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**Rethinking the Challenges of Negative Ethnicity in Africa:
Beyond the Impasse, Towards the Alternatives:
A Case Study of Kenya**

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Introduction

While Africa is well-endowed with abundant natural and human resources, it is a continent in distress due to the challenges posed by negative ethnicity (Haygood, 2001). Africa was colonized by Europeans who brutalized its residents, massacred those who opposed its rule and siphoned its resources to Europe (Hochschild, 1999). When they were done with the looting of the continents treasures, and after subjecting its inhabitants to the most dehumanizing treatment, the colonial powers granted independence to the already divided continent marked with the ideology of negative ethnicity. Consequently, the departing colonial powers perpetuated their rape of the continent through the imposition of constitutions which preserved the privileges of the immigrant European populations at the expense of the Africa inhabitants.

However, with the advent of independence of most African countries, some of the new African leaders emulated the brutalism and savagery of the colonizers and heaped misery, violence and poverty upon their citizens (Swain, 2000). These African leaders pitted ethnic groups against ethnic groups to preserve their political power and lived in shameless luxury, while robbing their countries blind (Edlin, 1988).

This paper hinges on the notion that Africa's development problems cannot be divorced from the negative ramifications of ethnicity. Kenya, in particular, is a divided country mainly because of negative ethnicity and must first deal with ethnicity before tackling problems of political misrule, poverty and human misery. Development efforts in this country must be preceded by the political will on the part of national government rather than the devolved governments (anticipated in Kenya's New constitution) to bring forth tangible solutions to the question of ethnicity. However, it should be noted that ethnicity is a social construct, a living presence and an important part of what many Kenyans are. However, it is important to put ethnicity as an identity in its theoretical perspectives.

In recent years, scholars working in social science and humanities disciplines have taken an intense interest in questions concerning ethnicity and identity. In comparative politics, for example, "identity" plays a central role in work on nationalism and ethnic conflict (Horowitz 1985; Smith 1991; Deng 1995). Consequently, in political arena, questions of "identity" mark numerous arguments on gender, sexuality, nationality, ethnicity, and culture in relation to liberalism and its alternatives (Young 1990; Connolly 1991; Kymlicka 1995; Miller 1995; Taylor 1989)

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Despite this vastly increased and broad-ranging interest in "identity," and "ethnicity' the concept itself remains something of an enigma. Among scholars such as Phillip Gleason (1983) the meaning of "identity" is fairly a recent social construct, and a rather complicated one. Even though everyone knows how to use the word properly in everyday discourse, it proves quite difficult to give a short and adequate summary statement that captures the range of its present meanings. In addition, it is important to note that ethnicity is now popularly conceived as something constructed, invented or created (Anderson, 1983; Saul, 1979; Cohen, 1978). One cannot help thinking that this is a view of reality as it appears within the colonial situation. Ethnic groups are, to be sure, inventions and constructions in some measure, but they are also decidedly real, even in the sense that states are said to be. Before the colonial era, some parts of Africa had what may be described as ethnic polities - political societies with governmental institutions in a local space where territoriality and ethnic identity roughly coincided.

Colonial rule, which amalgamated disparate ethnicities into the chaos called the colonial state, largely created the fluid abstract ethnicity which is so evident today by dissociating ethnicity from autonomous polity and territoriality. Apart from the question of its historicity, the logic of the argument for the non-existence of ethnic groups is flawed. Ethnic groups are no less real for existing intermittently, for having fluid boundaries, for having subjective or even arbitrary standards of membership, for opportunistic use of tradition or even for lacking a proprietary claim over a local space. They are real if they are actual people who are united in consciousness of their common ethnic identity however spurious or misguided that consciousness may be. The concreteness of ethnic groups is invariably affirmed by ethnic markings which society categorically pins on them, markings which underscore the social existence of ethnicity even when they are arbitrary or shifting.

Situating ethnic challenges in Africa
The genocide in Rwanda and "ethnic" killing in the Democratic Republic of Congo, Nigeria, and elsewhere stand out as examples of disasters caused by negative ethnicity in Africa. According to Koigi WA Wamwere (Wamwere, 2003), negative ethnicity gives a picture of the force behind untold deaths on the continent, dispelling the myth of an intractable conflict waged along ethnicity. Negative ethnicity explains the roots, colonial and pre-colonial, of the current "ethnic" tensions. Wamwere goes on to describe how, for most Africans, ethnic identity is ambiguous,

and analyzes why that fact is obscured. The culprits are many: chronic poverty, a broken education system, preying dictators, corrupt officials, the colonial legacy of hate and the ongoing exploitation of the West. Indeed, colonial legacy of hate was in the light of divide and rule which was used by the British in Kenya to ensure that the Africans were divided so that they could be controlled by them. This, therefore, increased tribal animosities among the Kenyan people something that has remained with us even after independence.

To understand the issues related to negative ethnicity in Africa in general and Kenya in particular, this paper uses "competition theory" as prescibed by Robert Park (Park, 1950). Accoerding to Robert Park, "competition theory" is a contemporary example of the exploration of migration issues in the tradition (Park, 1950:229-235). Park emphasized that ethnic relations grew out of the migration of peoples, which in turn led to competition for scarce resources and then to accommodation and assimilation. Later, other competition theorists have explored the contact and competition parts of and concluded to what they reffered to be "race relations cycle." Unlike some order-oriented theorists, they do address questions of protest and conflict, although they do not give much attention to power, exploitation, or inequality issues.

Accordingly, these competition theorists, point out that collective action is fostered by immigration across geographical borders and by the expansion of once-segregated ethnic groups into the same labor and housing markets to which other groups have access. Attacks on immigrant or black workers, for example, increase at the city level when a group moves out of segregated jobs and challenges other groups and not, as one might expect, in cities where ethnic groups are locked into segregation and poverty.

Competition theorists also emphasized that economic struggles often accompany political competition, which includes competition among ethnic groups for elected and appointed offices, tax dollars, and other types of political power. Joane Nagel (Nagel, 1982) has shown how contenders for political power often organize along ethnic lines and argues that "ethnicity is a convenient basis for political organizers due to the commonality of language and culture and the availability of ethnic organizations with ready-made leadership and membership." Political policies that may favor one group, such as affirmative action programs for African Americans,

have created political mobilization among other groups, such as Latinos and Asian Americans, that seek similar programs.

Moreover, competition theorists sometimes contrast their analyses with the power-conflict views. perspectives that emphasize the role of capitalism, economic subordination, and institutionalized discrimination. They also write about a broad range of ethnic conflicts around the globe. When they deal with urban ethnic worlds in the United States, they often write as though institutionalized racism and capitalism-generated exploitation of workers are not major forces in recurring ethnic and racial competition and conflict in U.S. cities. These theorists emphasize migration and population concentration, as well as other demographic factors.

However, a power-conflict theorist counter this emphasis by noting that the competition theorists are studying markets and interethnic competition in cities without a clear sense of the great inequality that has undergirded urban job and housing markets for several centuries. Missing from competition theory is a systematic and deep concern with the issues of inequality, power, exploitation, and racial discrimination that are accented by power-conflict theories. There is, therfore, similarity in the aspects that this theory attempts to explain which this study envesiges to explore.

The ideology of negative ethnicity in Kenya

The ideology of negative ethnicity in Kenya is a mindset that claims some ethnic communities are superior and deserve more resources, while others are inferior and deserve less. The chief function of negative ethnicity is to bind us with our community by antagonizing us with other communities, but its ultimate goal is to eliminate others culturally, politically, and eventually, physically. Negative ethnicity does not come to us with a war-cry against other communities.

It approaches us only as a friend and an ally, merely eager to secure the survival of our ethnic community from the threat of other ethnic species. Ostensibly, ethnic survival is never threatened by our own ethnic elites. But negative ethnicity preserves us for their exclusive exploitation through exclusion of exploitation by other elites! Disarmed by an exaggerated need for ethnic survival, we embrace our own exploitation, and are misused as cannon fodder by our ethnic elites in their wealth accumulation and wars with other elites. Normally, we are born into innocent ethnicity, neither for nor against anybody.

Thereafter, we begin to demonize other communities and become perpetrators of negative ethnicity. When we are victims of demonization, we seek refuge in redemptive or positive ethnicity. The ideal, however, is innocent ethnicity that embraces national identity and subordinates itself to patriotism.

Functionally, negative ethnicity infects our minds, eyes, ears and hearts, orienting them to reason, see, hear, love or hate ethnically. As it spreads everywhere like wildfire, many believe it is invincible and wiser to join than fight it. But people who embrace negative ethnicity also deny it. Like a cockroach, it thrives best in the dark. After becoming the ideology of our politics, negative ethnicity has captured and devoured the heart of the nation. Indeed, its power to subvert, corrode and replace is awesome. Kenyans are no more, only Kikuyus, Luos and Kambas are left. Patriotism is no more. There is only ethnic patriotism. And Kenya itself is no more. Ethnic homelands have taken over.

Once leaders go ethnic, the parties, alliances, manifestoes or governments they make are only for furthering ethnic divisions, discrimination and *majimbo*. Motored by negative ethnicity, the referendum could only birth an ethnic constitution, ethnic distribution of resources, ethnic homelands and ethnic claims to ancestral lands from one another.

The python of negative ethnicity has also ensnared, captured and swallowed our schools, institutions of higher learning and universities only to give the nation robots, propagators and parrots of negativism. Made from the same clay, negative ethnicity is more than an ally of corruption. It breeds its own graft that it defends fiercely among all communities. To perpetrate its corruption, negative ethnicity has eaten into the private sector just as it has the public sector. Hence top managers and ministers employ from their tribe, and from their kith and kin. Negative ethnicity is a terminal cancer whose cells mutate from tribe to clan, family, region and even brother, making its cure impossible outside the prescription of Jesus: "If your eye causes you to sin, pluck it out . . . ."

Negative ethnicity leads to war, genocide and ruin of individuals, communities and nations. Ironically, as others celebrate nuclear weapons for self-defense, Africans boast of the negative-ethnicity bomb, but for how much longer? To end negative ethnicity, its victims must fight its persecution, beneficiaries its favors and we must urge ourselves to reject it, as we ask others to do the same.

In Kenya, general elections are opportune periods of conflict when ethnic violence erupts and tens of thousands of people are displaced. There were ethnic clashes during the presidential

elections in 1992, 1997, 2002 (Kanyinga, 2010) and in during the constitutional referendum. In the post December 2007 election period, however, violence was unprecedented. In a few weeks an estimated 664,000 (Kenyans were displaced of which 350,000 found shelter in 118 temporary tented ca(Kanyinga, 2010) mps. More than 78,000 houses were burned and the government estimated that about 1,300 people were killed. PeaceNet a respected Kenyan civil rights organization believes that with the exception of police killings, 90 percent of those who died were killed by ethnic gangs. The post election violence was a huge blow to the country's overall security, economy and democratic gains. While two waves of violence followed in close succession, in some areas, the violence erupted almost instantaneously on December 29th, 2007 when the chairman of the electoral commission of Kenya declared the incumbent president Mwai Kibaki the winner. The results were widely doubted by the media, the Commonwealth, the African Union and local and international observer's source. Though triggered by accusations of electoral fraud, the causes of the clashes were rooted in deep historical injustices; a strong belief held by many ethnic groups that there were massive inequalities in resources and government appointments between regions and ethnicities. At the heart was the issue of land distribution. Since independence, the successive governments have glossed over the growing conflict as well as aggravated it by distributing land to their supporters. Into that mix was a serious lack of trust with the judiciary, deepening poverty and a rapidly growing population of unemployed youth that easily turned to gang violence. Vernacular radio incited both hatred and fear while cell phones, a recent phenomenon that has revolutionized communication in Kenya, facilitated the spread of violence.

In the first weeks of 2008, violence erupted in four of Kenya's eight provinces as well as in Nairobi, the multi-ethnic capital. A survey by PeaceNet shows that the Rift Valley Province bore the largest numbers of displaced people as 49% of IDPs (internally displaced people) came from the areas between Naivasha and Eldoret. In the Rift most of the ethnic groups were displaced either in the first wave of violence or the revenge attacks that followed. Kalenjin gangs viciously attacked Kikuyu farmers around Eldoret. Kikuyu gangs retaliated. Luos and Luhyas working in the huge flower farms near Naivasha were evicted, beaten and killed by Kikuyu gangs while Kikuyus and other groups just near Nakuru were attacked by Kalenjin youth.

The international emergency response was quick and coordinated with the government. Camps were set up, psycho social workers tried to heal the scars of violence, peace committees were

created, food aid was distributed and the government of Kenya began a process of supplying money to displaced families to assist them in rebuilding their homes. Officially, there are no now longer any internally displaced people. As of January 2010, there were 25 camps, now called "transit sites." IDPs have been relocated, reintegrated, resettled. I visited the Rift recently to see whether the government had made progress in resettlement and how well the issues that had ignited the violence had been addressed. From the resettled Kenyans to United Nations, international and local NGOs, the responses were equally somber and pervaded by a deep sense of worry that peace was yet to be achieved and violence, in such a fragile environment, could easily erupt at any moment and especially during the next presidential elections in 2012.

Causes of negative ethnicity in Kenya

Ethnic clashes, wherever they have taken place in Kenya, have generally been instigated by the fear of loss of political power and the consequences that might accompany such an eventuality such as loss of privilege and the patronage that goes with it. In this regard it has been noted elsewhere that the only distinct pattern that emerges from the ethnic clashes is that they appear to be connected to political tension in the body politic. For instances the Rift Valley in Kenya clashes took place when the political atmosphere in the country was highly charged due to external and internal pressure for political pluralism. Some of the minor causes include the following: high unemployment rate among the youth, and high gap between the rich and poor. But the major causes are discussed below.

- Politicized Ethnicity:

A lot has been written about ethnicity as a source of conflict in Africa. It is suggested here that ethnicity per se, in the absence of its politicization, does not cause conflict. There is evidence to suggest that where ethnic conflict has emerged in Africa, there have always been political machinations behind it. Politicization of ethnicity often takes place in a situation characterized by an inequitable structure of access. Such a structure gives rise to the emergence of the "in group" and the "out group" with the latter trying to break the structure of inequality as the former responds by building barriers to access that ensure the continuation of its privileged position. At the centre of this scenario are the elites who, feeling excluded or threatened with exclusion, begin to invoke ethnic ideology in the hope of establishing a reliable base of support to fight what is purely personal and/ or elite interests.

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- Land issues:

Land was an underlying factor behind much of the organized violence in the Rift Valley Kenya, as well as being critical to the more localized ongoing conflicts in Mt Elgon and Molo. Indeed, since the 1990s certain leaders have exploited grievances over perceived 'historical injustices' and poorly handled settlement schemes for electoral advantage. These grievances are perceived as favoritism and corruption by successive governments in allocation of fertile land, including a refusal to prevent and reverse settlement of outsiders (notably Kikuyus) in land originally appropriated from the local residents by the colonial authorities. This of course has occurred in a context of rapid population growth in what remains a largely agricultural society.

- Weak and disempowered institutions:

Despite some attempts on reform since 2002, institutions in Kenya are easily manipulated or captured by personal agendas and vested interests. Popular distrust and political manipulation rendered crucial institutions unable to mediate the election impasse and respond effectively to the violence. For instance ECK (Electoral Commission of Kenya) and the various to amend the newly promulgated constitution in Kenya.

- Culture of impunity:

Since the advent of multi-party politics during the 1990s this political dynamic has been a key factor leading to the incitement of violence around elections (both constituency-level violence and more wide-ranging). Crucially, there has been a failure to hold accountable those responsible for past human rights abuses, including the ethnic clashes of the 1990s, abuses under the Kibaki presidency, and land-grabbing and economic crimes, despite the naming of many senior politicians in successive enquiries. In these circumstances, it was not illogical for politicians to believe that they could get away with trying to manipulate elections or incite violence.

Effects of negative ethnic in Kenya

Clashes or any conflicts have their own positive and negative effects. This section discusses briefly the main negative and positive effects of conflicts with reference to Kenya.

- Negative effects:

Following the announcement of the results of the December 2007 National General Elections, violent skirmishes and riots erupted in many parts of the country that also involved destruction

of both private and public property. The most violent scenes were witnessed in Rift Valley, Nyanza, Western and Nairobi Provinces, while there were limited incidents in the Coast Province.

- Loss of Human Life:

The violence resulted in the death of an estimated number of 1,300 persons. Most of them were those in Rift Valley province including women and children burnt in a church in Eldoret.

- Destruction of Property:

The violence was accompanied by looting, burning and destruction of private and public property. Most of this occurred in Rift valley province.

- Effect on Economy:

The political crisis that prevailed in the country did not only cause loss of human lives, livelihoods and properties, it also had significant impacts on the operations of many public and private sector institutions. The magnitude of the impacts may have been varied from institution to institution and from place to place. Nevertheless, the impacts reversed many gains that the country had made since independence. Various sectors were negatively affected. Water sector, for instance was affected in four main areas namely: Operations, equipment and physical facilities; Staff and their dependants; challenge in the provision of water to the IDPs. the impact was equally felt in agricultural sector. The violence reduced the exports of Kenyan flower exporters by nearly one quarter on average and by nearly 40% for firms located in conflict areas like Naivasha. The impact was also greatly felt in tourism sector. In general the entire economy of the country was affected and further worsened by global recession.

- Sexual and Gender Based Violence (SGBV):

This was employed as a tool of intimidation, with reports of the threat of rape being used to chase women from their homes. Other cases of SGBV appear to have been opportunistic, perpetrated by gangs of youth in slums or targeted at women fleeing violence. A few cases of ethnically motivated forced circumcision of males from the Luo and Luhya communities, allegedly perpetrated by Mungiki, were documented in Naivasha, Nakuru and Nairobi. However, the number of cases suggests that circumcision was sporadic rather than an overall trend in the violence.

- Displacement of people:

The violence led to widespread displacement. As of 27 February, KRCS estimated that there were 268,330 IDPs in organised sites, whilst a similar number of displaced were living in host communities.

- Positive Effects:

Conflicts have two dimensions, positive and negative. Despite their negative effects, conflicts also do bring new hopes. Following eruption of violence after general erection in 2007, various interventions were undertaken and this move remains the greatest gains of conflict. To resolve the issues, dialogue was initiated and power agreement deal was reached. Within the framework of the KNDR (The Kenya National Dialogue and Reconciliation), and including in the power sharing agreement of 28 February, 2008 embedded in the Kenya National Accord and Reconciliation Act, parties made commitments to address long-standing issues, such as land reform, the constitution, police and judicial reform, socio-economic inequalities, corruption, accountability and disarmament of militia. They also agreed to the establishment of key commissions and review processes. Such conflicts also bring about trials of perpetrators aimed at ending a culture of impunity. All these are just but positive effects of clashes.

- Interventions of negative ethnicity in Kenya

Various interventions have been made to bridge the gap between various ethnic communities. Such has been use of elders in the communities, some of whom have even been trained to deal with various issues. In each community and especially the pastoralist communities where conflicts are more severe, the elders have a traditional way of solving the problems. There has been a breakdown in holding the traditional mechanism because the new mechanisms confuse the traditional hence the conflicts are not solved. Most of the traditional mechanisms are affected by the judicial who don't take into consideration what the community does traditionally. Hence community resolution mechanism is something that should be put in place when resolving conflict; else the conflict is likely to start again after sometime. Well aware of this, Government and NGOs have been making deliberate efforts in holding workshops with elders in communities especially in Rift Valley province with view of resolving issues and bringing about a spirit of reconciliation between warring communities.

Facilitating inter-ethnic dialogue between traditional elders, youth and women, as well as trust-building with local Administration is a must. For example, Mt. Elgon area is now part of peace consultations aimed at developing a 3-year peace building/conflict prevention strategy, where elders have been used. Training of elders have been carried out in other areas. For instance workshops have been held in areas like Molo (in Rift Valley Province of Kenya) to train elders on combating mistrust. Such efforts in other places have also been made to bring about a spirit of reconciliation among various communities in Rift Valley.

An Analysis of Ethno politics in relation to negative ethnicity

The resurgence of conflicts centered on ethnic claims in the Balkans and the Caucasus, Africa and South Asia has provoked renewed debate among social scientists about the nature and significance of ethnicity in contemporary societies. From the 1950's through the 1970's it was widely thought that economic development, rural-urban migration, and growing literacy would lead to the creation of complex and integrated societies throughout the world. Modernization theory made a specific prediction about ethnic identities; greater political and economic interaction among people and the growth of communication networks would break down people's "Parochial" identities with ethnic kindred and replace them with loyalties to large communities.

Of course it has not worked out that way, and the apparent explosion of conflicts centered on ethnicity has led to a scramble for theoretical explanations:-

(a) One view alleges that ethnic identities are "primordial", perhaps even genetically based, and therefore more fundamental and persistent than loyalties to larger social units.

(b) A contrary view alleges that ethnic identities are more salient than any other kind of identity; they became significant when they are invoked by entrepreneurial political leaders in the instrumental pursuit of material and political benefits for a group or region.

The primordial view is held mainly by sociologists, especially those influenced by socio-biology. The instrumental interpretation is most common among social scientists who have succumbed to the lure of rational actor theory.

Neither of the above interpretation offers a wholly convincing explanation for the increase in ethnic claims during the 1980's and 1990's, however, if ethnic identities are 'primordial', one needs an accounting of why they are so much more in evidence now than at mid-century. If ethnic identities and claims are a matter of choice, then an explanation is needed of how the political opportunity structures of the world have changed, so that appeals to interests defined in ethnic terms are instrumentally more effective now than they were several decades ago.

Culture is assumed as the core of the identity of most groups that define themselves by the ethnic criteria. Ethnic identity and continuity are maintained by the transmission of basic norms and customs across generations. The greater the competitions and inequalities among groups in heterogeneous societies, the greater the salience of ethnic identities and the greater the likelihood of open conflict.

When open conflict does occur it is likely to intensify, or reify both perceptions of difference among contending groups and perceptions of common interest within each group. And the longer open conflict persists, and the more intense it becomes, the stronger and more exclusive are group identities.

Fundamental Sources of Ethno political Conflicts

- Material Inequalities

One of the most pronounced and growing cleavages in the contemporary world system is the widening ecological, demographic and material gap between North and South, rich and poor. At the most macro level the cleavages divide whole regions and continents, but it is also acute within states, especially those undergoing rapid modernization. The reasons why poor countries can be expected to have more frequent and intense communal conflict are easy to specify. Systemic poverty means limited state capacity: substantial concessions to communal contenders therefore are prohibitively costly, military control of secessionist challenges is problematic, and conflicts over power and material issues tend to be seen by all contenders in zero-sum terms.

All these concomitants of systemic poverty increase the chances that communal conflicts in the poorest countries will be intense, protracted and deadly. Contention over material inequalities is

a secondary issue in most contemporary ethno political conflicts. It is unwise to discount the present or future significance of economic factors, however because conflicts tend to be more numerous and intense in regions and countries where systemic poverty is greatest. Most African economies are stagnant or in decline; material inequalities continue to increase between urban elites and the rural poor throughout most of the south.

- Political Transitions

State-level political changes precipitate specific conflicts. It is often argued that political transitions are immediate causes of ethno political conflict. It can be agued that that genocides and politicides are likely to follow from national upheaval. Societies characterized by sharp pre-existing internal cleavages, such upheavals tend to intensify conflict between regimes and national minorities and often lead to an exaggerated emphasis on national identity followed by targeting of minorities as scapegoat. Helen Fein (Fein, 1993 makes a more restricted argument that a predisposing condition for the Holocaust and Armenian genocide was national crisis brought about by defeats in war and internal strife that brought new elites to power, elites who were committed to a myth of national purity that justified the exclusion of communal victims from the universe of obligation.

Specific predictions that follow from Fein's arguments are that in societies with pre-existing communal cleavages, state formulation and defeat are both likely to be followed by what is now fashionable and called ultra-nationalism, increased conflict among communal contenders and victimization of minorities. Another argument links revolutionary changes of power to increased conflict. States that have undergone revolutionary political changes are much likely to be involved in international conflict.

Transitions to democracy contribute in complex ways to ethnic and communal conflict. Some ethno political contenders use the opportunities provided by democratic openings to justify protest and rebellion as struggles for individual and collective rights to be achieved and protected in the political framework. Rwanda provides a cautionary example. Genocide massacres in the early 1990's were a reaction to the policies of a recently elected Hutu – controlled government that threatened the status of the once-dominant Tutsi minority. They were, in other words, an unintended consequence of efforts to democratise a racially stratified autocracy. Proponents of democratisation will find little comfort either in this case or in the

comparative evidence that recent ethno political conflicts in transitional states are far more intense on average than those in transitional democracies and on a par with the intensity of conflicts in autocratic regimes. Among the examples of power-transition conflicts are civil wars in Bosnia, Croatia and Azerbaijan, genocide massacres in Rwanda, clan fighting in Somalia, communal warfare in South Africa.

- Civilization Fault Lines and Religion

A generic alternative to ethnic fragmentation perspectives is to look for emerging lines of cleavages that cut across states and continents and thus are likely to structure and provide rationales for future conflicts. Civilizations are differentiated from each other by history, language, culture, tradition and most important, religion. They are far more fundamental than differences among political ideologies and political regimes. Civilization differences are becoming more salient due to various factors including increasing interactions among people of different civilization, growing resistant to western power and culture elites in other civilizations, and the restructuring of economic competition along regional lines and essential idea of religious nationalists, whether they are islamists, militant Hindus, Budhists, Sikhs or Zionists, is that political communities should be beliefs. The growing desire to ground the legitimacy of political authority in religious principles is mainly a reaction to the limitations of a secular nationalism which is corrupt, a worldwide, revival in religious beliefs to replace weakening local and state level of identity which lead to "religious nationalism".

How to jettison the impasse of negative ethnicity and ethno politics conflicts

It is commonly observed that communally based conflicts are more resistant to settlement than other kinds of intra and inter-state conflicts. There are at least three general reasons why this is so:-

a) *Some of the key issues are non-material:* Ethnopolitical conflicts are fought not just about resources or power, but about protecting group status, culture and identity. Identity and belief are non-negotiable. On the other, the means by which they are protected can be the subject of creative compromise.

b) *Most communal groups lack effective governing structures:* Ethnopolitical movements can energize group members for sustained collective action but have little capacity for political control. Therefore, settlements are difficult to reach and often challenged violently by factions that choose to fight on. On the other hand, once authentic representatives of

communal groups establish their own political structures, or gain regular access to state power, they acquire the authority and resources to restrain challengers within the group.

c) *Regional and global strategies for mediating and regulating ethnopolitical conflicts have been slow to development:* The development of techniques of preventive diplomacy and peacemaking suited to ethnopolitical rivalries has long been handicapped by two systematic facts. One was the cold war rivalry, the other was the doctrine of unqualified sovereignty which inhibited international and regional agreement about interfering even in the most deadly of communal wars.

The quest of disadvantaged people for greater autonomy or access to power does not necessarily lead to protracted and violent conflict. It is unrealistic to think that conflicts over these issues can be resolved for all time, but there is much evidence that they can be managed or transformed to less destructive form. The first general principle is that management of ethno political conflict requires balancing the interests of communal groups and state elites. The second is that the process of creative conflict management should begin as possible in the conflict, on the grounds that the more protracted the conflict, the more resistant the contenders are to settlement. The good offices, mediation, incentives and diplomatic pressures provided by outside parties often play a critical role in the process of accommodation. When ethno political disputes escalate into protracted communal conflicts it usually is due to failures of leadership and political imagination on both sides, combined with international inattentiveness.

Four observations based on the comparative evidence can be offered in support of these assertions:-

a) Ethno political conflicts usually begin with limited protest and clashes that only gradually escalate into sustained violence: Government responses in the early stages, in these and other conflicts usually are critical in whether and how escalation occurs, for instance, the government of chancellor Helmut Kohl almost certainly contributed to the escalation of anit-foreign violence in Germany in 1992 by not taking a strong public stand against it at the onset in marked contrast to the response of the Mexican government to the rebellion that begun on New Year's Day in 1994 among indigenous people in the state of Chiapas. Within a month the government moved to negotiate with the movement's leaders.

b) The western democracies have been relatively successful in devising policies of regional autonomy, integration, and pluralism that have kept most ethnic protest from escalating into rebellion: Policies of affirmative action and multiculturalism are much more likely to

contribute to civil peace in multiethnic societies than historical patterns of segregation, involuntary assimilation, and suppression of autonomy movements.   It is virtually, inconceivable for example, that the federal government of Canada would fight a civil war to keep Quebec part of Canada.   Democratic governments like those of Canada, and of Czechoslovakia in 1992 would rather switch than fight.

c) Negotiated regional autonomy has proved to be an effective antidote for ethnonational war of secession in western and third world states: Basque demands for independence were largely undermined in 1980 when the new democratic government of Spain offered autonomy to the Basque, Catalan and Galician regions, have violent secessionist conflicts which were more or less successfully settled through negotiated autonomy arrangements.

d) Regional and international intervention: UN diplomatic and peacekeeping efforts ended serious fighting in Croatia in 1992, concerned regional and US efforts have succeeded thus far in preventing civil war in Marcedonia. The Georgian government has accepted a Russian military presence aimed at discouraging further ethnic and political warfare. All six serious ethnopolitical conflicts of the Soviet and Yugoslav Regional and International Intervention.

It should be noted, however, that a great deal of attention has been given by international actors to designing policies that will forestall and contain future ethnopolitical conflicts. The benchmark for evolving international doctrine is the UN secretary-General "Agenda for Peace", presented on 17 June 1992 to the General Assembly and the Security Council (United Nation 1992). The Agenda focuses attention on threats to international security arising from ethnic, religious, social, cultural or linguistic *strife* and outlines four kinds of responses:- Preventive diplomacy, peacemaking, peacekeeping and post-conflict peace-building that addresses the deepest causes of conflict i.e. economic despair, social injustice and political oppression. The UN's capacity to implement the Agenda has been seriously questioned because of strategic and political errors in the Bosnia and Somalia operations. The capacity of the international system to sustain these kinds of activities continues to depend on the political will of member state of the of the UN and their willingness to provide resources.   Nonetheless there is a compelling collective interest in antipating and responding to emerging ethnopolitical conficts. There are six issues that will have to be addressed as part of the global strategy of moderating ethnopolitical conflicts. These include:-

a) International law and policy about the rights of communal groups to autonomy need to be clarified e.g. what groups, under what conditions have a right to internationally supported self-determination.

b) International law and policy about protecting rights of communal groups within states should be consistently enforced. Communal minorities supposedly have the right to individual and collective existence and pursuit of their cultural interest free of political repression. Those rights ought to be consistently monitored and their systematic violation should lead predictably to diplomatic pressures and in severe cases, to sanction.

c) Systems should be established for gathering information about and issuing early warning of impending communal conflicts and humanitarian crises. Researchers, activists and international officials have widely endorsed the objective of early warning systems. The hard work needed to implement the idea has just begun. What is required is information networking, developing and testing of early-warning models, and establishing channels to communicate risk assessments and warnings to those in positions to act on them.

d) Guidelines and instrumentalities for preventive diplomacy in cases of emerging ethnopolitical conflict need to be established and widely employed by the UN, by regional organizations, by the United States and other power: This means using traditional diplomacy directed at states and providing mediation. It also means developing new mechanism that gives representatives of communal groups incentives to enter into internationally brokered negotiations and agreements.

e) The people and governments of the south need to be actively engaged in identifying and responding to emerging ethnopolitical crises: The cold wars may be over but there remains strong resistance among countries of the south to preventive action by the United Nations which is sometimes seen as the agent of hegemonic Northern interests. One alternative is to strengthen the will and capacity of regional organizations for preventive diplomacy and peacemaking: The Organization of the Islamic Conference (OIC) has long played a low-key role of this sort; the African Union (AU) has increased its capacity for preventive diplomacy. A parallel strategy is to involve non-governmental organizations of the south for example, those concerned with human rights, democratisation and women's issues in efforts at conflict prevention.

f) International doctrine, early warnings, and the practise of preventive diplomacy need to be backed up with established doctrines of humanitarian intervention:- This emphatically

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includes the resorts to force in cases of gross and persistent violations of human rights. The Allies did so in Iraqi Kurdistan in 1991, but only after many thousands died and hundreds of thousands fled to Turkey and Iran. Somalis are no longer starving to death nor killing one another in clan rivalries. And the siege of Sarajevo has been lifted. The lesson is that once ethnopolitical conflicts escalates into intense warfare, international political strategies of re-establishing peace and security are not likely to work unless backed by the credible threat of force.

Conclusions

Negative ethnicity has hampered any meaningful collective engagement to deal with the critical national challenges of hunger, disease, poverty and bad governance in Africa. Following the arguments raised in this paper, several African countries have remained poor and unable to change the citizen's livelihoods because of the manifestations of negative ethnicity. Whereas ethnicity in itself is not evil, some African leaders have used their ethnic groups to enrich themselves and to maintain their stay in power. As a result, evils of nepotism, corruption and dictatorship have caused disasters made possible by the fact that ethnic groups have had to question the operations of these African leaders who use their power to divide communities within their nation-states. However, attempts have been made in various African countries to jettison this impasse.

 In Kenya, for example, there is a law that was passed in parliament called National Ethnic and Race Relation Commission whose functions are to: Promote the elimination of all forms of discrimination on the basis of ethnicity, discourage and prohibit persons, institutions, political parties and associations from advocating or promoting discrimination or discriminatory practices on the grounds of ethnicity. However, it is sad to point out that under the umbrella of this illusion; we see plenty of motion, but no movement. Similarly, Kenya has already tasted this with the Kenya Anti-Corruption Commission. The Kenya Anti-Corruption Commission has busied itself dealing with petty corruption, but has had absolutely zero impact on grand corruption. Additionally, referring to the question of ethnicity to a commission removes it from the offices where real power is wielded, making it easy to neglect or even ignore, while always using its existence as a shield when questions are asked about the government's commitment to address the issue. Here, lessons must be learnt from Kenya's past and vast experience with

statutory and ad-hoc commissions, whose recommendations are routinely dodged, their reports shelved and left to gather dust. It is hard to believe, in this context, that whatever outputs the proposed commission produces will be taken seriously. For even those commissions that are vested with, and have used, their enforcement powers have had their rulings or determinations that are deemed awkward conveniently and contemptuously ignored.

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