

**STATE FAILURE IN AFRICA: CAUSES, CONSEQUENCES AND PROSPECTS FOR  
BETTER AFRICAN SOCIETY**

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**Abstract**

*The increasing wave state failures since the end of the Cold War have become a disturbing phenomenon. This paper examines the causes and effects of state failure in Africa. It employed analytic method to critically examine the different views on state failure. The work argues that the faulty foundation on which most African states were built on is one of the major reasons why African states are the major victims of failed states in the world. A look at the recent ranking of failed states in the world reveals that African states dominate the first thirty countries in the Fragile State Index (FIS). The paper however suggests that authentic education, real independence and rediscovering of Africa's lost identity will be a necessary alternative to restore Africa's bartered historical journey. The work concludes that the present internal ethnic and religious crisis that have destabilized the peace and development of the African continent since after the independence of most African states, will eventually lead to their final collapse if nothing is done.*

**Introduction**

The threat posed by failed and failing states in Africa has been a thing of concern because its consequences have not escaped other nations. The world is quick becoming a global village so a crisis in one country affects the others. If they are not affected through the influx of refugees, terrorists and miscreants, they will be affected by a change in their economic, political and religious status. The implication of this is that no country is completely safe until every country is safe. The paper argues that the foundation of state failure in Africa begins from the failure of the family values because the family is the base of the society. It also pointed out colonialism as a major factor that destabilized African values and left the African man in a serious identity crisis which is the major cause of Africa's Underdevelopment.

This work is therefore worried about the position of Africa states in the Fragile State Index (FSI) 2017 released by the Fund For Peace (FFP), an independent nonpartisan, nonprofit, research and educational organization. From the index, the worst or the most fragile state in the world judging from 178 countries they used in the research is South Sudan. One may be forced to ask why South Sudan since they recently broke away from Sudan. On 9<sup>th</sup> July, 2011, South Sudan got their independence from Sudan. However, internal conflict have led to the formation of a parallel government with the Sudan People's Liberation Movement the major opposition to the government taking control of some part of the state. Other countries immediately after South Sudan in the rankings are Somalia, Central African Republic, Yemen, Syria, Sudan, Congo D.R, Chad and so no. As a matter of fact the first 30 positions in the rank are occupied by African Countries. Our own dear country Nigeria is at the 15<sup>th</sup> position.

These facts have been compiled by the FFP since 2004 using different social, economic and cohesion indicators. According to the 2017 FFP report, the Fault lines can emerge between identity groups, defined by language, religion, race, ethnicity, nationality, class, caste, clan or area of origin. Tension can deteriorate into conflict through a variety of circumstances, such as competition over resources, predatory or fractured leadership, corruption, or unresolved group grievances<sup>1</sup>. These factors that they pointed out are things that can likely lead to state failure.

Looking at the top of the index the most stable and least fragile country in the world is Finland, followed by Norway, Switzerland, Denmark and Sweden, in that order. This work also tries to find out the things that those countries have in common which African countries don't have. The work then finally concludes by making some suggestions on things that will help to save the already critical situation and fragile nature of African states.

### **What is State Failure?**

The concept of state failure is a nebulous concept because it is always difficult to find out the point you can conclude that a state have failed. While some may argue that a state has failed when it can no longer control any part of its territory. This work views state failure from the point of view of its function which also includes: security, economic development, political control, social development etc. Thus, a state has failed when it is found wanting or can no longer fulfill any of its functions to the citizens.

The understanding of the meaning of a state will go a long way in understanding when it fails. A narrow definition of a state sees it as a political entity that possesses a permanent population, a defined territory a government and a capacity to enter into agreement with other states. However, a broader definition of the state involves the idea of social contract which focuses on the relationship between the state and citizens. When the citizen enters into a contract with the state they give their freedom to the state in exchange of peace and security. So, when the state cannot provide this they have failed in the contract.

According to Helman and Ratner the term failed state is a “disturbing phenomenon” whereby a state was becoming “utterly incapable of sustaining itself as a member of the international community”<sup>2</sup>. They argued that a failed state would endanger its own citizens and threaten their neighbours through the influx of refugees, political instability and random warfare. Zartman develops the idea of state failure along the lines of Hobbesian social contract theory. For him, state failure occurs when the basic functions of the state are no longer performed. It refers to a situation where the structure, authority, law and political order have fallen apart<sup>3</sup>.

According to Rotberg, nation-state failed because they can no longer deliver positive political goods to their people<sup>4</sup>. Their governments lose legitimacy and in the eyes and hearts of a growing plurality of its citizens, the nation-state itself becomes illegitimate. From the definitions of failed state, one will not be wrong to describe Nigeria as a failed state because it has all the indices of a failed state.

### **Causes of Failed States**

When we look at the worst fragile states in the world, we will discover that most of them are African states. The African continent was the worst victim of colonialism and most African

states were products of colonialism. Thus it will not be out of point to argue that the problem of state formation is the major reason of state failure. The foundation must be strong for the building to stand. And for the foundation to be strong there must be unity of purpose. However, African states were weak and there is nothing uniting them because the white man just came and lumped up people from different ethnic and religious background together. This has resulted to antagonism and struggle of domination by these different groups making it difficult for peace and development to thrive.

### **Colonial Legacy: The Nigeria Example**

The colonialists sat in a Berlin Conference in Germany put the map of Africa on a table and shared it among themselves. They arbitrarily created borders with little or no regard for the differences which exists among different ethnic groups.

Wole Soyinka writes that:

One hundred years ago at the Berlin Conference, the colonial powers met to divide the African continent into states, lumping various peoples and tribes together in some places, or slicing them apart in others like some demented tailor who paid no attention to the fabrics, colour or pattern of the cloth he was patching together.<sup>5</sup>

Because of this disjointed and haphazard creation of boundaries, Nigeria and many other African nations, consists of different ethnic groups with different languages and cultures. This made peace and unity which is necessary for solving national problems to be absent. If it is not external conflicts like boundary disputes it will be internal dispute like ethnic religious or cultural crisis. Nigeria for example began independence under a constitution that divided the country into three regions: North, West and East, that were made up of Hausa-Fulani, Yoruba and Igbo as the predominant ethnic groups, respectively. Each region had a different culture and language, and each region was governed as if its region was a separate country.<sup>6</sup> There is a struggle of who will control more power in commerce and industry, this led to ethnic rivalries. The amalgamation of the country by the colonial masters in 1914 was merely for administrative convenience. However, this did not help in uniting the country as it was like a square peg in a round hole.

The survival of states must be based on certain conditions that are intricate in the nature of the state. Just like a house, if it must be solid, it must be built on very strong foundations. Although many materials come together to build a house, they must agree to work together and ensure that the house stands. The cement will not tell the sand or stone “please I don’t need you”.

It is one thing to have a country and it is another thing to sustain it. The recent agitations all over the world by different groups fighting for self determination and self-governance are fueled by the fact that the existing structures do not accommodate their interest. The major function of the state is protection of life and property of its citizens and provision of social goods to make life worth living. In a situation where the state fails in fulfilling these responsibilities either to its entire population, the state is adjudged as a failed state.

In Nigeria, the Biafran agitation, the declaration of Oduduwa republic and the fight for liberation of the Niger Delta in recent times have been propelled by the non-inclusive government

practiced in the Nigeria. The question of revenue sharing formular and power sharing formular has further divided the country along ethnic lines.

The emergence of states has been a common issue in Africa because most African states were arbitrarily created to satisfy the interest of the colonialists. In what some have identified as colonial legacy;

Across much of the continent, state boundaries drawn up by the colonial powers cut across existing tribal, ethnic, and regional allegiance. Many of these new states were landlocked (15 of Africa's 54 countries fall into this category) or faced other geographical barriers to effective economic development.<sup>7</sup>

The issues that arise from this colonial haphazard creation of states are enormous. The first problem is that they lumped up ethnic nationalities together. In Nigeria for instance, there are over 250 ethnic groups with Hausa Fulani, Yoruba, Igbo, and Ijaw the major ones. The possibility of agreeing to a common national goal becomes difficult since most ethnic nationalities will always seek the interest of their ethnic group. Furthermore, after the independence of most African states, some of the states with many ethnic groups like Nigeria started playing ethnic politics. Although political party formation from the pre-independence era tried to be national in outlook with the formation of the National Council of Nigerian Citizens (NCNC), it later changed to a regional party because some saw it as a party principally for the eastern region. This led to the formation of the Action Group party (AG) for the western region and the Northern People's Congress (NPC) for the northern region respectively. This became the bane of national integration and the foundation of state failure because ethnic rivalries will not give way for any sustainable development. Even the new parties formed presently in Nigeria, APC, and PDP which its members cuts across all the ethnic groups are not left out from the infection of this ethnic virus. Simbine observes that "The People's Democratic Party (PDP) the erstwhile governing party formed in 1998 with a membership that cut across all the ethnic groups in the country eventually became bogged down by vicious factional wrangling that often assume ethno-religious and regional dimension"<sup>8</sup>. This is why they now try to introduce zoning within the party to forestall ethnic and religious disputes within the party. But even at that, there are still problems and disagreements as some ethnic groups try to dominate the other. Every election in Nigeria now is always seen from an ethno-religious angle and this continuous fanning of the embers of ethnicity will eventually lead to the collapse of the state. All these were as a result of how the country emerged. Looking at the most stable countries of the world like; Finland, Norway, Denmark, Switzerland, etc, one can discover that there is none of them with the level of ethnic complications as we have in Nigeria. Furthermore, their emergence was not as a result of forceful amalgamation. Thus as one people, they can work together in achieving a common goal.

**Resource Curse:** This might sound strange because most people will argue that the abundance of resources should be a blessing rather than a curse. However, research has shown that in recent times the abundance of natural resources especially, oil has been attributed to poverty, violence, and conflicts. Some countries that have oil or people that have oil in their lands will have preferred if it was not there because of the situation it has placed them. Wars have been fought, lands rendered useless, waters and water bodies polluted because of oil. In some countries where this oil

is extracted from, the people live in a very deplorable condition and their means of livelihood are destroyed.

In a research carried out by Collier and Hoeffler (1998, 2001, 2002, 2004) they discovered that commodity exports increase the possibility of civil war. In their most recent work which covers 161 countries of the world and 78 civil wars between 1960 and 1999, the claims that the state's commodity for export has a major impact on the likelihood that a civil war will begin in the next five years.<sup>9</sup> They suggest that oil abundant less developed countries generate valuable rents and the existence of these rents often leads to violent forms of rent-seeking that take the form of 'greed-based' insurgencies<sup>10</sup>. This will increase the risk of civil war. For them, most of the states with oil as their resources are prone to fighting secessionist wars as the people that have the largest deposit of oil will seek to break away and control the resources themselves. This is the problem we are facing in Nigeria with the militancy in the Niger Delta and the call for a Niger Delta Republic. Collier and Hoeffler argue that natural resources offer rebel groups a funding opportunity because they produce rents that are location-specific and can be looted on a sustained basis. The possibility of looting money from manufacturing firms is less because these firms are more mobile.<sup>11</sup> When rebels are not settled oil companies may be attacked to stop them from mining, the kidnapping of oil workers and full-blown militancy may set in.

The Niger Delta part of Nigeria is a practical example. Their lands are polluted to the extent that cropping or farming on them is needless. Their major occupation and means of livelihood is fishing because they live amongst rivers, however, this dream cannot be achieved because due to oil spillage, their rivers have been polluted. The government has been promising them a cleanup, but up till now, nothing significant has been done. On the other hand, most stable countries in Europe and Asia like Denmark, Finland, Switzerland, Norway, Sweden, China even America have little no oil deposits. And yet they are technologically advanced more than Africans that are sitting on the oil.

Although we can attribute the resource curse as a major cause of state failure, we may not conclusively say that it is in all situations. Some other states that still have oil, gold, diamond, and other natural resources have managed it well to provide important political goods to its citizens and make life better. Saudi Arabia for example has a large deposit of oil and they are stable. Thus, the management of resources should be a major concern, not the resources itself.

**Population:** This might sound strange but you cannot rule out population explosion as one of the factors that contribute to state failure. This is because none of the highly populated countries in the world falls in the top ten of the most sustainable countries in the Fragile State Index. However, Nigeria is far below the table because of multiple internal contradictions caused by ethnic and religious differences. Due to the diverse historical and ideological experiences, in countries like Nigeria with over two hundred million people, there are bound to be clashes of interest resulting from individual differences especially when the differences are irreconcilable.

With the vast population, there will be shortages in resources to sustain the teeming population and this will result in conflicts and clashes which will lead to the failure of the state. With this huge population, the government will struggle to share the social goods and because it may not go round they may be tempted to attend to their own people first. This may be seen as favoritism by the other people who may also revolt. Countries with a very high population like

Nigeria, India, China, etc end up migrating to other countries around the world in search of greener pastures. Nigeria for instance is a country that has its citizens all over the world. Population experts have argued that apart from the indigenous people, Africans, especially Nigerians are the next in terms of population in every country of the world.

**Religion Economy:** Religion has also been linked as one of the causes of Africa's underdevelopment. Simon Oladipo and editor with New African Broadcasting Network T.V the role of religion in the progress and failure of nations cannot be overemphasized. For him, every nation in the world falls under two types of economy: The knowledge economy and the religious economy. The most prosperous nations of the world belong to the knowledge economy while the poorest nations of the world belong to the religion economy. The knowledge economy engages the brain and asks questions and seeks solutions to problems, while the religion economy is the economy that dumps every responsibility to God. Japan for instance is a knowledge economy, it has no natural resources, but it is a prosperous nation six out of ten cars we see are made in Japan, it is also a corrupt-free nation. The same goes with China, it is not a religion economy and yet it is successful and almost every phone we use is made in China. On the other hand, African countries despite been blessed with a lot of natural resources like; oil, diamond, tin, Gold, Nickel, copper, uranium, phosphates, coal, natural gas etc yet are still the poverty capital of the world with endless corruption. It is also one of the most religious continents in the world.

Ironically, two of the greatest religion of the world which is Christianity and Islam emanated from Isreal and Saudi Arabia but surprisingly, none of them falls under religious economy. One of the evidence of their subscription to the knowledge economy is the yearly pilgrimages that generate to them billions in dollars. In fact, the Hajj and the Umrah add \$12 billion to Sandi Arabia's GDP per year which accounts for 20 percent of the country's non-oil GDP and seven percent of total GDP. The Saudi government also plans to increase revenues from pilgrimage to \$150 billion by 2022<sup>12</sup>.

### **Consequences of Failed States**

The consequences of failed state are devastating ranging from loss of control over its territory, to total collapse and break down of law and order. Failed state have very weak control of its territory this is because, when the necessary political goods have not been supplied to the citizenry, violent groups rise up and attempt to take over the government. Under a failed state, physical infrastructures are in decay, economic and social institutions are in comatose, abuse of human rights and corruption is high, the life and property of the citizens are in jeopardy.

Rotberg summarizes the consequences of a failed state thus:

Weak states include a broad continuum of states that are: Inherently weak because of geographical, physical, or fundamental economic constraints; basically strong, but temporarily or situationally weak because of internal antagonism, management flaws, greed, despotism, or external attacks; and a mixture of the two. Weak states typically harbor ethnic, religious linguistic, or other inter-communal tensions, that have not yet or not yet thoroughly, become overtly violent.<sup>13</sup>

For him, in a failed state, urban crime rates tend to be higher and increasing. In weak states, the ability to provide adequate measures of other political goods are diminished or diminishing<sup>14</sup>.

Furthermore, the physical infrastructural networks in failed states are in shambles, this is very glaring in the poor state of schools and hospitals in such state. The GDP per capita and other critical economic indicators are very low in failed states and the level of corruption is embarrassingly high and escalating. In most failed states, there is no rule of law as civil societies, journalists and human rights activists work under very stringent conditions. Weak states are often ruled by dictators either elected or not. Some leaders turn to dictators, after been elected in a democratic election, some of them turn to pursue personal or ethnic agenda rather than a national course. This type of leadership further divides the state and makes the state insecure.

The high level of insecurity in failed states is enormous. This makes the citizens live in fear and anxiety. Robert states that:

Citizens depend on states and central governments to secure their people and free them from fear. Unable to establish an atmosphere of security nationwide, and often struggling to project power and official authority, the faltering state's failure becomes obvious even before, or as, rebel groups and other contenders threaten the residents of central cities and overwhelm demoralized government contingents, as in Liberia and Sierra Leone.<sup>15</sup>

Nigeria is a typical example of a state where insecurity thrives. Armed robbery, kidnapping, banditry, militancy, and worst of all Boko Haram insurgency are the order of the day. The government has done little or nothing to arrest the situation, instead, they are been used to score cheap political points.

In most failed states, regimes prey on their own constituents. Driven by ethnic or other inter-communal hostility or by the governing cities insecurities, they victimize their own citizens or some subject of the whole that is regarded as hostile.<sup>16</sup> This was visible in most African states especially, Zaire under Mobutu Seko, Sierra Leone under Siaka Steven, Liberia under Charles Taylor, Zimbabwe under Robert Mugabe and, Lybia under Muammar Gaddafi.

Failed states are characterized by the presence of violent crimes. As the state authority weakens and fails, and the state becomes criminal in its oppression of its citizens, so lawlessness becomes more apparent. Criminal gangs take over the street of the cities. Arms and drug trafficking become more common, insurgency, terrorism, banditry, kidnapping becomes the order of the day. The police can no longer protect the people and the citizens will resort to self-help. This is the picture that the government of Nigeria is currently painting. That is why different ethnic nationalities that make up the Nigerian state are resorting to regional security outfit to protect their people. The establishment of Amotekun security network in the South West, the Ogbunigwe security services in the south East, and the Shege,-Kafasa (I dare you to attack or surrender) in the north are all evidence to show that the Nigerian state is quick nose-diving into a failed state. The fact remains that the unity and security of the country have never been threatened since after the Nigeria-Biafra war more than now. The country has been drifting into a failed state because its leaders have abandoned a national course to pursue an ethnic agenda.

In a failed state, there is no proper separation of power, and the checks and balances which should exist between the three arms of government in a democracy are lacking. In most countries like Nigeria, the executive hijack the other institutions (the judiciary and legislatures), and they will be used like puppets by the executives. Rotberg paints the picture thus:

Failed states exhibit flawed institutions. That is, only the institution of the executive functions. If legislatures exist at all, they are rubber-stamping machines. Democratic debate is noticeably absent. The judiciary is derivative of the executive rather than being independent, and citizens know that they cannot rely on the court system for significant redress or remedy, especially against the state.<sup>17</sup>

This makes the other arms of government lose their sense of professional responsibility because they exist only to carry out the orders of the executive and oppress the citizens using the police and the army. The right and freedom of the citizens are not respected, thereby giving rise to protests and crises. One of the features of a failed state is that there is no freedom of worship, freedom of speech, freedom of association, freedom to own property, etc.

Failed states are typified by decayed infrastructures. In a failed state, we have bad road networks filled with potholes, dilapidated and ill-equipped hospitals, poor communication networks, epileptic power supply, poorly structured and unequipped schools, etc. There is a high rate of corruption in public and private places and leaders and those in positions of authority siphon funds from the state coffers into their personal accounts. All these make life unbearable for people living within the state and most of them who could not survive the hardship will seek to go out of the country for greener pastures. Rotberg explains that:

When the state has failed or is in the process of failing, the effective education and health systems are privatized (with a resulting hodgepodge of shady schools and questionable medical clinics in the cities), or the public facilities because increasingly decrepit and neglected. Teachers, physicians, nurses, and orderlies are paid late or not at all, and absenteeism increases. Textbooks and medicines have become scarce. X-ray machines break down and are not repaired. Reports to the relevant ministries are ignored. Citizens, especially rural parents, students, and patients, slowly realize that the state has abandoned them to their own devices and to the forces of nature.<sup>18</sup>

When states fail, the unity of purpose is lost, because the whole institution collapses and the state will be prone or open to different attacks both from outside and from within. In cases of a global health emergency or epidemics like AIDS, Lassa fever, and Corona Virus, such states often experience a very high casualty rate because the existing health infrastructure is often overwhelmed. The life expectancy rate in failed states is very low because the situation of the country places the citizens at a very high risk of passing at any time. Poverty and illiteracy rates also fall, corruption flourishes, this manifests itself in "Kickbacks on anything that can be put out to fake tender (medical supplies, textbooks, bridges, roads, and tourism concessions); unnecessarily wasteful construction projects arranged so as to maximize the rents that they generate; licenses for existing and non-existent activities; and persistent and generalized extortion".<sup>19</sup> The gradual decline of real national and per capita income levels of annual GDP



marks the total collapse and failure of a state. This economic crisis lead to inflation, deflation, and food shortages.

Finally, state failure has many indicators, but in other to rank the severity of state failure, Rotberg suggests that there is a hierarchy of positive state functions. These include; 1. Security; 2. Institutions to regulate and adjudicate conflicts, rule of law, secure property rights and contract enforcement;

3. Political participation; and

4. Social service delivery, infrastructure, and regulation of the economy.

From his analysis, strong states scores very high marks, and all these indicators while failing or failed states perform abysmally poor.

### **Prospects against State failure in Africa**

The solution to state failure in Africa is not going to take a straight perspective. There is need to approach it from a foundational angle, this is because if the healing do not start from the root, other efforts will just be like window dressing the major issue.

**Authentic Education:** The failure of states in modern Africa can also be attributed to the type of education that the Africans received from their colonial masters. This type of education is what we refer to as "inauthentic education". Walter Rodney called it "Education for underdevelopment"<sup>20</sup>. Education is very crucial in any society because it is through education that the values and beliefs of the people are transferred from one generation to another. It can either be formal or informal. However, in Africa, informal education is the first and most important part of education because young people start learning from home how to respect their elders, honesty, hard work, etc. Education is what grows out of the environment. The process of learning cannot be separated from what the people do in society. This is what is obtainable in the indigenous pre-colonial education where education was not separated from the productive activities of the individual. This helped in producing children with sound mental, emotional, and physical personalities. Rodney asserts that "Altogether, though mainly informal means, pre-colonial African education matched the realities of pre-colonial African society and produced well-rounded personalities to fit into that society"<sup>21</sup>. There was also formal education in Africa during the pre-colonial era. This form of education then was also connected to the purpose of the society. There were regimented programs taught at different periods and stages of the individual's life. Rodney writes that:

There was, for instance, more formal specialization, because the proportion of formal to informal education increases with technological advance. Apart from hunting and religion, the division of labour made it necessary to create guilds for passing down techniques of ironworking, leather making, cloth manufacturing, pottery moulding, professional trading and so on<sup>22</sup>.

This system is called the apprenticeship system of education. In Igbo land, it is expected that the young student stays under the guidance and tutelage of the master for some period after which he is settled and starts up his own. The type of education that the colonizers introduced to replace traditional African education ignored the African values, beliefs, and environment. Their education

was focused on training Africans to help them in local administration and to staff the private capitalist firms to be junior clerks and messengers owned by Europeans. Rodney insists that "colonial schooling was an education for subordination, exploitation, the creation of mental confusion and the development of underdevelopment"<sup>23</sup>. Their main aim of educating Africans was just for their interest; this can be seen from the poor enrollment of students throughout Africa.

Thus we must go back to our apprenticeship method of education because the colonial education alienates the child from his environment and only trains him to know book instead of skills. In the African condition, the education that is supposed to be a tool to solve the problem of society is the problem itself. Given this, there is an urgent need to change the Euro-based curriculum which the colonialists left us with, from the primary, secondary to the university level. African cultures, values, and history must be thought to students from the elementary stage. Njoku rightfully states that: "every university in Africa must be involved in Africa in a deep and fundamental sense. Like universities everywhere, universities in Africa must represent the focal point of the culture of the society of which they are a part"<sup>24</sup>.

The urgency for this change is because the African child who is a product of the colonial school is a marginal child who belongs to neither Europe nor Africa. Ezeani submits that:

It is baffling that African art, African literature and African history are still strange to many Africans. Ironically, the people seem to be more familiar with the European music, arts, culture and history. Since schools are today the principal agents which transmit culture, it is time that schools in Africa began to spend more time on African culture<sup>25</sup>.

When this change is made and Africans taught in the context of their own culture and values, only then will the African child bridge the gap between school and African society. And that is when he can provide solutions to the problems bedeviling the continent, especially the problem of underdevelopment. Little wonder why, despite billions of dollars that flowed to the poorest part of Africa, yet they are getting poorer and their economy is not getting any better? William Easterly proved in his work *The White Man's Burden* that over 1950-2001 among the poor countries, countries with below-average foreign aid had the same growth rate as countries with below-average foreign aid<sup>26</sup>. This means that poor countries without foreign aid had no problem having positive economic growth. This goes a long way to show that aids do not affect investment and economic growth. When the foreign aids come and disappear, everyone will be wondering, where did the money go? In countries like Nigeria, there have been many cases where stories of Animals like snakes, monkeys, and even rats swallow billions of Naira. These stories are made up to cover the stealing and diversion of the commonwealth into the private purse. Foreign aid usually finds its ways into the pockets of corrupt leaders and their allies. This goes to show that foreign aid is not the solution to the underdevelopment of African countries because it is often mismanaged. Thus, before African countries ask for aids, they must be ready to curb the insatiable greed of their leaders and to use the available resources to transform the lives of their poor citizens.

### **Real Independence**

No meaningful development can take place in any society where freedom and justice are not entrenched. The way and manner that African countries got their independent exposed them to

another level of external manipulation or what many called neo-colonialism. This situation manifested after the physical independence granted to African states. The young "independent" Africa adopted democratic norms for governance, but this did not take care of the immediate problems facing African states then, African states were bedeviled by civil wars, diseases, corruption, and boundary disputes. These were caused by the artificial multi-ethnic states with haphazard and no clearly defined borders created by the white man. This situation was an ideal ground for all sorts of foreign interventions. African leaders thought that these aids and interventions from the white man were to show concern about their plight, but they didn't know that they had ulterior motives to continue their subjugation, exploitation, and domination.

The colonialists left Africa in a precarious state so that they (Africans) will always run back to them asking for help and aids. These aids are like the Trojan horse, which comes with many stringent conditions. These conditions have contributed to the underdevelopment of the continent today. Economically, western influence has been felt all over Africa especially through Aid and Foreign Direct Investment. Caplan quoted in Ezeani states that: "The collective complexity of western governments and banks, multinational corporations and African business and political leaders in this massive fraud is a perfect example of the great conspiracy against the people of the continent"<sup>27</sup>. When they come with their loan and aids like bait, Africans swallowed it hook line, and sinker, without knowing that that they are killing themselves. The external manipulation comes through IMF, World Bank, and international organizations in form of adjustment programs, austerity measures, currency devaluations, and Foreign Direct Investments (FDI). A typical example in Nigeria is the astronomical increase of the exchange of Naira to the dollar in the last thirty years.

Politically, the case is not different, African countries have been manipulated politically. Because even after independence, Europe still has an interest in controlling, thus they planted puppets that are ready to follow their dictates and protect the interest of the colonial masters. It will surprise you to hear that even now, almost all African presidents emerge with the blessings of the colonial master, it is no longer the duty of the people to elect their leaders but that of America, Britain, France, Portugal, Spain, etc. The manipulation and rigging of elections in Africa were enacted by the colonial government. In countries like Nigeria and Kenya, they tried to manipulate elections to ensure that their allies would emerge victoriously. These manipulations have instituted corruption, and authoritarianism in African politics thus development becomes very difficult.

Moreover, the political system that African leaders inherited was structured to benefit the evolving ruling classes with little regard for the needs of the people. The inability of African leaders to dismantle the internal political structures imposed by the European colonial regimes allowed ethnic and regional- based political competition to remain the core of Africa's local and national political competition to remain the core of Africa's local and national political structures<sup>28</sup>. The lack of national identities and political movements ensured the continued intervention of the former political powers in Africa's internal affairs.

### **Africa Must Regain its Lost Identity**

Identity is the particular traits that something is known with. In Igbo, it is called "Ejiri mara ihe". Identity is those qualities that are inherent and it can also be acquired from our immediate environment. It is like a signature that is attached to individuals and people. These traits can be

lost and a new one acquired. In situations where the newly acquired traits conflict with the original one, identity crisis sets in and this has devastating consequences on both the individual and the society.

The crisis of identity amongst Africans was caused by its bizarre historical experiences (slave trade and colonialism). Africans encountered the church and Western education in this process. These two institutions helped in brainwashing and indoctrinating Africans. They devalued African culture and almost obliterated Africa's identity. The identity of the Africans, are those things they are known for which are imbibed in their culture: language, value, religion, social structure, and world views. The sudden transformation which characterized African's newfound identity is enormous.

The impact of western culture on African identity is visible in every facet of African life. For Okere:

This present culture is an amalgam of the total of all its parts: the pre-colonial, ancient past; the experience of the slave trade/ colonization and independence; the present multi-lingual, a multi-ethnic form of political co-existence; the massive urbanization, industrialization, and neo-colonial exploitation; the religious pluralism, exposure to modern education and growing capitalism; the growing mass poverty, consumerism, and corruption; the mass urban unemployment and the deserted villages syndrome<sup>29</sup>.

The truth is that African culture never remained the same after contact with other cultures. Thus, language, belief, system, worldview, which were the main constituents of the African identity were distorted. This brought about the crisis of identity that the Africans suffer today because they are now what Frantz Fanon called "black skin, white mask". Although, they are Africans by the virtue of their birth, heritage, and history, but they wear the mask of the white man. The effect of this is enormous. The crisis of identity leaves someone confused and lifeless. To live, one must know who he or she is. The knowledge of self is a fundamental condition for being alive. One may be breathing but yet he is not alive. This means that to have no identity is to be an object instead of a subject. Ezeani called it *ihe-ndu* (subject) and *ihe-nkiti* (object)<sup>30</sup>. He described *ihe-nkiti* as a thing that can be animate or inanimate. *Ihe-nkiti* does not reflect or ask fundamental questions about why he is alive, reasons for his actions, and the limitation and practices of his actions. But *ihe-ndu* reflects and asks fundamental questions. Having an identity crisis turns the Africans into *ihe-nkiti*, they accept whatever names the white man calls them, speak the white man's language, adopt his religion, and forgets where he comes from and what he is. Ezeani however explains that a person can move from being *ihe-nkiti* to *ihe-ndu* when he wakes up from his slumber and becomes awake. He begins to ask fundamental questions and he removes the cloak of the white man to reveal his true identity. For example concerning European names which many Africans took or were given, those who gained the necessary awareness reacted by shading them off. Such people are; Kwame Nkrumah, Chinua Achebe, Wole Soyinka, Obafemi Awolowo, Mbonu Ojike, and Nnamdi Azikiwe<sup>31</sup>. They discarded their European names because they realized that by bearing these non-contextual and alienating names they were tagged instead of named. For instance names before the coming of the white man are means of identity. People are known for what they answer. In Africa, most names have a lot to say or do about where people come from. This is because people are

named after their ancestors, natural things within the environment, gods that they worship, and situations surrounding their birth. Igbo names like; Chioma, Ada, Igbonekwu, Akachukwu, Ani, etc has deep meaning and connection to the people and their beliefs. However, with the coming of Christianity, names like; James, Michael, Peter, Wendy, William, Henry, etc were used as baptismal names. These names were imported from overseas and have no correspondence to our culture. Africans were made to believe that these names are holy names and names of saints. Ezeani writes that: "we have to answer these names of holy saints so they can intercede for us; they say, but why should Africans not answer their original names and become saints of tomorrow who interceded for others"<sup>32</sup>.

Now people have even started changing their surnames and not allowing their children to answer their surname because some of them believe that the name is the cause of their misfortune. Thus we now see names like; Jane Francis, Hilary John, Mary Kenneth, etc. This is creating an individual who has no identity, who has no root, who is completely an alien. Before now, you can comfortably predict where someone comes from, the tribe, the state, the local government, even the village, because their names take you to their root but today, it is very hard to do that.

Our contention is not that Africa should not copy anything from the Europeans. However, in copying, we should copy it wisely. We must not lose our identity in an attempt to copy the white man. Africa must know how to copy the right things for instance; copying European technology will help us to improve technologically, but changing our names, our skin color, or language can never enhance our standard of living. Imitating their lifestyle by involving in homosexuality and lesbianism which are a moral aberration in Africa is completely unacceptable. Ezeani agrees with this point when he states that: "The point is not that Africans should not learn new things from Europeans or copy Europe or America: the contention is that they should show circumspection in their progress of copying others"<sup>33</sup>.

There are also good things in Africa and African culture which the Europeans can copy, for example, the beautiful African dance, the architectural skills that go into women plaiting, the natural way of beautifying the bride, etc. Africa cannot discover these good sides of them when they have not liberated themselves from ignorance, prejudice, and hatred. They cannot discover this when they don't know who they are: and why they are here. They must discover their identity through reflective education.

## **Conclusion**

The problems associated with state failure such as poverty, drug trafficking, terrorism, and failure of democracies are major global issues, and in order to prevent states from failing, adequate attention must be paid to the process of state emergence and state formation. Fukuyama in his article; *The Imperative of State Building* argues that while we know much about state-building, there is much that we do not know, particularly about transferring strong institutions to developing countries. For him, we can transfer resources, people, and technology, but well-functioning public institutions require habits of mind and they operate in complex ways that resist being moved.<sup>34</sup>

These institutions which are the bedrock of development in every state will have to grow out from the culture and the worldview of the people, for it to be generally acceptable by the people. Institutions cannot be imported and imposed on the people without any regard to their cultural values. Institutions are not like products that you export to any part of the world. It is

something that spurts forth from the people. This is because man is the agent of both development and underdevelopment, thus, his views, beliefs, actions, values must be respected. The work concludes therefore that the failure of African states is due to the fact that the institutions on which most African states are built on are faulty and alien. Development and underdevelopment is a product of man's action and inaction, so anything that influences his thinking, affects his action and this is why colonialism and slave trade is the most devastating thing that happened to Africans.

Protagoras supports this view when he declares that: "Man is the measure of all things of all things that are, they are; and of all things that are not, they are not"<sup>35</sup>. This statement does not just stop at the consideration of objective truth, but also to everything that can be measured and development is one of them. This means that development and underdevelopment is a function of man. Man in this context is the thinking man (Ihe-ndu) who reflects on his condition, why he is here, his roles, and how he can better his situations and find solutions to his challenges. Man here is the subject and the creator who asks important questions in order to act. In what Agbo called *Refl-action*, man does not only think but takes action on his thought. For him, *refl-action* is a commitment to think out a practical solution, to think of what to do, how, and when to do it. *Refl-action* is not to think before acting, neither is it unguided action. It is an admission that thoughts without action or thinking without acting is docility while acting without (simultaneously) thinking is foolhardiness and arbitrariness<sup>36</sup>.

Finally, we must not continue to use the Whiteman as scapegoats to the African predicaments, we must take our destiny in our hands and take proactive steps to change the present African predicament. This will be done through the redefinition and reconstruction of African values. The need for action is what brings about development, there may be different theories of development but there will be no development if they are not put into action. This is why Karl Marx in the 11th of his *Theses On Feuerbach* had written that "the philosophers have only interpreted the world, in various ways; the point, however, is to change it"<sup>37</sup>. There is a need for this change in Africa now. For Agbo, "if there is anywhere this "change" should transit from "made point" to 'carried out action', it is in Africa, where political, religious, economic, scholarly, in fact, cultural processes and institutions have been deliberately created to encourage (and sustain) a culture of docility, indifference, ignorance, surrender and fear.<sup>38</sup> The foundation of Africa's underdevelopment is in the mindset of Africans, which needs to be worked on. This task is for philosophers who have liberated themselves from 'colonial mentality' and regained their identity.

### End Notes

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