PROTO-NATIONALISM AND THE INSECURITY DOMINO IN WEST AFRICA: A STUDY OF COTE D'IVOIRE AND NIGERIA

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Abstract

Since the end of the Cold War, West Africa has continued to languish in protracted insecurity situations. The history of the sub-region is synonymous to violent conflicts such as civil wars, political crisis, resource conflicts, coup d'états, militancy, religious extremism, ethnic unrests, insurgencies, terrorism, and so on. Most of these security challenges are products of proto-nationalism; that is, a deliberate manipulation of nationalist identities (like ethnicity, religion, language, descent, et cetera) by political elites who use them as instruments to fulfil their self-serving political and economic agenda. This has polarized countries and communities by creating deep feelings of marginalization, unwontedness, ostracism, and exclusion. Interestingly is how this insecurity situation is being able to spill-over and across state borders rendering the entire West African security architecture precarious and unstable. It is to this end that this paper interrogates the role of proto-nationalism in regional security concerns in West Africa. By so doing, the study investigates the manifestations of this phenomenon in Cote d'Ivoire and Nigeria, and how they are able to have knock-on effects on other countries so that they become regional emergency situations. 27 in-depth interviews were conducted face-to-face, with interviewees from the security agencies, political parties, religious organizations, traditional institutions, academia and the road transport unions in Cote d'Ivoire and Nigeria. Data collected were analysed using NVivo 10 software through which open-coding was carried out thematically, matrix coding queries were conducted on the themes to generate tables and charts after which textual and discourse analytical approaches were employed. The result indicates that the failure of the Ivorian and Nigerian states to guarantee the socio-economic security of the numerous ethno-religious splinters in their countries created vacuums that are been filled by proto-nationalists. Also, most of the ethnic groups in these countries have cross-border alliances that are being mobilised for solidarity movements, thereby causing trans-border security concerns. Therefore, the study concludes that though the phenomenon of proto-nationalism is domestic, it has very high tendency of destabilising security at the regional and international levels. To this end, ECOWAS, African Union and United Nations should insist on good governance as solution to the problem.

Keywords: Conflict, ECOWAS, ethnicity, identity politics, religion, political elites, regional insecurity.

1 INTRODUCTION

Strands of literature have amicably described West Africa's security architecture as the most chaotic in the world. Just after the Cold War, Kaplan (1994) depicts West Africa as a strategically dangerous space, with the potential of threatening global peace and security. The sub-region is characterized as a Hobbesian state of intense violence and conflict with no place for reason. A geographical location for blood-thirsty, war-mongering, power-drunken warlords and elites. McGowan (2005, p. 5) calls it "Africa's zone par excellence of coups and conflicts." Annan (2014) regards West Africa as the most precarious and unstable across the entire continent. No matter the level of conflict in the sub-region –whether "at community, state or regional levels—they have all been marred by violence" (Afisi, 2009; cited in Annan, 2014, p. 1).

Most of the issues that have jeopardised security in West Africa can be linked to the deliberate manipulations of nationalist identities by political elites. This has polarized states and communities, creating the deep feelings of marginalization, unwontedness, ostracism, racism and total exclusion (Annan & Danso, 2013). It is the argument of this paper that despite multiplicity of identities in the sub-region, these identities are not by themselves responsible for the waves of conflicts experienced, they are only objects of manipulation in the hands of political elites who use them to fulfil their self-centred objectives.

The characteristic attitude of political elites in West Africa have always pounced on primordialism to elicit easily manipulative solidarities among ethnic, linguistic, religious, cultural or regional associations to gain required majority for political contests. It is, however, pertinent to emphasize here that the reason the sub-region of West Africa is so vulnerable is its level of contiguity along these primordial lines. This makes it almost spontaneous for local communal clashes initially triggered for domestic political reasons to boomerang into full-fledged regional crisis. This is the unique feature of West Africa's insecurity; that is, the ability and frequency by which seemingly localized violence spill into neighbouring countries to become a regional epidemic (Francis, 2009; Duruji, 2012; Onuoha & Ezirim, 2013; Joshua & Olanrewaju, 2017).

It is to this end that this paper interrogates the role of proto-nationalism in regional security concern in West Africa. By so doing, the study investigates the manifestations of this phenomenon in Cote d'Ivoire and Nigeria, and how they are able to have knock-on effects on other countries so that they become regional emergency situations. The next section extensively reviews existing literature to shed light on the key concepts under study. The third section reveals the methods adopted for the study, the result and the discussions of findings made. It is therefore the conclusion of this study that proto-nationalism is a major source of insecurity in West Africa.

2 CONCEPT OF PROTO-NATIONALISM

Scholars have described proto-nationalism as the earliest form of nationalism that existed before the establishment of the nation-state. It is said to be the earliest form of confrontation against political oppression by the state or a foreign power (Jacobson, 2004; Rotimi and Ogen, 2008; Ubaku, Emeh and Anyikwa, 2014). Hobsbawm's (1990) work referred to proto-nationalism as a deliberately created bond or identity strengthened with the instrumentality of both forces of myth and history to galvanize the emotion of a specific people. He went further to explain that symbols like language, religion, flag, anthem, monument, celebration and so on all have the ability to ignite the feeling of camaraderie among a people when they are embellished with history. For instance, the Muslim Brotherhood sect in Egypt tagged President Mubarak as non-Arabic speaking to appeal to the sentiments of the majority Arabic speaking Muslims to successfully topple his government.

Furthermore, Hobsbawm (1990) and Dreyfus (2005) argue that proto-nationalism is the "reawakening of pre-modern sentiments and attachment to a common imagined community." This implies that it is possible that this community might not be bonded by blood or descent but it could be by shared language, religion, culture, or a fabricated vernacular which is surrounded with some sort of history. When such history is reminded it reawakens solidarity between and among the people. This is the reason Patterson (2012) avows that proto-nationalism plays on pre-existing unifications and bonds for self-realization.

Therefore, for the purpose of this paper, proto-nationalism can be seen as the deliberate manipulation of nationalist identities, such as language, ethnicity, religion, culture and descent, by political elites to fulfil certain political ambitions. It is the reawakening of nationalist sentiments and values by political elites for the purpose of achieving political power (Olanrewaju, Omotoso, Alabi and Ayodele, 2019).

3 CONCEPT OF INSECURITY

The term insecurity is the direct opposite of security. According to Beland (2005), insecurity is a "state of fear

or anxiety stemming from a concrete or alleged lack of protection." This implies that insecurity is a feeling of apprehension that one is exposed to danger. It can be described as a state of internal instability as a result of external volatility. To Ajodo-Adebanjoko and Walter (2014, p. 366), it is "a state of being subject to danger or threat." Achumba, Ighomereho and Akpor-Robaro (2013, p. 80) see insecurity as a "state of vulnerability to harm and loss of life, property or livelihood." Major assumptions in these renditions of insecurity are that it is a state of uncertainty, tension, violence, and/or out-right harm. It is simply the "breach of peace and security" (Eme & Onyishi, 2011, p. 176). Robert-Okah (2014, p. 4) argues that it is "… the presence of a non-conductive atmosphere for the people to pursue their legitimate interest within the society."

For the purpose of this research therefore, insecurity is referred to a state of fear, uncertainty or out-right danger within a state or region caused by the interface of internal and external socio-political clash of interest leading to tension or violence and loss of life, property or livelihood. Also, one of Robert-Okah's definitions of insecurity catches one's attention. This states that:

> Insecurity is the presence of and/or apprehension of those tendencies that could undermine internal cohesion and corporate existence of the nation and its ability to maintain its vital institutions for the promotion of its core values and socio-political objectives, as well as meet the legitimate aspirations of the people (Robert-Okah, 2014, p. 4).

4 THE DOMINO THEORY

The domino theory was first used in 1954 by the United States of America's foreign policy-makers led by the President, Dwight Eisenhower. The theory was developed from the idea that "when you have a row of dominoes set up, you knock over the first one, and what will happen to the last one is the certainty that it will go over very quickly…" (Leeson & Dean, 2009, p. 533a).

This model was used during the Cold War era to justify the importance of the spread of democracy against that of communism for the primary purpose of protecting the strategic interest of the United States of America all across the globe. The theory was used to explain the possibility of countries going into alliances with the Soviet Union and falling under communist rule which will threaten the security and hegemony of the U.S. in world politics (Leeson & Dean, 2009; Leeson, Sobel & Dean, 2010). According to Butterly (2012, p. 26), "if one country in a region falls to communism, this will have a definite knock-on –or domino— effect on the other states, and eventually the entire region will be lost." Eisenhower invoked the model to clarify the position of the United States to intervene in Vietnam. He stated that if Vietnam is allowed to fall under communist rule, gradually communism might spread to Indonesia, Thailand and other countries in the region. In this scenario, the U.S. will totally lose in political-economic relations with the region and the region could plunge into a potential security threat to the U.S. However, this idea was supported by the successive governments of Kennedy, Johnson and Nixon (Butterly, 2012; Chomsky, 1992).

In the post-Cold War era, scholars and policy-makers have adapted the domino theory to broader issues that are as geographically contiguous as the original one (Leeson & Dean, 2009; Leeson et al., 2010). Leeson, Sobel and Dean were the first to scholarly adapt the model to the economy. They explain that "changes in one country's economic policies and institutions spread to neighbouring countries, affecting these countries' economic policies and institutions similarly, which spreads to their neighbours, and so on" (Leeson et al., 2010, pp. 2-3). In another occasion, Ninkovich (1994, p. 92) invokes the theory to explain Franklin Roosevelt's act of interrupting the spread of fascism in Europe. He looks beyond the set of countries that were conquered by Hitler's military, with the argument that neighbouring countries are at the risk of falling under fascism. If nothing is done the entire Europe will be taken over by the Nazi regime. However, Leeson and Dean (2009) coin the term democratic domino theory. The term avows that increase in a country's democracy will have an infectious effect on its neighbours' democracy. This increase will also bring about changes in their neighbours' democracy, until there is a significant increase in the region's democracy.

For the purpose of this study therefore, applying domino theory to insecurity in the West African sub-region will mean when a country in the sub-region falls to insecurity, it will have a knock-on effect on its neighbours, and gradually spread until the entire sub-region is plunged into insecurity. The works of Musah and Fayemi (2000), Musah (2009), Annan (2014), among others, reveal how the civil strife of the late 20th Century which begun in Liberia knocked down Sierra Leone and Guinea-Bissau; and how the Casamance conflict in Senegal had a domino effect on Guinea-Bissau and The Gambia. In the same way, the recent insurgent activities started in Nigeria in 2009 by Boko Haram and it is gradually spreading across the sub-region. That is, the domino started with Nigeria, knocked down Niger Republic, Chad, Cameroon, in 2012 Mali went under siege from a Salafist rebel group, in 2016 Burkina Faso and Cote d'Ivoire were attached by Al-Qaeda, while threats of attacks were sent to Ghana and Republic of Benin.

5 PROTO-NATIONALISM AND THE DOMINO EFFECT OF INSECURITY: THE AFRICAN EXPERIENCE

Extant literature has identified African nationalism to be too porous. The nature and character of nationalism in Africa gives room for political exploitation and manipulation, largely because the continent is a contiguity of faulty nation-states. This makes Sub-Saharan Africa serves as a very rich source for academic theorising and analysis (Robinson, 2009; Hussein, 2016). In the thoughts of Mazrui (2008, p. 36), it is stated that "the overall pattern of violence on the African continent is disturbing and deserves analysis." But it is important to acknowledge that this nature of 'chaotic nationalism' in Africa is often politically triggered.

The heterogeneity of the continent precedes the series of insecurity and violence it has experienced, and the frequency and intractability are relatively second to none with other continents of the world. According to Marina Ottaway, "in much of Africa, ethnicity is not a problem until it is made a problem" (Joseph, 1999, p. 8). Majority of the ethnic conflicts in Africa are politically inspired. African political elites see nationalist identities as the simplest formula for political mobilisation, resulting in the establishment of political parties fashioned along ethnic, linguistic and religious lines. In the words of Kwatemba (2008, p. 92),

> In a multiparty setting political competition creates incentives for individuals to see themselves in terms of ethnic identities that define them as members of large blocks, usually based on religious, linguistic, or regional distinctions.

This implies that politicians craftily transform political pluralism into ethno-religious contest by taking maximum advantage of the existing dimension of cleavages that characterise the state for their self-serving ends. For instance, the political geography of Kenya reveals this kind of ethnic competitive contours, as political gladiators project ethnic competition to attract required political mileage from political pluralism.

> KANU, led by Moi, became a party of Kalenjins and the minority tribes. Odinga dominated the FORD-Kenya party, which was mainly associated with the Luo and the Bukusu sub-tribe of the Luhya. The Kikuyu dominated two political parties – the Democratic Party (DP), led by Mwai Kibaki and the FORD-Asili Party, led by Kenneth Matiba (Kwatemba, 2008, p. 92).

In consonance with the above, Ottaway (1999) asserts that African political elites utilise national identities to bolster their political power. In Kenya, like it is in many other African countries, both the incumbent and aspirants decisively adopt divisive strategies in a system originally established to promote freedom, inclusion and accommodation. Perhaps, democracy is meant to engender inclusion, accommodation and compromise, instead, exclusion, hostilities and intolerance have been the constant in many African societies. Alluding to the work of Herbst and Ottaway, Joseph (1999) argues that:

> The processes of regime transformation […] heighten ethnic considerations and provoke defensive postures by politically dominant groups. The return to competitive politics encourages parties to take on a sectional colouration that hinders the capacity of transitional governments to reflect and respect the identities of all groups (p. 8).

This suggests the Machiavellian approach that African political elites take on, making national identities the easiest culprits in their quest for political power. They do not hesitate pitting ethnic nations, religious groups or linguistic groups against one another so long as it grants them access to the corridors of political and economic power. The writing of Bangura (2007) avows the extent politicians can go in ensuring they achieve their political ambition at the detriment of the security of the masses they are determined to rule. In his words, "it is true that national relations are and must be competitive, but it is not true that they need be cutthroat or cannibalistic or that 'an individual has to do whatever it takes to survive'" (p. 448).

It is, however, more interesting that in communities without very obvious difference, African politicians are able to dig deep to discover tiniest identity gap. When this gap is amplified with the instrumentality of history and the media, it often climaxes into terrible insecurity, and at the same time, generates the quantum of sentiment and triggers the kind of emotions that will produce their desire. This is why Rothchild (1999) opines that despite the horrific genocide in Rwanda the memories alone cannot result in insecurity until politicians exploit the event by reminding the people to elicit hate, suspicion and fear; forming the basis for political violence. In the same vein, according to Sekou Toure, "no one will remember the tribal, ethnic or religious rivalries which, in the recent past, caused so much damage to our country and its population" (cited in Ottaway, 1999, p. 303).

For example, on the face value, the conflict in the Central African Republic in 2001 seemed to the world as a sectarian religious crisis but studies of scholars such as Coldiron, Roederer, Llosa, Bouhenia, Madi, Sury,

Neuman and Klaudia (2017) and Isaacs-Martin (2016) have revealed its real cause to be deeply rooted in crude political power contest. Conflict burst between the Yakoma ethnic group and the Sara-Kaba group on one side and a Yakoma militia group and the military force on the other, leading to the killing of many civilians and the displacement of about 70,000 (seventy thousand) (UNHCR, 2001). This insecurity situation was caused by the political tussle between Andre-Dieudonne Kolingba (a Yakoma) and the then President Ange-Felix Patasse (a Sara-Kaba). Kolingba spear-headed a failed coup against the government of Patasse, making the military inflict extreme force against the Yakomas because they share ethnic identity with Kolingba. As a result of this, Kolingba incited the formation of an armed Yakoma ethnic militia group against the government forces and the Sara-Kaba people (Isaacs-Martin, 2016). Broch-Due (2005, p. 25) testifies that "communities that had previously coexisted became hostile towards, and suspicious of, members of ethnic groups outside of their own" (cited in Isaacs-Martin, 2016, p. 32a).

Also, the independence of Africa's newest state was fought for by a coalition of strange bird fellows made up of the two dominant ethnic groups in South Sudan. Former warlords from the Dinka and Nuer ethnic groups and their troops formed majority of the members of the Sudan People's Liberation Movement (SPLM) that eventually formed the government after independence in 2011.

Despite been arch-rivals way before independence, Salva Kiir (a Dinka) became the President while Riek Machar (a Nuer) became the Vice President of South Sudan. According to Koos and Gutschke (2014):

> Although the power struggle between Kiir and Machar is not an ethnic one per se, it has severe implications for relations between the Dinka and Nuer communities. The ethnic equilibrium in the government – a Dinka as president and a Nuer as vice president – has been widely viewed as an important safeguard to preserve stability between the two largest ethnic communities (p. 2b).

The stroke that broke the camel's back in the relationship of these foes was in December 2013 when President Kiir decided to sack his vice and several senior cabinet members, accusing Machar of leading a failed coup (Blanchard, 2013; Dessalegn, 2017). The age-long power tussle between the two suddenly metamorphosed into ethnic conflict, as loyalists of Kiir and Machar in the military and the presidential guard fought one another. Senior military officers from the Nuer ethnic group were dismissed and many more disserted the army to join local Nuer rebel forces in support of Machar against the government. Targeted attacks on civilian ethnic Nuers by government forces and revenge attacks on civilian ethnic Dinkas by the militia led to wide spread death recorded by United Nations to be around 50,000 (Blanchard, 2016).

Apart from the refugee crisis the infighting in South Sudan caused to its neighbours, the situation posed serious security and economic concerns to them. For instance, Uganda became concerned that the intractable state of affairs in South Sudan will provide a safe haven to the Lord Resistance Army (LRA) that have threatened Ugandan sovereignty over the years. Also, Uganda was concerned about the interruption the conflict would have on the economic activities it had with South Sudan. Uganda was South Sudan's biggest trade partner to the tune of millions of dollars annually. Likewise, Uganda had thousands of its citizens employed in South Sudan's service sector. For Sudan, her concern was obviously on the possibility of having uninterrupted oil flow from South Sudan despite the conflict for Sudan's domestic demands. And on the part of Kenya, the conflict jeopardised returns on the huge investments for Kenyan Banks in South Sudan. Again, Kenya was apprehensive that the crisis in South Sudan could destabilise its security, creating a safe haven for terrorist groups like Somalia (Dessalegn, 2017).

6 METHODS

6.1 Study Design

Cross-sectional survey research was adopted and in-depth interviews were conducted to elicit primary data. These face-to-face interviews were conducted at a point in time with interviewees considered to be stake holders in the security architecture both in Cote d'Ivoire and Nigeria. A total of 28 interviewees were drawn from various section of the society like the security agencies, political parties, religious organisations, traditional institutions, academics, and the road transport unions.

6.2 Study Location

Recognising the enormity of the security challenges of individual West African states; this study only covers insecurity issues that had spill-over effects on the sub-region. Therefore, to execute this study, the researcher carried-out field work in Cote d'Ivoire and Nigeria.

The choice of these two West African countries is because of their recent experiences of insecurity which

might have been created by proto-nationalists (the Boko Haram insurgency in Nigeria and the political struggle between Laurent Gbagbo and Alassane Ouattara which culminated in an Ivorian civil war in 2011) and their effects on the region. The nature of the insecurity situation in these two countries contributes to the choice. Nigeria is a typical example of countries within the West Africa sub-region that are bedevilled with insurgency and terrorism. Others include Niger Republic and Mali; while Cote d'Ivoire is an example of countries afflicted with ethnic and political crisis within the sub-region. Others include Burkina-Faso, Liberia, the Gambia, Guinea-Bissau and Togo.

Of equal importance to the choice of these countries is their profile in comparison with other countries in the sub-region. Nigeria and Cote d'Ivoire account for over fifty-eight per cent (58%) of the total population in West Africa (182.2 million and 22.7 million respectively) (United Nations, Department of Economic and Social Affairs, Population Division, 2015); Nigeria was a major financier and contributor to the success of ECOMOG. Hence, Nigeria represents the group of Anglophone West African Countries, while Cote d'Ivoire represents the Francophone countries in the sub-region. It is the belief that inferences from these two countries may help in the generalisation of the findings to other West African countries.

6.3 Method of Analysis

Data gathered from Nigeria were transcribed straight away while those collected from Cote d'Ivoire were interpreted from French language to English language. Thereafter, Coding, categorization and analysis were done through the use of QSR NVivo 10 to run matrix coding. This advanced coding method connects patterns within coded responses and presents relationships within them in tables and charts. Therefore, discourse analysis was adopted to identify how the activities of proto-nationalists spark-off insecurity in the sub-region.

7 RESULT

7.1 Proto-nationalism and Regional Security in West Africa

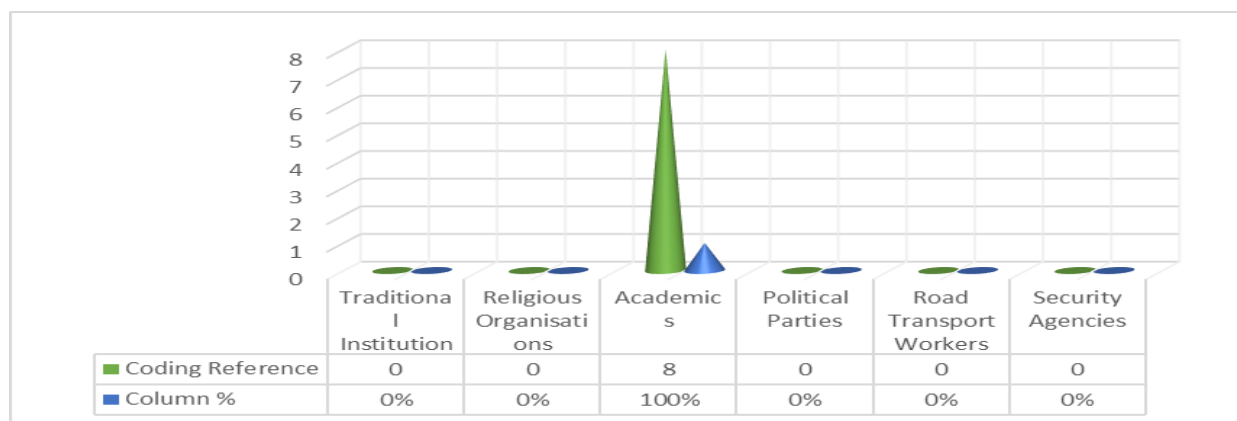|	Traditional Institution	Religious Organisations	Academics	Political Parties	Road Transport Workers	Security Agencies
Coding Reference	0	0	8	0	0	0
Column %	0%	0%	100%	0%	0%	0%

Figure 1: Matrix Coding Query: Proto-nationalism and Regional Security in West Africa

Source: Field Survey (2017-2018)

In an attempt to achieve the general objective of the study, Figure 1 shows that among the different categories of interviewees that were interviewed in both Cote d'Ivoire and Nigeria, only those in the academia were able to connect the relationship between proto-nationalism and the security situation of the sub-region. This is due to the nature of their profession. They are specialists in Political Science, International Relations and Strategic Studies.

In total, six scholars were interviewed. Four of them were selected from the university environment (two from the Faculty of Law and Political Science, Felix Houphouet-Boigny University, Abidjan, Cote d'Ivoire; one from the Institute of Peace and Strategic Studies, University of Ibadan, Oyo, Nigeria and one from the Department of International Relations and Diplomacy, Baze University, Abuja, Nigeria). While the remaining two interviewees from this category were selected from the research institute; specifically, the Nigerian Institute of International Affairs, Lagos, Nigeria.

Therefore, Figure 1 reveals that eight (8) coding references are credited to the responses given by scholars, positing how proto-nationalism aggravates insecurity across the West African sub-region. As a result, 100% of this allusion was made by scholars.

7.2 Politics of Insecurity in West Africa

In line with the focus of the first objective and the corresponding research question, Figure 2 details the responses of interviewees on how proto-nationalism generates insecurity in West Africa, deriving instances from Cote d'Ivoire and Nigeria. Data gathered from Ivorian politicians show 5 (29.95%) references that are associated to the subject matter. The security force has 3 (22.13%) references, while the traditional rulers and scholars have 2 (23.96%) references each. But the Ivorian religious leaders and road transport workers failed to draw a connection between politics and insecurity in Cote d'Ivoire, thus reflecting 0 (0%) coding reference. On the other hand, data collected from Nigeria shows almost the same pattern with data collected from Cote d'Ivoire. Nigerian politicians were able to relate with whether insecurity is a product of deliberate conjuncture by political elites, resulting in 5 (29.95%) coding references. The Nigerian security force was able to reflect 4 (22.13%) references, followed by the traditional rulers at 3 (17.11%) references, then the scholars at 2 (30.93%) coding references. Again, Figure 2 shows no response for both religious leaders and road transport workers concerning the subject matter in Nigeria.
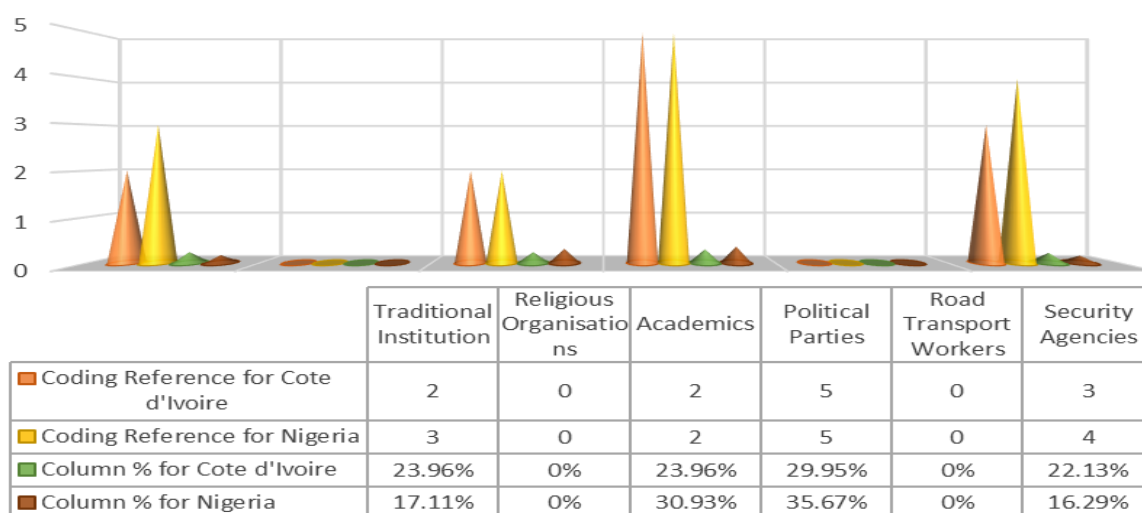

	Traditional Institution	Religious Organisations	Academics	Political Parties	Road Transport Workers	Security Agencies
■ Coding Reference for Cote d'Ivoire	2	0	2	5	0	3
■ Coding Reference for Nigeria	3	0	2	5	0	4
■ Column % for Cote d'Ivoire	23.96%	0%	23.96%	29.95%	0%	22.13%
■ Column % for Nigeria	17.11%	0%	30.93%	35.67%	0%	16.29%

Figure 2: Matrix Coding Query: Politics of Insecurity in Cote d'Ivoire and Nigeria

Source: Field Survey (2017-2018)

8 DISCUSSION

Most academics interviewed explained that proto-nationalism is a product of the character and nature of the independent states in West Africa. That is, state in West Africa is such that is dichotomized by ethno-religious contradictions which continue to tear the country apart and provide instruments of divide and rule for selfish politicians to lash on. Academic further explained that insecurity arising from proto-nationalism often spill across borders in West Africa because ethnic, national and religious groups in the sub-region have cross-border alliances. These cross-border alliances are potential threats to the stability of the sub-region.

There is a consensus among traditional and religious leaders and the security agencies in both sampled countries that there is always a deliberate provocation of insecurity by political elites for the purpose of achieving political gaols to the detriment of the general public. Interestingly, politicians interviewed in Cote d'Ivoire and Nigeria all argued that the structural make-up of the state in West Africa makes it difficult, if not impossible, to find patriotic politicians who are not ethnocentric or religious bigots. Political elites consider the existing wide cleavages within the state as a gift of nature, a tool to execute their profession, and their ability to manipulate the differences to the extent of creating insecurity as a flagrant show of might.

9 CONCLUSION

Though the phenomenon of proto-nationalism is domestic, it has very high tendency of destabilising the sub-region and the international community. Therefore, ECOWAS, African Union and United Nations should insist on good governance as solution to the problem. If there is good governance in the West African states sub-nationalists, insurgent and terrorist groups will not find relevance in the society and they will not have the

capacity and justification to do evil.

The current political party structures across West Africa encourage proto-nationalism and its attendant insecurity because majority of the political parties are established along ethnic and/or religious lines. Therefore, the use of ethnic and religious rhetoric must be outlawed in the political and electoral processes to promote unity, patriotism and nationalism. Political parties must be established with far-reaching national spread and acceptance.

It is, therefore, the conclusion of this study that proto-nationalism is a major source of insecurity in West Africa. The study argued that though West Africa could be described as a collection of ethno-religious splinters, it is political elites who magnify these differences via the creation of inter-group acrimony for the advancement of their own political goals. The study submits that, among other reasons, insecurity is a deliberate conjuration for the actualisation of political ambitions during intense political competition.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

NOTES

Interview with an anonymous officer of the Department of State Security Service in Nigeria on August 12, 2017.

Interview with an anonymous officer of the Special Force, Ivorian Military, Abidjan, Cote d'Ivoire on October 9, 2017.

Interview with Madam Lagustina Kofi, Woman Leader, Ivorian Popular Front, Abidjan, Cote d'Ivoire on October 2, 2017.

Interview with Ndar Kamelan, Western Regional Coordinator, Democratic Party of Cote d'Ivoire, Abidjan, Cote d'Ivoire on October 9, 2017.

Interview with Chief George Moghalu, the National Auditor and a party chieftain of the All Progressive Congress (APC) on December 21, 2017.

Interview with Prince Aliyu Orogo, the Youth Leader and Administrative Officer of the All Progressive congress (APC) on December 20, 2017.

Interview with Hon. Sergius Oseasochie, a Peoples' Democratic Party (PDP) Member of the House of Representatives, Esan North-East/South-East Federal Constituency, Edo State, Nigeria on November 8, 2017.

Interview with Pastor Victor Ita, Christian Organisation in Cote d'Ivoire, Abidjan, Cote d'Ivoire on October 12, 2017.

Interview with Sonta Mohammed, Islamic Organisation in Cote d'Ivoire, Abidjan, Cote d'Ivoire on October 7, 2017.

Interview with Doumbia Amadou, Islamic Organisation in Cote d'Ivoire, Abidjan, Cote d'Ivoire on October 9, 2017.

Interview with Rev. Dr. Supo Ayokunle, Christian Organisation in Nigeria, Abuja, Nigeria on February 1, 2018.

Interview with Alhaji Femi Okunnu (LLB, S.A.N, C.O.N), Islamic Organisation in Nigeria, Lagos, Nigeria on May 25, 2017.

Interview with Chief Gnoan M'Bala, Special Adviser to the King and Leader of the Council of Chiefs of Grand Bassam, Grand Bassam, Cote d'Ivoire on October 11, 2018.

Interview with Chief David Mel, Leader of the Council of Chiefs of Dabou, Dabou, Cote d'Ivoire on October 8, 2017.

Interview with Chief Moses Ogunmola, the Oloye Otun of the Alaafin of Oyo, Oyo State, Nigeria on February 18, 2017.

Interview with Chief Osarumwense Amayo Isosinmwinoba, the Ohen-Iso of Ugbeku Community and the Traditional and Administrative Head of Ugbeku Community, Edo State, Nigeria on December 9, 2017.

Interview with Dr. Souleymane Doumbia, Lecturer, Faculty of Law and Political Science, Felix Houphouet-Boigny University, Abidjan, Cote d'Ivoire on October 6, 2017.

Interview with Dr. Philippe Ketoure, Lecturer, Faculty of Law and Political Science, Felix Houphouet-Boigny University, Abidjan, Cote d'Ivoire on October 4, 2017.

Interview with Professor Isaac Olawale Albert, the Director, Institute of Peace and Strategic Studies, University of Ibadan, Oyo State, Nigeria on April 14, 2017.

Interview with Professor Osita Agbu, Professor, Department of International Relations and Diplomacy, Baze University, Abuja, Nigeria on March 28, 2017.

Interview with Professor Ogaba Oche, Director, Research and Studies, Nigerian Institute of International Affairs, Lagos State, Nigeria on February 9, 2017.

Interview with Dr. Sharkdam Wapmuk, Research Fellow, Nigerian Institute of International Affairs, Lagos State, Nigeria on February 9, 2017.

Interview with an anonymous (1) executive member of the Abidjan Chapter, National Union of Transport Workers in Cote d'Ivoire, Abidjan, Cote d'Ivoire on October 9, 2017.

Interview with an anonymous (2) executive member of the Abidjan Chapter, National Union of Transport Workers in Cote d'Ivoire, Abidjan, Cote d'Ivoire on October 9, 2017.

Interview with Guar Civiac, President, United Union Association, Abidjan, Cote d'Ivoire on October 9, 2017.

Interview with an anonymous executive member of the Lagos Chapter, National Union of Road Transport Workers, Nigeria on January 22, 2018.

Interview with an anonymous executive member of the Ibadan Chapter, National Union of Road Transport Workers, Nigeria on February 15, 2018.

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