss of Cross-Border Trade*: neighbouring countries feel threatened by the influx migrations and so close borders (OECD/SWAC (2022)). In many of these borders, communities, members of the same family often trade across the related borders. Also, there are commodities flowing in and out of the two countries, thus opportunities for trade and development. With the closure of these borders, trade is interfered with, denying the inhabitants subsistence. It also increases crime and illegalities across borders thus increased corruption. Not only do the individuals lose revenue but also the concerned governments (World Bank, 2011). What lessons can Africa have from other regions to assist her in overcoming the imminent losses and enhance development?

Lessons from Asia and Latin America

At the Micro Level

(i) *Working Association between Social Related Cultural Practices and Poverty*: Experiences from Asia bring forth the notion of family coaches who help individual families to profit from social support services (Zulkifli, 2024). This family-centric approach (working well in Singapore), focuses on “uplift lower-income families with children towards stability, self-reliance, and social mobility” (p. 7). By extension, allowing the programme to go to the lowest of levels, “Community partners have contributed programmes to support families in areas ranging from debt counselling to homework supervision, and sports programmes” (p. 7). In Asia’s pathway, the family is looked at as the primary unit of inclusion. Asia’s social-cultural practices are thus addressed at the realm of the family unit.

Latin America’s cultural backgrounds show descendants from Africa (slavery) and the subsequent colonial regimes (Spain and Portugal). Like it was in Africa, these epochs destabilized the traditional set-ups leading to devastating experiences (Eakin, 2007). What efforts have Latin Americans put in place to ensure recovery and continued economic development? The presented positions challenge Africa’s mindset whose focus is on different ethnic communities. Family units are looked at as belonging to particular tribes, rather than to the related nations. The focus on tribe is ground to divisive politics and enmity between the ethnic communities. This position then leaves African families focusing on conflict as a weapon to fight the other ethnic community. In so doing, resources are reduced to harming the other, rather than on self and community development. Among the practices that though apparently positive, need redress, are African socialism (Akyeampong, 2017) that may easily tilt towards communistic tendencies. When questioned on whether they were communists, African leaders led by Senghor responded, “We stand for a middle course, for a democratic socialism, which goes so far as to integrate spiritual values, a socialism which ties in with the old ethical current of the French socialists” (Senghor 1964, p. 46). Since independence, African states have struggled to get off the economic blocks. Might some of the African socialist tendencies encourage laziness, dependency and wastage of resources by the majority, while overburdening the few hardworking minorities? What is it that makes the over 60 years of independence and socialism in Africa, not translate to economic growth?

(ii) *Sense of Entitlement with No Responsibility*: While it is positive for individuals from a certain community, to want to profit from the proceeds of the community, it is also imperative that such a want is met by an equal measure of responsibility (Annan, 2023). When a set of individuals desire peace in a locality, they are meant to equally collaborate with the security agents in the area, to unearth criminals. This sense of entitlement is also experienced among political leaders. Often times, political campaigns in Africa spend huge amounts of money on attempts to corrupt and lure the voters. On acquiring office, such leaders feel entitled to not only get financial refunds, but also cherish the hard work of clinching the positions. This creates an entitlement that renders them corrupt bosses rather than public servants.

(iii) *Impunity*: In this context, the study points to members of specific ethnic communities attempting to offer safe haven for corrupt leaders in the guise that their community is being unlawfully and politically targeted. In several cases, Africans have been on record, demonstrating when a leader from






their community is being accused of corrupt and even criminal activities. The African population demonstrates a “nonchalant attitude, complacency, and their feeling of let us leave it to God to judge corrupt politicians” (Aluko, 2006, quoted in Ikeke, 2024, p. 33). This attitude inspires more corruption. In such communities the public also take to the streets to assert political pressure on the legitimate organs of power, to either abandon litigation and even influence verdicts to their favour.

There are attempts to render impunity to persons that appear to be from vote-rich constituencies, in exchange that the existing leaders profit during elections (Dada, 2015). In the same breath, those that are politically aligned with the reigning governments, are rendered blameless, while their counterparts in the opposition are pursued for justice (Abada & Onyia, 2020). This not only, instills fear to those who may desire to oppose current regimes, but encourages selective application of the law.

(iv) *Gender Discrimination*: For the African families that tended towards patriarchal systems, the male child was more valued than the female child (Eze, & Chigbo. 2018). Due to this position, property also tended to pass on to the male child, and not to the female. In addition, the female child was often viewed as property through which bride-price would be paid to the father, thus increased wealth; the more the girl was educated, the higher the bride price (Ashraf, Bau, Nunn, & Voena, 2020). However, since the girl was destined for marriage and thus to profit “the other” family, there were tendencies to prefer educating the male child (UNESCO, 2020). This often resulted in the male gaining education, subsequent jobs and earning power. In some regions, though the women were involved in production of cash crops, the proceeds went to the man, who had the necessary banking documents, through which monies were paid. Such practices led to gender discrimination. As such, wealth creation and spending decisions, over time remained in the docket of one gender. This led to increased neglect of feminine power, increasing misuse of wealth by the male and subsequent injustice and poverty.

At the Macro Level

National Agenda: Zulkifli (2024), gives a summary of the national trajectory in ASEAN countries. The interventions are expansive in relation to the individual and to the community.

Key Result Area	Strategic Objectives
 Economic	Fast-track rural transformation to enable participation in socio-economic opportunities
 Human	Ensure access to education, social services and healthcare towards enhanced welfare and healthy lifestyle in rural communities
 Protective	Institutionalise disaster preparedness programmes for environment and climate change risks towards resilient communities and households
 Political	Good governance, institutionalised mechanisms and processes to strengthen convergence of rural development and poverty eradication initiatives
 Inclusivity	Institutionalised multi-stakeholder rural development mechanisms, especially for rural women and youth participation and other vulnerable sectors

A summary of the interventions is given in Fig. 1.

Adopted from Zulkifli (2024, p. 9).

Asia’s focus on the integral wellness (economic, human, protective, political and inclusivity) of the individual starting from the lowest social cadre (the family), is laudable. Efforts towards millennium goals are also evident (ASEAN, 2012). With Africa’s leaders still grappling with issues of immense corruption and negative ethnicity, the focus on developmental agenda, remains far-fetched. It is thus not a surprise that Africa is yet to learn to be on the right trajectory towards development.

Latin America on her part has had various efforts towards development. The seed towards a changed mindset, can be traced back to the pedagogical times of Paulo Freire (1974a, b). The lessons brought out a transformative way of thinking and reasoning, that invited a critical mind opposed to the banking method earlier advocated by the colonial education. Discussing the contemporary Latin America, Ball (2025), gives an elaborate path that the region has followed since the period between 1500 and 1866, where over 9 million enslaved Africans were brought to the region. He takes us through the colonial era and later through the development of the film industries in the 1930s, and through the 1940s when the region put effort to “diversify production and increase industrial capacity in an attempt to catch up to more developed nations” (p. 1). The author also takes the reader through the large (such as Brazil), medium (e.g. Argentina) and small (among them Bolivia). In the history Latin America’s dismal functioning is noted prior to 2008.

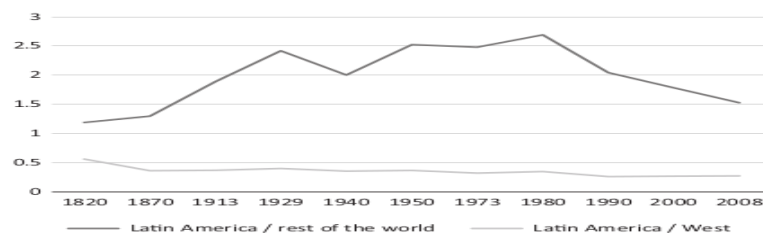


Figure 1.2 Latin America gross domestic product per capita relative to the West and the world, 1820–2008. Graph elaborated from Bértola and Ocampo, *Economic Development of Latin America*, table 1.1, pp. 4–5.

Derived from Ball (2025, p. 7& 12)

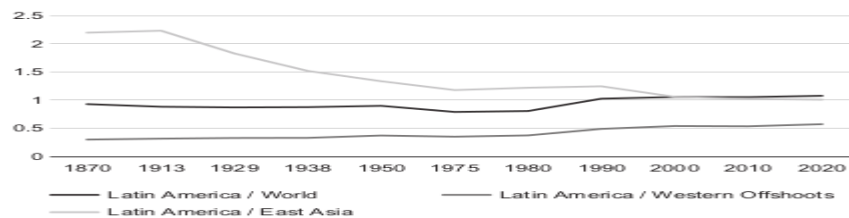


Figure 1.3 Latin America augmented human development index (AHDH) relative to the world and other regions, 1870–2020. Graph elaborated from data in Leandro Prados de la Escosura, “Augmented Human Development in the Age of Globalisation.”

Notable in the second figure, is the stability in Latin America’s performance more so from the 1990s.

A lesson to Africa at this level, is to engage in a critical look at her issues, as opposed to reduce her discourse to blames on slavery, colonial intrusions and international trade treaties. Over 60 years of Africa’s independence are meant to yield results that leave her citizens above the struggles of basic needs (food, disease and illiteracy). As other regions have managed to keep their leaders on check through improved democracies, Africa too has a role to play to emancipate herself. Key among these roles is to participate in her governance issues, combat the vice of negative ethnicity, and continue to criticize her leaders’ engagement in corrupt activities.

Regionality: In addition to nationality, Asia has also focused on the reduction of poverty in the area, as a region, rather than as individual member states. ASEAN member states (Brunei Darussalam, Cambodia, Indonesia, Lao PDR, Malaysia, Myanmar, Philippines, Singapore, Thailand and Viet nam), have come together to increase the synergy of development. The regionality goes hand in hand with being part of the global and regional treaties that help benchmark and even monitor growth.

In relation to Latin America, the United Nations Economic Commission for Latin America (ECLA) and the Caribbean has been significant in bringing the region together towards development. Since opening its doors in 1948, the organ's structuralists (*dependistas*) have led the region through the creation of export markets for goods beyond basic commodities. They have focused on industrialization of the region. The organ also addressed colonial instigated landholding inequities.

Africa through the African Union and the subsequent regional organs (East African Community (EAE); Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS); Southern African Development Community (SADC), and the North African countries, have also shown efforts of unity. The study acknowledges that the role of the African Union (AU, 2021) established in 2002, has been crucial. It has promoted "political integration, peace and security (African Peace & Security Architecture (APSA), Peer, economic African continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA)... and regional integration [as well as] ...good governance and accountability [through the African Peer Review Mechanism (APRM) (Annan, 2005). AU continues to work to enhance and foster peace and security (Peace and Security Council: - PSC), and integral human development incorporating health, education and gender equality. However, African leaders are yet to show fruits towards developing their regions. This is more so for Sub-Saharan Africa. Bakamana (2020) cautions of presence of a strong correlation between sub-Saharan Africa's entrenched leadership and security, development, instability and conflict. With continued corruption, leaders from these zones are seen as profiting individually from the regional meetings, rather than representing their impoverished populations. Also, land injustices continue to plague the region with increasing squatters in their own lands. Attempts to appeal to the justice systems are often diverted through negative ethnicity overtones. It is thus, difficult for Africa to register steady growth.

Fighting Corruption

As a start to this discourse on corruption, the following extract is deemed essential:

In December 2003, the United Nations opened its Convention against Corruption, or UNCAC, for signature. One hundred twenty-nine countries, including many in our region, have now signed on to UNCAC. This is a clear indication of how seriously the world community takes the issue of corruption.

It is estimated that, in many Asian and Pacific countries, fully one third of public investment is being wasted because of corruption. Corruption has a devastating effect on the poor, robbing them of needed services and depleting their assets and incomes through scandalous rents.

Corruption also increases the cost of doing business, and keeps countries from achieving their economic growth and employment potential. The World Bank's investment climate survey shows that more than 36% of firms with interests in East Asia and the Pacific see corruption as a major or severe obstacle to the operation and growth of their business (ADB/OECD, 2005. p. 4).

TI (2023) presents the following data:

Region	Countries Sampled	Score x/100	Explanation
Asia/Pacific	31	45	Lack of delivery by elected leaders/ Pacific affected by climate change
America (Latin)	32	43	Sense of impunity and inability of the justice system to be impartial
Eastern Europe & Central Asia	19	35	Abuse of power and dysfunctional rule of law

Middle East & North America	18	38	Loss of momentum in anti-corruption efforts and political corruption
Sub-Saharan Africa	49	33	Corruption in the justice system, weakened access to justice and information
Western Europe	31	65	Robust anti-corruption measures though weakened checks and balances

It is also noted from the index that Western Europe countries pride of full democracies, followed by those with flawed and last non-democratic regimes. Low corruption index is linked to those with flawed democracies mainly in Sub-Saharan Africa. Countries that are in the lead in Asia on improved democracies are United Arab Emirates, Qatar, Singapore and Hong Kong. At the lower level are Yemen and Syria, as well as Afghanistan, Myanmar and North Korea. In Africa, those performing well are Seychelles, Cabo Verde and Botswana while Equitorial Guinea, South Sudan and Somalia are performing dismally. Lessons on corruption for Sub-Saharan Africa include election of leaders devoid of ethnic overtones. Leaders that are elected on tribal grounds have a tendency towards entitlement and their allegiance is often to the tribe rather than towards dealing with corruption. Such is the need for improved democracies marked by the power of the vote and continued holding leaders accountable (Bakamana, 2021f). As noted, access to information should increasingly improve democracies.

It is also recommended that the justice system is well articulated to handle injustices. The judges and the police in such countries, have to constantly be put on check, to serve the public rather than the political class. Human rights activists as well as the general public have a role to play to ensure continued push towards improved democracies. With the continued use of social media, the concerned countries shall progress. Suggestions from Asia (ADB/OECD, 2005. p. 9) point to the importance of government in fighting corruption. "Governments need to devise solutions: to guarantee integrity in the public administration and business; to make the public-private interface fully transparent; and to consolidate the legal and institutional framework for international judicial cooperation". The question that African states need to address is the degree to which integrity in public administration and business is realised. As the African public air their voices through social media on the government performances, it is only prudent that Governments and their Civil Servants listen. This is largely because the public are the victims of bad governance. On this note therefore, in acceptance that the African elite shall continue to safeguard the platforms from which they continue to enrich themselves, the public has to constantly keep up the fight towards good governance (Bakamana, 2021b). Through increased participation in democratic activities, the public must continue to demand their rights.

In situations where Civil Servants view the public that they are meant to serve, as a bother, and as competitors, there is need to correct the fallacy. While the private enterprises are meant to be a source of revenue to the government, the latter is them meant to render services that make business operations more friendly. The view of private firms as only source of government revenue, facilitates the intrusion of government policies that not only kill existing and upcoming private enterprises, but also kills employment and in the end development.

Conclusion

Over 60 years after colonial regimes, a large part of Africa continues to struggle in challenges ranging from disease, immense poverty and ignorance. Various scholars have reduced attempts to address African challenges, to blaming slavery and colonial regimes, in addition to unfavorable international trade treaties. This study has however, chosen to re-look into the African, in view of efforts that continue to be done in Latin America and Asia. These regions that have countries that in some way have managed to

start surmounting the ugly face of poverty, have had histories that are not so different from those in Africa. Even with the challenge of corruption, these countries have managed to leave Africa in the pool of negative ethnicity and immense corruption, realised in nepotism, land injustices, and human rights violations. The African elite and leadership continue to institutionalize the vices, to their perceived advantage, while in the long run impoverishing the countries that they purport to serve. The public on their part, oblivious of their contribution to the vices, continue to propagate yet remain victims of divisive politics of ethnicity. Conflict that is inherent in the human person, thus becomes a poison that continues to consume the African. The study has shed light on ways in which other regions have surmounted conflict, and thus taken advantage towards development.

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