INSECURITY AND CLIMATE CHANGE IN AFRICA: EVALUATING THE STRUGGLE FOR RESOURCE CONTROL AND CONFLICT IN DARFUR REGION OF SUDAN

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Abstract
As a global phenomenon of immense significance, climate change distorts and alters the systematic equilibrium in both atmospheric and weather conditions with far reaching impact on human habitation and environment. Extreme weather phenomena associated with climate change have compounded the challenge of environmental sustainability. Various forms of land degradation, resulting from climate change induce human migration; at times across National Boundaries. In recent times, a new phenomenon described as 'climate change refugees' has emerged which if not properly addressed may lead to serious security issues and may also trigger socio-political conflicts. The paper took time to outline and properly situate the raging conflict in the Darfur region of Sudan within the context of climate change. It is an issue that has often be neglected or subsumed under the erroneous paradigm of ethno-religious and power politics in Sudan. Although these factors were later grafted to advance some selfish political interest, it never eclipsed the true essence of the insecurity that snowballed from the struggle for ownership, and control of economic resources in the form of land, access to water and grazing fields among other necessities. The lack of coping strategies by Sudan, contributed to worsening the effect of climate change on the people and environment of Darfur.

Keywords: Insecurity, Climate Change, Africa, Resource Control, Conflict, Sudan

Introduction
The Darfur region, in the Western part of Sudan has long borne the stigma of insecurity in the form of sporadic violence between and among the numerous ethnic groups that make up the vast area. The Republic of Sudan, the largest country in Africa in terms of land mass lies on the Western shore of the Red Sea. It is bordered by Eritrea and Ethiopia to the East, Kenya, Uganda and

Democratic Republic of Congo to the South, the Central African Republic, Chad and Libya to the West and Egypt to the North. Darfur is the most underdeveloped region in the country and is prone to drought and famine-two factors which have fueled conflict between Nomadic Arab tribes and local African villagers (Offodile, 2011) Darfur is therefore characterized by a lingering culture of internecine violence over resource control due to the influence of climate change.

Abusharaf (2005) observed that Darfur comprises an area of approximately 25,000 kilometers with a population of about 6 million people. Sedentary African farmers such as the Fur, Massalit and Zaghawa tribes predominate Darfur. The rest of the population consists of nomadic Arab tribes. From the pristine times, Darfur had always been associated with skirmishes and squabbles over land and grazing rights. These occasional misunderstanding between the diverse co-existing ethnic groups had always been amicably resolved, using time tested and traditional mechanisms. However, the situation assumed a more sinister dimension in the 1970s and 80s in the wake of environmental challenges occasioned by different forms of climate change.

Geographically, Darfur is made up of a Plateau some 2000 to 3000 feet above sea level. The volcanic Jebel Marra Mountain range runs North and South for a distance of some 100 miles, rising to between 5000 and 6000 feet. (Offodile 2011). The combination of desertification, drought, deforestation, massive population explosion and migration exacerbated tension in Darfur as the various stakeholders competed for control of the scarce economic resources. According to a United Nations Environmental Programme Report (2007), environmental degradation is one of the major causes of conflict in Sudan and Darfur. The report indicates key environmental problems: land degradation, desertification (especially South wards by an average of 100 kilometers over the past four decades) over grazing of fragile soils (Livestock population has increased in Sudan from 27 million animals a few decades ago to around 135 million today) and deforestation (in the last fifteen years, Sudan has lost 12% of its forest). It thus stands to reason to submit that the tide of insecurity in the Darfur region which came to a head in 2003 can only be analyzed and understood within the context of climate change. Battiste (2005) had also noted that much of the peace between the region's ethnic groups have been destroyed due to environmental degradation from the spread of the Sahara Desert as a result of drought, coupled with the divide and rule tactics of the central government and the influx of modern weaponry.

As a global phenomenon of immense significance, climate change distorts and alters the systematic equilibrium in both atmospheric and weather conditions with far reaching impact on human habitation and environment. Extreme weather phenomena associated with climate change have compounded the challenge of environmental sustainability. Various forms of land degradation, resulting from climate change induce human migration; at times across National Boundaries. In recent times, a new phenomenon described as 'climate change refugees' has emerged which if not properly addressed may lead to serious security issues and may also trigger socio-political conflicts. Anuforom(2012, citing Hay etal 2001).

2.   Conceptual Definition/Clarifications

Climate Change

Climate change is paramount on the global scale of high priority issues. It encapsulates the weather atmospheric and human activities and their impact on the environment. According to Anuforom (2012) climate change is defined by the Inter-governmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) as a statistically significant variation in either the mean state of the climate or in its variability, persisting for an extended period (typically decades or longer) climate change involves a motley of natural atmospheric processes, pollution, shrinking natural resources and depletion of the Ozone layer. Human activities in diverse forms accentuate the incidents of climate change. Reckless deforestation, and other forms of human development which lead to road construction or building of new cities has implications for climate change. As corroborated by Anuforom (2012) the challenge of increasing Green House Gases (GHG) concentration is compounded by increasing urbanization and economic development. Nature provides trees and other green vegetations as the natural sink for atmospheric C02. With growing population, there is increasing pressure on land to meet the need for food crops and livestock production. This puts more pressure on the environment, leading to its eventual degradation. The combined effect of fossil fuel burning, destruction of green vegetation and unwholesome land use practices is the increasing concentration of Atmospheric CO_2 and worsening of Green House Effect.

Climate change is both naturally and human induced. Activities of man that encourage this environmental hazard have been outlined as follows: Soil loss and deterioration, water and forest degradation, atmospheric pollution, species and gene pool extinction, Papp (1988). In their own contribution, Onweremadu and

Asiabaka (2013) defined climate change as a significant and lasting change in the statistical distribution of weather patterns over periods ranging from decades to millions of years. It is associated with extreme weather events. Generally, climate change represents alterations in the statistical properties of a climate system considered over long period of time, regardless of cause.

In relation to insecurity and conflict across Africa, climate change has direct implication for escalating violence due to scarcity of resources like water and land for economic sustenance. In addition to contributing to World hunger, the shrinking of natural resources relative to demand has the potential to contribute to international conflicts (Kaarbo and Ray, 2011).

It is equally worrisome to note that climate change influences migration of population from the hinterland to the cities in search of jobs due to unplanned urbanization, destruction of the ecosystem through deforestation. According to Shevel (2014), climate change affects Agriculture, people will have less water, they will not be able to cultivate their land and they will migrate to the cities. This is the main risk for Africa. The constant conflict between the pastoralists and farmers across Africa is linked to climate change. From Sudan to Nigeria, the situation is the same. For instance, in Nigeria, pastoralists with their animals continue to traverse the country in search of 'free' pasture; unfortunately, in many instances, this resulted in road accidents and bloody clashes with crop farmers. This will in all likelihood exacerbate since the human population is expected to double within a few decades with the attendant necessity for more land for crop production (Okeudo, 2017).

For Africa, climate change has become a nightmare and a threat that can hardly be ignored. The consequences are not just unfolding but mounting by the day: land encroachment, water scarcity, poor production, conflicts, famine and increasing poverty and hunger among the people. While advanced economies have coping strategies, to manage climate change, Africa, especially the sub-Sahara region is at the receiving end of challenges emanating from the environmental hazard.

Onweremadu and Asiabaka (2016) observed that sub-Saharan Africa has the largest number of water stressed countries than any other place on the globe and as of an estimated 500 million people who live in Africa; 300 million live in a water stressed environment. It is estimated that by 2030, 75 million to 250 million people in Africa will be living in area of high water stress, which will likely displace anywhere between 24 million and 700 million as condition become

increasingly unviable. Climate Change is a threat to the African Continent, and that it will have a major impact on life through a series of possibly cascading events: desertification could trigger a vicious circle of degradation, migration and conflicts over territory in transit and destination area. This in turn may significantly increase instability in weak or failing states by over stretching the already limited capacity of governments to respond effectively to the challenges they face.

Insecurity

Insecurity essentially means absence of security. It therefore connotes danger, threats to lives, property, welfare and translates to a general atmosphere of fear or uncertainties of being protected. According to Freedictionary.com (2012) insecurity is a state of being subject to danger or injury-a condition of being susceptible to harm or injury, the state of being exposed to risk or anxiety. The concept of insecurity is quite vast.

However, insecurity in the context of this study revolves around the impact of climate change and how it gave rise or affected the conflict in Darfur and indeed across Africa. Insecurity at the national level reflects a state that is incapable or unwilling to secure its citizens or boundaries.This failure or inability inevitably breeds conflicts with the diverse and opposing groups taking laws into their hands to protect and advance their different interests. This is symptomatic of fragile states.

According to Khalid (2007) Sudan's government policed Darfur by promoting loyal Chiefs and arming their militias. Most of these loyalists were Arabs who fueled Arab Supremacists Ideology and underwrote an escalating land grab. Insecurity thrives in an environment of ecological devastation and poor leadership .Eme and Onyishi (2014 citing Dyke (1966) maintained therefore that for a state to achieve security, the aggregate of the people organized under it should have a consciousness of belonging to a common sovereign political community, enjoy equal political freedom, human rights ,and economic opportunities .On the contrary when the state is weak or fragile, it is basically incapable of protecting the citizens from challenges of the environment.. As an institution which has the legitimate use of coercive apparatus of power, the state controls the security architecture of a country. In the case of Sudan, the state reflects symptoms of weakness or fragility. Fragile or failing states have the following features:

   I.   A security threat from organized non-state violence

II.   The government lacks legitimacy in the eyes of many citizens.
III.   The state has weak capacity for essential functions.
IV.   The environment for private investment is unattractive.
V.   The economy is exposed to shocks and with little resilience
VI.   Deep divisions in the society (Fasan, 2018)

These conditions depict the Sudan situation where the state abdicated its responsibility to ensure security of lives and property of her teeming population with the failure to ameliorate the impact of climate change in the country especially in the Darfur region. Against the backdrop of the general failure of governance, the struggle for control of economic resources in Darfur took a dire turn of genocidal proportion.

3. Background To Darfur Insecurity

Since her earliest history, Darfur had always experienced occasional outbreaks of inter and intra ethnic rivalries and violence over the ownership and control of land, access to water and vegetation for animal grazing. It was then perceived as part of the local culture. The disputes were easily and quickly settled through some traditional mediation processes.

O'Fahey(2004) writes that conflicts were settled with spears or mediation by elders and religious figures. Darfur was not originally part of Sudan. It was a flourishing sultanate established around 1650. It was then famous as a prosperous Trading Centre for such goods as Ostrich feathers, Ivory and black slaves (Daly, 2007). The Sultanate was considered one of the region's most powerful kingdoms, wholly separate in culture and heritage from the rest of Sudan.

However, in 1916, Darfur was annexed by Britain merging it with Sudan,two states with vastly different cultures and political structures (Pruner, 2006) . The cohesion and solidarity that once defined Darfur dissolved into the massive British colony of Sudan. As such, Darfur lost its original structures and distinct identity. Sudan's colonial experience which lasted from 1820 to 1956 must be factored in to properly streamline the Darfur conflict, within the context of climate change.

Pavlish and Ho (2009) recalled Sudan's colonial antecedents….which resulted in deep divisions between the Northern and Southern Sudan. As a result, since gaining Independence from Britain in January 1956, Sudan had experienced two

prolonged Civil wars, from 1955-1972 and 1983-2005 (UNHRC, 2008). The history of Sudan since independence has therefore been a history of war and instability.

Darfur emerged after annexation in 1916 as the 'weeping child' of environmental violence in Sudan. At the earliest stages, under British colonial domination, Darfur was grossly marginalized. Differing administrative patterns emerged between agricultural and pastoralists communities, but the administrative structure created 'owed as much to British innovation a to indigenous custom (Johnson, 2003) Darfur region actually suffered structural atrophy under British colonial administration. After decades of dislocation and forced migration as a result of colonial conquest, 'many of Darfur's tribal unit were unviable alone and dispersed from their original Dars (Land), (Daly 2007). The region of Darfur was totally subdued and disoriented. The attempts at amalgamation and hierarchical re-ordering resulted inevitably in the accession and despotism of "Supra-tribal-Overlord" whose authority was conferred by the colonial power rather than derived from kinship (Peter, 2007) Herein lies the persistence of violence within and between the various ethnic groups that make up the Darfur region in the Post-Colonial Sudan as they struggled for scarce resources. Before colonialism land was equitably shared even with little climate change effects then.

In re-organizing the province as an administrative mosaic of tribal politics" British rule discriminated against the so called 'settler' tribes in terms of entitlement to land and posts in the native administration. Such system fuels ethnic tension between residents in every 'dar' based on discriminatory political land rights. More fundamentally, it separated tribes with a 'dar' (land) from those without.It was this tribes division pertaining to rights of access to productive natural resources that erupted in the Darfur crisis of the mid 1980's (Mamdani, 2009).

The emergent Sudanese power elite who inherited power at the end of colonialism in 1956, failed to redress the marginalization and underdevelopment of Darfur orchestrated by the departed colonial power. Instead the new leadership consisting mainly of Arab extraction of Northern Sudan worsened the situation by introducing ethnicity and religious bigotry into the already bad security condition. Darfur became more neglected, more divided and abandoned to the vagaries of mounting pressures of climate change. In addressing the Darfur security challenge, Sakainga(2009) described it as a complex history of deeply entrenched social inequalities, an environmental crisis and competition over natural resources, conflicting notions of identity, the militarization of rural

societies and above all, a chronic problem of bad governance that has plagued the Sudan since its independence from British colonial rule in 1956.

Darfur was caught in the web of debilitating security challenge of climate change and the hideous activities of the central government of Sudan to divide and rule Darfur through the process of induced intra-ethnic violence. This gave rise to serious economic problems of poverty and heightened sense of insecurity. As farmers, crop farming is the main economic activity of the majority of the population. Cultivation depends heavily on rainfall and land fertility, absence of which renders the population vulnerable to climate change hazards of natural disasters-droughts, desertification and population growth which combined to produce sharp decline in food production and with it wide spread famine (Sikainga, 2009).

4. Climate Change And Insecurity In Dafur

Climate change has a sweeping and preponderant negative influence on the entire social fabric of the Darfur society. From the initial on set in the 1950s, to the 1980s and 90s when it got to its height, the scourge of climate change brought with it an endemic culture of insecurity in Dafur. Every facet of the society was marred by violence and intrigues. The Dafur society broke down into atomistic enclaves always at war with itself. The people viewed the society through the prism of deprivations, and a general sense of impending disaster brought about by the impact of climate change. It is in this wise that insecurity became a way of life in Dafur. The economy, governance, political leadership, ethnic configuration and race were organized in such a way as to promote insecurity within the context of overcoming climate change. It was a contradiction: aspiring to contain and control the problematic effects of climate change through a process of group immolation.

Abella (2010) confirmed that unrest and periodic violence in Darfur is not new. On the contrary, numerous reports identify a timeline of tension and violence in the region dating back to a decade or more. In the same vein the Sudan Country Report (2009) traced violence to the age old economic competition between the nomadic Arabized herdsmen and the sedentary farmers of African tribe over land use and water. Climate change has a wearing away impact on land through desertification, thus increasing the struggle for the remaining space. Food security is equally at risk. This was the point made by Anderson (2004) when he said that desertification and famine intensified competition over grazing area and land, which is why the most common crimes involve livestock and crops.

Libya's Muammar Ghadaffi exploited the 1985 famine in Sudan by bringing guns to the Arab herdsmen in Darfur. This cross border gun running introduced different types of high caliber arms and ammunitions with mercenaries and soldiers of fortune getting involved in the Darfur crises. This raised the tempo of the conflict and with harsh economic realities caused by the effects of climate change and insecurity, Darfur slipped into serious multidimensional conflict. Wall (2004) noted that as law and order collapsed and the Darfurian tribe's men acquired weapons to defend their farms and herds, the central Sudan government in Khartoum failed to act as an honest broker in the numerous local conflicts.

Successive Sudanese governments neglected the Darfur crisis, partly because the government dominated by the mainly Muslim northern Sudanese elements was equally facing a stiff opposition from the Southern part of Sudan over issues of marginalization and exclusion of the South from the government in Khartoum. Rather than seeking amicable solution to the uprising from the South, the Arab dominated government of Sudan reached out to those ethnic groups in Darfur who consider themselves Arabs for assistance in fighting the insecurity from the South. This alliance between the central government in Sudan and the Arab elements in Darfur introduced sharp intra-ethnic divisions and racial antagonism between the black Africans of Darfur(who are mainly sedentary farmers) and the Arabs of Darfur (who are mainly herdsmen or pastoralists.) Sudan employed this divide and rule policy to emasculate the Darfur region and heightened the struggle over resource control.

Starting in the 1980's, drought, famine and the spread of desertification caused increased competition for land, severely upsetting the structures of the Darfuri society. Farmers had claimed every available bit of land to farm or forage for food, closing off traditional routes used by herders. The herders, desperate to feed and water their animals in a dwindling landscape, tried to force the Southern route open. They attacked farmers who tried to block their routes. (Jewish World Watch 2009). The impact of climate change aggravated the climate of insecurity in Darfur with multiple conflicts and war of attrition within and between ethnic groups. The black farmers resented Camel-riding Arabs who trampled their land looking for pasture. Arabs resented those blacks who herded cattle across their grazing land. Fighting began, people and cattle were killed, Villages and nomad tents were burnt. (Jewish Darfur Coalition, 2009). The cycle of violence in Darfur continued unabated.

As already established, conflicts were predominantly clashes between Arab nomadic groups with the farming communities over access to pasture and water for cattle or outright theft of animals. Since the 1980's drought has driven these nomadic tribes to systematically occupy the land in the central part of the Darfur region known as Jebel Marra Massif. At one point, the conflict rose to the level of a civil war, with entire villages destroyed and thousands of lives lost on both sides (Battiste, 2005).

As the impact of climate change engulfed Darfur, the government of Sudan did not seek either palliatives or measures to mitigate or manage the effects. The inability of African countries to evolve coping strategies to manage climate change has been problematic. Stern (2006) had noted with concern that while many sub-Saharan African countries remain the most vulnerable to threats, they have limited capacity to address the climate crisis. Vulnerability represents the degree which a system is susceptible to, or unable to cope with adverse effects of climate change including climate variability and extreme weather events. Also, a lack of capacity available for coping with environmental changes is experienced in lower income communities, a majority of which are found in sub-Saharan Africa. The cycle of poverty heightens the potential negative impact of climate change.

As a result of this structure and institutional incapacity, Sudan abandoned Darfur to stew in its own juice of environmental denudation and degradation. The violence continued to characterize Darfur. In the 1990's hostilities resumed in West Darfur.

Arab Nomads moved their flocks into land predominantly populated by Massalit Farmers (Battiste, 2005). From 2002 and beyond, the Darfur insecurity profile gained international attention due to its escalation to an outright shooting war with the Sudan armed forces. The Darfur group had formed the Sudan Liberation Army (SLA) and the Justice and Equality Movement (JEM). These Darfur based rebel groups attacked a police station in 2002 and burned government garrisons in early 2003 with high causality on the side of the central government of Sudan. This attack opened the flood gate of counter insurgency measures by the government of Sudan against the Darfur communities which culminated in a genocide against defenseless and innocent civilians mainly women and children.

Anderson (2004) noted that the factor of struggle for land and water, racial bigotry and religious consideration constituted the fuel that ignited the fire of violence in Darfur. The struggles came to a climax when in 2003; Sudanese forces launched the first of two major offensives against rebels in Darfur. The cumulative consequence on Darfur was colossal and genocidal. The armed resistance by the Darfur rebels was met with the full might of advanced military hardware by the central government of Sudan. Since the war started, an estimated 1.9 million Darfurians have died, 2.5 million are famine affected and 350,000 crossed the border to neighbouring Countries. This war continues to expose Darfur to widespread instability, forced capture and slavery, destruction of physical and natural environment, disturbance of cultural life and social Cohesiveness, death and displacement. Approximately, 4million people have been forced to flee their homes….(Abusharaf,2006)

Conclusion

The paper took time to outline and properly situate the raging conflict in the Darfur region of Sudan within the context of climate change. It is an issue that has often be neglected or subsumed under the erroneous paradigm of ethno-religious and power politics in Sudan. Although these factors were later grafted to advance some selfish political interest, it never eclipsed the true essence of the insecurity that snowballed from the struggle for ownership, and control of economic resources in the form of land, access to water and grazing fields among other necessities. The lack of coping strategies by Sudan, contributed to worsening the effect of climate change on the people and environment of Darfur.

In an effort to escape from the debilitating impact of climate change, Darfur people engaged in series of violent conflicts, which ultimately disorganized the society and led to other forms of insecurity on the scale of a shooting war between the region of Darfur and the central government in Khartoum.

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