



Rethinking Culture: An Introspection into the Changing Patterns of Power in Africa

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ABSTRACT

The violent clashes between ethnic groups and classes continues in Africa. The crucial question of belonging, idea of identities remains the core area of strife in Africa. The population in Africa experience violation in different ways. These forms of routinised violence and tensions prevail in Africa. Violence is experienced in personal spaces and it increases the ambiguity. We explore the Identity politics in Africa and the chain of class struggle experienced by the Africans.

Keywords: Rethinking Culture, Africa, Identity politics .

1. Introduction

The violent clashes between ethnic groups and classes continues in Africa. The crucial question of belonging, idea of identities remains the core area of strife in Africa. The population in Africa experience violation in different ways. These forms of routinised violence and tensions prevail in Africa. Violence is experienced in personal spaces and it increases the ambiguity. We explore the Identity politics in Africa and the chain of class struggle experienced by the Africans. The range of casualties during war, the trauma and trepidations of women and children, the bitter rivalry that exists between the civilians, the canvas of Africa is bound up with wide range of conflicts. On the contrary, the effects of corruption and privatization has led to the breakdown of the functioning of the state. They have broad structural adjustment policies as a part of globalisation and the destructive forces of globalisation is rapidly creating globalised destitution. Ordinary Africans feel and trapped under the mysterious forces and is inflicting damage on the fragile heart of people's existence. The corrosive effect on violence is creating the feeling of objection and a sense of marginalisation. The symbols of neglect and exclusion disconnects Africans from the modern world of progress. Ethnic clashes occur in Africa on a national scale and the crisis in Africa had percolated into multiple spheres of their lives.

The screams of women and the furiousness of men is a tragic reminder of the painful social conditions. Their ethnicity is a part of African existence and their life is deeply and messed with in this set of relations. Africans share the experience of poverty and impoverishment and the effects of violence in everyday life is immense. 19th century nationalism in Africa lead to the colonial ideas of Africa. The state apparatus determines the conceptions of femininity and masculinity. Institutionalization becomes major part of their political discourse. The constant tussle and struggle exist to establish political power. The different spheres of structural, sexual and political violence are evident in Africa. The geographical and the cultural landscapes of violence ends up creating more confusion. History of relationships between perpetrator and victim in the post-war period is troublesome in Africa. The process of polarisation creates a plethora of consequences in the African sphere. There has been an increase in the sexual and domestic violence in Africa. The shock and terror created by violence, the unconscious forms of violence, the virtual violence threatens humanity. When the border between the conscious and

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unconscious breaks up, the victims are then subjected to situations that are difficult to overcome. Judith Butler's argument on power concerns with physical violence and draws imagery around suppressed rage and loss. Physical violence is inflicted on the subject's bodies and they are deprived of food, sleep and other basic necessities. Rituals and scripted performances of the ritual urge to place Africa within the whole frame.

There have always existed the ideas of primordial tension between the children and parents in Africa. The terrifying scripted violence of myth erupts into tangled reality. Symbolic violence, political violence, ritual politics, the aspect of sacrifice reverberates through the lives of Africans. Arjun Appadurai mentions about the violent obsession in his article "Dead certainty: Ethnic violence in the era of globalisation" - wherever the testimony is sufficiently graphic. It becomes clear that even the worst acts of degradation involving faeces, urine, body parts, beheading, impaling, gutting, sawing, raping, burning, hanging and suffocating have macabre forms of cultural design and violent predictability' (Appadurai 229). The multiplicity and fragility of identities in the modern world is indicated by Appadurai. The doubt and uncertainty, the growing criminalisation in Africa is evident. Food is a major fault line along which so much violence erupts. The politics of identities including age, ethnicity, gender shapes voice and sketches the vivid elements implied in it. The conceptual space of 'women' is denied and is under scrutiny. Violence, be it social or sexual, leaves people with a tremendous sense of helplessness. The people in Africa are devastated by the poverty, marginalisation and violence. Clashes between farmers and herders are extremely violent in Africa. The increasing population pressure leads to scarcity of resources and to the increasing competition among the ethnic groups. The irresponsible use of ecological environments increases the ethnic hostility among the age-old tribal groups. These conflicts arise at local level and it helps to the multiple levels of conflict later. Poverty and lack of adequate technology, malnutrition has made them more vulnerable. Environmental scarcity, the scarcity of renewable resources is a result of the population growth in Africa and high levels of exploitation of soil nutrients. It is a result of the impact of human activity. The brutality and displacement experienced during the war time emphasizes the shared experiences of political violence. Nordstrom writes: "This concept of war scapes makes it possible to transcend individual expressions of the war in particular locales, to understand the creation of a culture of war throughout Mozambique". The resistance against dehumanizing violence accounts for the process of transformation in the society.

They championed traditional African power and culture, and thereby posed a threat to both the scientific - Marxist government of Frelimo. Violence is a notion as well as a lived experience to Africans and this conceptualisation in the social dynamics of Africa is regarded as its 'theoretical taming'. The tribal hatred, dictatorship and the atrocious realities of Africa is a challenge and the discussion of a failed state theoretical framework is on greater emphasis. Deeply entrenched scepticism prevails in the heart of Africa. Thinking conflict and the numerous obstacles associated with it is concerned with the continent and it has complex and deep-rooted origins. It is linked to the failure of the post-colonial state system. It is a result of the pre colonial scramble for Africa. The catastrophic relationship existing in Africa and the unfulfilled expectations of people leads to the unresolved turmoil. Des Forges wrote "Politics, not tribalism is the root of the bloodletting...as the poles of bodies mount in Rwanda, commentators are pulling out their generic analysis of violence in Africa: anarchy and tribal conflict content with ready-made explanations, they overlook the organised killings that opened the way to what has become chaos. (Des 17). The transnational identities such as ethnicity and gender play a pivotal role in the structures of government and territory. Experience of different events in multi-ethnic villages point to deeper insight in this regard. The protest later changed from opposition to ethnic discrimination. The gross violations of Human Rights are evident in Africa including torture, killing, abduction, committed crimes etc. The commission recognised this stating, "Victims are acted upon rather than acting, suffering rather than surviving... however, when dealing with gross human Rights violations committed by perpetrators, the person against whom that violation is committed can only be described as a victim regardless of whether he or she emerged as a survivor. Men were the most common victims of violations. Six times as many men died as women and twice as many survivors of violations were men... Hence, although most people told the commissioner about violations were women, most of the testimony was about men. Violence practiced against them, including rape, threats of rape, sexual violation, torture with electric shocks, separation was clear particularly during the tension and times of conflict. Women's testimonies reveal the inflicted damage on bodies and relationships.

2. Conclusion

The stories of harm and intrusion of violence is testified directly by women. Duffield says Humanitarian aid is now an integral part of the politics - military strategies Western governments pursuit to transform conflicts, decrease violence and set the stage for liberal development. The aid emphasis now focuses on the will to govern, a priority which appears logical to donors since they portray 'Borderlands as chaotic and devoid of morality. The conflict zones are likely to experience intense emotions including anger, grief, outrage, suffering and secondary trauma. The conceptualization of the power politics in this regard is also important.

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