



CONFLICT AND POVERTY IN AFRICA

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ABSTRACT

Colonialism has been blamed for the socio-economic challenges, threatening African countries. The creation of these countries based on largely, on ethnic and generated conflicts. These conflicts have also generated poverty. This study therefore attempts to examine relationship between conflict and poverty in Africa. The study relied on secondary data. The study revealed conflicts generates poverty in Africa and it is therefore recommended that ethnicity should be de-emphasized in African societies since this promotes conflict and by extension poverty.

KEYWORDS: Africa, Poverty, Conflict, Ethnicity, Corruption, Leadership.

INTRODUCTION

With the fall of the Berlin wall in 1989, countless millions of people have been killed in internal and regionalized forms of conflict (Good hand 2001). Some authors estimated that one third of the world's populace bears the burden of armed conflicts. These conflicts are not momentarily in nature, they are systemic and enduring in many African countries.

Ethnicity which is the basis of groupings in Africa and by extension the agitation for ownership of Natural resources are increasingly linked to conflicts as they have become a source of civil wars financing, for example, oil resource, whose association with conflict and poverty has generated much statistic significance and interest in Africa, due to its high level of profitability, the ecological consequences of its exploitation, the global politics involved and its role in the ethno-political and socio-economic affairs of the countries endowed Anyebe(2002).

It is worthy to recognize the ongoing and very vital endeavors for sovereignty by African peoples, based on the great human potential and rich natural resources.

In 2009, President Obama stated in Ghana that "Africa does not need strong men, Africa needs strong institutions" no doubt, institutional weaknesses and capacity constraints continue to limit the improvement in economic development, security and democratic governance, and by extension limit the overall well-being of the peoples of Africa.

Internal conflicts in resource-rich countries is a major cause of human rights violation around the world and availability of portable, high-value resources is an important reason behind the formation of rebel groups and the outbreak of civil wars.

Africa, over the past decades, from the 1980s to the 21st century has faced greater challenge of conflict, poverty, instability and poor leadership in all ramification. Africa is poor; Ikejiaku (2009) citing Oputa (1994) implying



that the natural resource-rich environment has little or no impact on the well being of the people, whereas the continent of Africa exceeds in its size and natural resources the combined territories of China, Europe, and the United States, yet most Africans live in extreme poverty and must struggle to barely survive (Seidman et al, 2006).

Revenues from the abuse of natural resources are not only used for sustaining armies but also for personal enrichment and building political support. As a result, they have become obstacles to peace as leaders of armed groups involved in exploitation are unwilling to give up control over these resources. Even when conflict gives way to a fragile peace, control over natural resources and their revenues often stays in the hands of a small elite and is not used for broader development of the country.

It should be noted that where ever conflict occurs, the country is seriously affected, because it slows down development efforts, the effect in most cases is abject poverty. The cost of conflicts in terms of human and property loss, and the damage done to social infrastructure are enormous (Wanyande, 1997), for instance, between 1998 and 2002, Democratic Republic of Congo recorded over four million deaths from the civil war (Report of the Commission for Africa (RCA), 2005). The same thing applies to Burundi and South Sudan When conflict occurs, natural resources are targeted and inevitably destroyed. It is true that many factors are responsible for conflicts and poverty, this paper assumes that conflicts in Africa are mainly a result of ethnicity, agitation for ownership of natural resources. This study therefore attempted to examine the relationship between ethnicity and poverty.

METHOD OF DATA COLLECTION

The data used in this study were obtained mainly from the following sources:

- i. Journals and books
- ii. Internet materials

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS

Conflict is a resistance or struggle, usually between two or more individuals, entities or groups over values or claims to status, power and resources, which in most cases are scarce, usually the objectives of those in conflict's are to affirm their values or claims over those of others (Good hand and Hulme, 1999). This Paper does not assume a form of functional harmony, with conflict as somehow representing a departure from the norm. Management or resolution of conflict is not to prevent conflict but to support institutions which are able to deal with conflict in a comprehensive and non-violent way, so managing conflict require leadership, which is lacking in most conflict prone areas.

Conflict is defined generally as an interface among interdependent people who recognize contrary goals and who expect interference from the other party if they attempt to achieve their goal. Conflict could also be viewed as a triangle with structure, attitudes, and behavior as its vertices. By structure, it means the conflict situation, the parties, and the conflict of interest among them. Conflict arise where the parties come to have conflict of interest, which is often referred to incompatible interests, values or goals e.g The conflict in the Niger Delta region of Nigeria (Galtung, 1996). Galtung uses the term attitudes to refer to the propensity for the parties to see conflict from their own point of view, to identify with own side, and to diminish the concerns of others. By behavior, it includes gestures and communications which can convey either aggressive or provocative intent.

When a conflict turns into open fighting it becomes violence. These are Conflicts that exist between governments (inter-state) or between governments and armed groups within states or between opposing armed groups (intra-state). Currently intra-state Conflict is the foremost form of conflict globally and Africa in particular (Rasheed, 2003).

Natural resources on the other hand, can be defined as Defining natural resources precisely is challenging, mainly in the context of international trade. Most people have an insightful idea of what natural resources are, but conceptualizing it commonsensical cannot be relied upon since they eventually run into challenge when dealing with ambiguous cases. For instance, crude oil and wood are natural resources; less obvious is how intermediate and final goods made from these products should be classified.

Rashid (2008) sees natural resources as substances occurring naturally, which are considered important in their relatively unmodified (natural) state. Therefore a natural resource's value rests in the amount of the material available and the demand for it. The latter is determined by its usefulness to production. A commodity is generally considered a natural resource when the primary activities associated with it are extraction and purification, as opposed to creation.

Houghton, (2009) defined natural resources as material source of wealth, such as timber, fresh water, or mineral deposit, which occurs in a natural state and has economic value. But for our purposes in this study, we shall attempt to define natural resources as "stocks of materials that exist in the natural environment that are both scarce and economically useful in production or consumption either in their raw state or after a minimal amount of processing" (WTQ, 2010)

From this definition, note the qualifiers; “economically useful” for instance, sea water is a natural substance that covers much of the earth’s surface but it is of limited intrinsic or direct value for consumption or production Goods must also be scarce in the economic sense to qualify as natural resources; otherwise people could consume as much as they wanted at no cost to themselves or to others. This study does not consider air as a natural resource under this description since people can obtain it freely just by breathing. This is not to propose that air (particularly clean air) or for that matter sea water(e.g. as a carbon sink) are not without value.

A country’s natural resources often determine its wealth and status in the world economic system However most Africa nations are resource trapped; thereby easily accessible natural resources actually hurt the growth of a national economy and the peoples by fostering poverty, Conflict and political corruption (Collier, *ibid*).

The continent of Africa holds an enormous Percentage of the World’s natural resources which remain largely untapped and have become a source of tremendous suffering, violence and war. Arguably the conflict in Somalia, CAR and South Sudan- the world’s newest country, were caused by control over the vast natural resources and leadership struggle. In order for Africa to reap the economic and other benefits inherent in these resources’ wealth, it is essential to urgently address such issues as poor leadership, proper management and the environmental impact of their exploitation.

If through conventional wisdom we could secure elementary human needs, there would be no need for weapons of war. - Mahatma Ghandi

As we know poverty and conflict are different phenomenon which plagues different societies, the impact of one on the other has been the subject of much research. In this section, we will attempt to address the correlation between poverty and conflict and viceversa.

Disagreement about the explicit association between poverty and conflict do exist. While some school of thought thinks that conflict causes poverty, other school of thought argues that it is poverty that causes conflict. Arguably, the correlation between poverty and conflict is unclear. This study argues that poverty is both a cause and a consequence of conflict. The association is two-way: poverty leads to conflict and conflict leads to poverty.

Let us therefore attempt to draw upon the literatures on conflict and poverty, while examining two hypotheses:

1. Conflict causes poverty
2. Poverty causes conflict

CONFLICT CAUSES POVERTY

Research has shown that a number of factors are central in the analysis: the time horizon, the nature of poverty – whether chronic or transient – the disaggregation of the poor. For further research and better understanding it may be important to differentiate people who appear to be trapped in poverty and those for whom poverty is a shorter-lived incident and who may have some prospect to protect, or even improve their livelihood.

The current thinking is that poverty is correlated with conflict under the core dynamics of the course of action found in definite patterns of inequality, deprivation and marginalization and the nature of relations within groups and between groups and the State.

There is a high degree of acceptance that conflict causes poverty. This is particularly not new as images of famine, pestilence, death and war riding invoked in times of crisis, explains the theory. When conflict occurs, there are direct and indirect costs. The direct effects include battlefield deaths; disablement and displacement and poverty is likely to rise due to high dependency ratios caused by an increased percentage of the old, women and disabled in the population. Many people die as a result of lack of basic medical services, damage to rural life, transport and collapse of the state in times of armed conflict, than from direct battlefield (Good hand *ibid*).

Some analytical work has been done that contributed to a better understanding of how conflict affects polities, economies and societies. These scholarly works includes focus on the macro level (Stewart and FitzGerald (2000), Duffield (2000), Collier (2000) and on micro level entitlements vulnerability and coping strategies (de Waal (1997); Keen (1998), Richards(1996).

These academic works shows that the impacts of war vary according to the nature, duration, phase of the conflict, the economic background and social Conditions. There is no gainsaying that chronic internal wars are likely to produce chronic poverty. This applies particularly to a failed state, war lord type conflicts like Sierra Leone, where the rationale of war maybe for money making and the armies or rebels make sure that it last longer in order to acquire more blood money (Smihlie, 1996). “Poor countries are dangerously at a risk of falling into no-exit cycles of conflict, where ineffective governance, societal warfare, humanitarian crises, and the lack of development perpetually chase one another.” (Gurr et al, 2001). As many of today’s wars are regionalized, the costs

of the conflicts are often spread extensively with neighboring countries, who suffers from the spillover effects; i.e. the conflict in South Sudan is having effects in Ethiopia and elsewhere.

POVERTY CAUSES CONFLICT

On April 15 2013, the United Nations Security Council met at the headquarter in New York, to discuss on preventing conflict in Africa; calling for a high priority to be given to addressing core root causes such as poverty, hunger, human rights abuses, marginalization and impunity. No doubt, conflicts rise where there is poor governance, human rights abuses and grievances over the unequal distribution of resources, wealth and power.

Following up to that experts at the 'First Africa Union (AU), Regional Economic Communities (REC), Regional Mechanisms (RMs) For Conflict Prevention and Management met in Abuja Nigeria, under the auspices of ECOWAS in November of 2013, blaming poverty and underdevelopment as the root cause of conflicts in different parts of Africa, including the violence in Central African Republic (CAR), Somalia, Sudan and South Sudan.

The issue of poverty is multidimensional; it goes beyond economics to include social, political, and cultural issues. Scholars like Laune Nathan (2003), John Burton (1997), Richard Sandbrook (1982) and Ted Gurr (1970) have in the past agreed that poverty is a result of lack of basic human needs, which lead to reactions that result in conflict. They are the proponent of human needs theory. However, Burton (*ibid*) argues that the denial of people's biological or psychological needs that relate to growth and development drives conflict and instability in developing countries. Basic needs (such as food, water, shelter and health) unlike interest cannot be compromised or traded, concealed, or bargained for; an attempt to do this, leads to conflict. Robust evidence on the causes of conflict shows that low national incomes are almost always correlated with the occurrence of violence and conflict.

According to Aristotle cited in Okanya (1996), "social strife and revolutions are not brought out by the conspiratorial or malignant nature of man; rather revolutions are derived from poverty and distributive injustice." Consequently, when majority of people are poor and have no hope of ameliorating their condition, they are bound to be restive and seek recompense through violence, this is arguably the case of the Niger/Delta region in Nigeria. No regime can hold stability and peace when it is created on a sea of poverty (Okanya, *ibid*).

Conflict evidently brings poverty in as much as it brings destruction, violence, and hatred. Poverty, on the other hand, is a cause of conflict: when grievances remain

largely unattended to. It is argued, poor people, who are restive, will stage an uprising (i.e Egypt and Tunisia), questioning government altogether and joining rebel groups, this may explain the strength of the Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt. Decline in the economy and extreme poverty may then underpin the tendencies to resort to violent unrest. Nevertheless, at the root of conflicts always lie multifaceted factors: inequality of political, social, economic and cultural opportunities among different groups, lack of democratic governance and effective leadership, absence of civil Society and mechanism for non-violent conflict management. However, some actors argue that the current research on the poverty - development - conflict nexus seems not to have provided convincing evidence on the association between poverty and conflict, the correlation is often understood to be indirect at best.

Most literature on poverty and conflict has paid attention largely on descriptive accounts of the impact of conflict on poverty, i.e. poverty as outcome of prolonged conflict. Somebody of work, which examines poverty as an underlying cause of violent conflict are emerging. While there is a level of consensus that chronic conflict leads to chronic poverty, reversing the argument is more controversial Political economists argues that insatiability (opportunities for greedy accumulation) rather than grievance, (generated by poverty and social exclusion) tends to be at the root of violent conflict.

The association between poverty and conflict is a complex one, but in our view, a common thread: violence conflict affects the poor dis-proportionally. Poverty, on the other hand, feeds conflict as the lack of opportunities for the people make them restive and in turn makes them more prone to engage in risky behavior, and leadership less likely to solve social conflicts in a peaceful manner.

NATURAL RESOURCES, POVERTY AND CONFLICT

The destabilizing phenomena frequently cited as defining lots of the extractive economies of the global south is Resource conflict, Stability has become a key concern of global governance and investment in the post-Cold War era, and it has also been an issue that has encouraged a proliferation of academic and policy interest. In this study, a large number of terms are now in use in an effort to account for the complex state of affairs faced by resource-rich countries in Africa: conflicts, civil wars, resource wars, multifaceted political emergencies, conflict trap and curse, resource securitization petro-violence blood diamonds (Collier & Hoeffler 2005; Watts 2008; Kaldor 1999; Nafziger & Auvinen 1996; Kaplan 1994). The consent built

between these different ideologies and theories is that wealth of natural resources is often at the root of violent and armed conflict. Consequently, the general recognition has been made of the reality of an irony of plenty (Karl 1997) that is the greater part of conflict prone and war ravaged states in Africa, as well as those emerging from conflict, are extractive economies endowed with natural and mineral resources, but cannot prevent declining into devastating violence and war. The observation is that while these resource-rich countries contribute critical inputs to the world's economy, they basically remain underdeveloped and politically unbalanced with the majority of their populace living on less than a dollar a day.

Scholars like Collier (2000a and b) argue that poverty is not necessary the cause of conflict, questioning the view that conflict is driven by grievance. He argues that popular perceptions are shaped by the argument which conflicts generate. Social scientists on the other hand, should be suspicious of the strident public debate on conflict, questioning the language of protest used by the conflicting parties. War "cannot be fought just on hope and hatreds." Collier noted further that civil wars occur when rebel organizations are financially viable. It is therefore the feasibility of predation which determines the risk of conflict.

Analyzing the risk factors comparatively, we can demonstrate the connection between 'greed' and conflict. The most prevailing risk factor is that nations which have a significant share of their income (GDP) coming from the export of primary commodities are fundamentally more at risk of conflict. According to Collier, nations with 25% or more reliance on primary commodity exports are 5 times more predictable to engage in conflict.

Collier argues that the curse of resource wealth rather than poverty induced grievance is most likely to cause violent conflict. Collier analysis resonates with a study on political underdevelopment, conducted by Moore (2000). There he noted that any groups that control the state have a historical record of capacity to acquire military force to keep themselves in power (or challenge state power).

Globalization has amplified the scope to exchange commodity exports for military force. Governments and/or rebel groups that have the control over commodity exports ends up gaining a great deal of power relative to the citizens. The barrier to entry are particularly low where (i) there is the possibility of selling the commodity without having to control a large territories or infrastructure (ii) control of the valuable commodities is divisible. 'Diamonds

and narcotics are the resources which meet these two criteria most completely, as the people of Angola, Sierra Leone and Liberia know their costs" (Moore, 2000).

Development analysts have, according to Collier, tended to focus on protest-type variables because of the loud discussion of grievance generated by the rebel groups, to hide the real motivation of greed. This is in spite of the evidence that "rebellion seems not to be the rage of the poor."

Rebel groups primarily face three challenge; finance, mobilization and cohesion. Finance has been mentioned already. To mobilize, rebels need a cause and to achieve cohesion they need a viable group identity. At the onset, poverty and injustice maybe used as the idea to mobilize disenfranchised groups and justify violence. Thereafter, the rebel uses network of social assets, based for example on tribal or ethnicity, to build the group's identity and cohesion. As Collier opined, "conflict is not caused by divisions, rather it actively needs to create them." That is to say, the rebels generate the group grievance by initiating both the grievance and the group.

No matter how convincing the 'greed' argument, to hypothesize that conflict is only about greed is wrong headed and has dangerous policy implications, which can be used to de-legitimate political projects and genuine forms of protest. In other words there is a propensity to use 'greed' as a justification to disregard 'grievance, which is likely to fuel insurgency in the long run.

Conceivably, there is a need to make a distinction between what causes, triggers or sustains conflict. Some agreement exist that economic agendas or 'greed' are imperative in sustaining wars, though this is very different from arguing that they are the causal factor.

As Moore noted, commodity exports do not cause civil wars, however, they are an important factor in fragile or failed state. For Moore, bad governance, which is the challenge of leadership, is a fundamental cause and 'greed' is the indicator. To Moore, weak states do not compromise, cannot deliver and cannot control grievance.

Natural resource wealth may either influence or retard the economic development of a nation. When the economic is retard, the scenario paints a picture of resource curse as against blessing (Richard 1993; Brunnschweiler and Bulte 2008). Mining is a good example of the argument that rather than bring blessing, it brings curse upon the mineral-rich developing countries. This argument pervades the debate on "Resources Curse". The basis for this hypothesis is based on the empirical research that established the strong evidence that countries with abundant resource wealth perform less than their

counterparts that are resources poor (IPIECA study, 2003).

The concept of resource curse (Auty 1993; Sachs & Warner 1995) is now generally applied to explain how natural resource rich countries are incapable of using the resource wealth to boost their economies and engender development for the well-being of the people and how counter-intuitively these nations had lower economic development and growth outcomes, compared to nations without natural resource wealth. The resource curse argument shifted critical discourse on poverty, growth and development away from previous explanations centered on imperialism, colonialism, reliance and the impacts of foreign interference to the study mainly concerned with the failures and inefficiencies of national economic planning, state institutions and leadership.

“Dutch Disease” theory is another viewpoint to the argument against resources use which appears justified in mining. The “Dutch Disease” theory is based on the broad effect of mining on economic development of the natural-rich country. For ease of understanding, the concept of the “Dutch Diseases” originated in Holland after the discovery of North Sea gas; it is when a nation’s economy is de-industrialized due to the discovery of natural resource, which raises the value of that nation’s currency, thereby making manufactured goods less competitive, increasing imports and decreasing exports. This theory as it relates to local impacts is that domestic wage and salary rate rises due to economic boom in the mineral resource sector and employees of other vital sectors like agriculture turn out to be easily attracted to the mining and other extractive activities because of higher salaries.

The presence of Mining Corporations also raises the cost of living in host communities and country due to the high standards of living of the workers of the mining companies. This view, argues that workers of the Mining Corporations offer enormous sums as rent leading to a hike in rent and prices of goods and services and general high cost of living, which will gradually lead to deprivation on the side of other sector workers, who cannot afford the lifestyle of mining workers, this situation on the long run, may lead to conflict; the Niger/Delta crisis in Nigeria is a justifiable argument of this theory.

Another good example of conflict mineral is diamonds and the illegal trades in gems, which have long served to provide a set of revenue for conflict actors, for instance, their role are mostly widespread all through African history (Humphreys et al 2007; Mehlum et al 2006)

Mikesell 1997). Revenues from diamond have not only served to maintain and sustain rebel groups, it has

also been used to strengthen the position of dishonest and corrupt dictators. For instance, Sierra Leone’s civil war which did not start, because of diamonds, mismanagement on the part of government, corruption and overall bad leadership about revenue Sources such as diamonds actually provided fertile ground or at least early support in some quarters for insurgence. Later in the mid 1990s, diamond mines control, particularly in the Eastern Province of Sierra Leone’s (i.e. Koidu and Tonga), was a main reward for civil war combatants. During that time, about 300 to 450 million US dollars in diamond revenues were taken out of the country—over 90% bypassing government treasury and exiting through illegal means via neighboring states of Liberia, Guinea and nearby Côte d’Ivoire (Collier & Leffler 1998; Smillie *ibid*).

LEADERSHIP, POVERTY AND CONFLICT

It is understandable that leadership contribute immeasurably to the development of any sector, government, society, nation etc. This development can either be positive and/or negative depending on the leader. When a nation is blessed with a charismatic, visionary and people-focused leader, there is a likelihood of massive positive development. But a nation governed by dictators, civilian or military and egocentric leader, is most likely to experience poverty, conflict and attendant anarchy.

The opinion in this paper is that Africa’s greatest challenge is leadership. Years after independence, in most African states, the peoples are yet to enjoy the dividend of independence. Most Africans may rather prefer to be governed by the colonial masters which would amount to double tragedy. This is largely because of the political instability and rampant upheaval. African states that have experienced military coup, has been justified by accusations of socio-economic and political mismanagement oppression, denial of fundamental human right, dictatorship, corruption and ethnic chauvinism indicating a lack of good leadership in Africa (Idike, *ibid*). (Captured from the Human Development Report 2013)

It is without exaggeration, from the above table (UNDP: The Rise of the South), that most peoples of Africa live in abject poverty despite the rich natural resource: mineral, oil and agricultural resources. The failure of leadership is attributed to brain drain, poverty and conflict in Africa, which has become the bane of the continent’s development. In most African countries, you either join the “band wagon” of corrupt and visionless leaders or you remain in the dungeon of irrelevance.

Leadership challenge in Africa is a combination of different factors: selfishness, partisan and ethnic sentiments, lack of vision, nepotism, primordial consideration, ego-celitricism and greed etc. Africa's past and in many cases, current leaders have been concerned with the interest of their parties and ethnic groups rather than the interest of the nation, for instance, ethnic and tribal favoritism is one of former President Olusegun Obasanjo's accusations against President Good luck Jonathan of Nigeria in an 18-page letter, titled "Before it is too late." Nigeria's poverty lies beyond understanding how can one justify, a nation rich in natural resource, now the largest economy in Africa and 26th in the world (2014 Rebasng: Nigeria Minister of Finance, April, 2014), paradoxically, one of the top five countries that has the largest number of poor. Nigeria, according to Jim Yoig Kim, President - World Bank, is ranked third in the world while India ranked number one with 33% of the world poor. China is ranked second with 13% of the world's poor, followed by Nigeria with 7% of the world poor, living in the country (IMF/World Bank Spring Meeting, 2014).

However, one may single out the now late former President Nelson Mandela of South Africa, as a leader who had built a peaceful society where the color of one's skin does not matter. In his inaugural speech on May 19 1994, Mandela, popularly called Madiba said: "We enter into a covenant that we shall build a society in which all South Africans, both black and white, will be able to walk tall, without fear in their hearts, assured of their inalienable right to human dignity (Meredith, 2005). Many African leaders lack the spirit of nationalism, Vision and patriotism; they see themselves first, as a member and leader of their tribal group before the nation. Ethnic chauvinism and party loyalty has led to a series of ethnic and tribal conflicts and coups in many African States, for instance, the Mozambique war (1964), the takeover of power by Gen Joseph Mobutu in Congo (1965), the civil war in Nigerian (1967 -1970), the Gen Mohammed Siyad Barre military coup in Somalia (1969), The Sergeant Samuel Doe coup in Liberia (1980), the General Ornaral-Bashi's coup in Sudan (1989), and the ethnic cleansing, Rwandan Genocide (1994) and so on. As Chinua Achebe (1983) puts it in "The Trouble with Nigeria", there is basically nothing wrong with the African character. The trouble is the reluctance and/or failure of African leaders to rise to the responsibility of leadership. The increasing rate of conflict, poverty, Conflict and Poverty in Africa: The Effect of Natural Resource and Management indiscipline, coTuptio11, political instability, social injustice, and some other socio-economic ills in Africa are just a manifestation of a lack of

effective leadership. Therefore, we posit here that poor leadership in Africa is a largely, an underlying factor resulting in resource curse conflict, poverty, religious mayhem, riot and passive resistance that has plague the continent over the years. Conflict, especially is an external expression of the frustration caused by leadership failure. Achebe clearly noted this when he said that a leader's undisciplined reaction can provoke the masses to anger and rebellion." This goes to validate our argument that the failure of leadership is actually the theory of socio-economic frustration, leading to poverty and conflict in Africa.

CONCLUSION

This study has examined the links between conflict, poverty, natural resource and leadership, we have tried to argue that natural resource struggle and poor leadership is at the root of poverty and conflict. Leadership is needed to manage natural resource for the greater good of all; leadership failure has resulted in the series of military coup, conflict and poverty bedeviling Africa. This needs to be better comprehended, accounted for and tackled if development gains are to be achieved in Africa. However, to date, there has been empirical research, which examines the nature of association between poverty and conflict, which this study also makes effort to demonstrate unfortunately, how the control over natural resource and poor leadership affect poverty and Conflict has not received enough attention. The intellectual argument in this study is that natural resource curse and Particularly poor leadership undermines peace and stability and promotes poverty. When the state fails to fulfill this responsibility, or provides for some groups, but not for others, or worse when the leaders are corrupt, in most cases, the people effectively regain their right to use force, leading to conflict, often with disastrous cost, such as a rise in poverty level, crime and stunted development.

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