Effects of Colonialism on State Fragility in Africa

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*Abstract:-***This research interrogates the uneasy nature of relationship that defines cohesion and social interactions across underlying ethnicities in contemporary Nigeria. Upon review of relevant literature, and posits that while the underlying nations and ethnicities collectively fought colonial domination as a nation, they soon regressed to their pre-eminent ethnic identities. A manifestation of this fragile relationship is depicted in amongst other instances, the 1966 civil war, the Niger Delta Insurgency and the renewed demand for Biafran state as well as the dreaded Boko Haram Insurgency. To address the uneasy relationship between ethnicities in Nigeria, the study posits constitutional amendments in the areas of resource exploration, wealth redistribution, abolishment of centralized fiscal control and revenue allocation as it propagates fiscal autonomy for states and regions.**

Keywords: **Colonialism, State Fragility, Biafra, Africa South of the Sahara**

I. BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY

The literature on colonialism continues to attract considerable attention across the range of social science endeavors; this is thought to be so, owing to the centrifugal role colonialism with recourse to the emergence of nation states in Africa South of the Sahara (ASS). Arguably, colonialism was driven by the material conquest, economic exploitation, political cum cultural domination and European self-aggrandizement. The incidence of colonialism interrupted the indigenous models of civilization and development in ASS, imposing alien conceptions of modernization and institutions of governance on the continent. The inherent implication of institutional imposition is manifested in amongst others fonts, a continent trapped between weak, fragile, failed and in other times collapsed states respectively. Consequently, the hurriedly assembled post-colonial states find it cumbersome to perform central statutory state functions like; provision of public goods and services, security of lives and properties and legitimate monopoly of coercive apparatus.

While the political and economic determinant of imperialist exploits remains conspicuous, the psychological and cultural determinants became more pronounced preceding its demise. Manifesting in amongst other instances, the need to meddle in internal affairs of former colonies, with a view of defining socially accepted norms, values and principles without recourse to pre-existing internal dynamics, thus depicting the psychological and cultural agenda of colonialism long after abruption.

Often misconstrued or narrowly elucidated; colonialism constitutes the foundational basis of the current plethora of instabilities that rocks ASS, ranging from the absence of a functional political system, weak, fragile and failed states to dysfunctional economies. The inability of the resultant states to proficiently carry out their statutory obligations, reinstates the center place of fragility ascribed a better part of the continent. In lieu, the underlying research sets out to interrogate the incidence of colonialism, with a view to accounting for the pernicious effects of state fragility that abounds ASS, with emphasis on contemporary Nigeria. Resulting in the profferation of relatable questions such as the following;

I. Why has Nigeria remained unsuccessful in her numerous attempt at consolidating its capacity as a sovereign state?

II. What are the plausible mediating effects of colonialism on state fragility in Africa South of the Sahara?

Building on a disparate body of existing literature, this research operationalizes the concept of colonialism by interrogating its economic, political, slavery, psychological, social and cultural determinants.

II. OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The broad objective of this study is to interrogate the probable existence of a literary correlation between the incidence of colonialism and state fragility in Africa South of the Sahara. While the specific objectives are stated as follows;

I. To examine the inability of Nigeria to consolidate the level of state capacity.

II. To examine the mechanisms through which colonial imperialism conditioned the outcomes of post-colonial Africa South of the Sahara.

III. CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

By way of complimenting the introductory prologue of the ongoing research, this section is devoted to elucidating the canons and dictums of apropos concepts to the study. They include amongst other sub-concepts colonialism, state and state fragility.

Colonialism

While some ascribe the incidence of colonialism to a certain geographic region others tend to confine it to an era. While in other instances it is used to denote a system characterized by foreign domination and exploitation. Accordingly, Sheriff

(2014, p. 21) conceives colonialism as an expansionist agenda of economic, political and socio-cultural subjugation of any kind. Envisaging a totality of what is sociologically understood as sheer alienation. Neil (1966) on the other hand, laments colonialism as an exclusively preserved to suggest reproach, accentuating the exploitation and impoverishment of helpless persons. For Aja (1988) it occasions foreign political domination and subordination of overseas territories for the purpose of economic exploitation, to the affluence of the metro-poles.

In more vivid term, this research claims colonial imperialism to envisage the domination and control of foreign territories, with a view of establishing un-interrupted access to human and capital resources to the detriment of the colonies. It also contends that while the mechanism through which such access is attained may differ contextually, exploitation and dominations connotes the essence of colonialism universally. In acknowledging the contextual variations evident in colonial tactics, and the near impossible task of interrogating the multifaceted dynamics in a few pages, the study equates economic, political, slavery, psychological and cultural as central to the drive behind colonial imperialist agenda.

The economic and political determinants of colonialism arguably top the imperialist agenda of the colonial masters. The study opines politics which amounts to access to and control of resources the primacy of colonialism. In consonance Sheriff (2014, p. 22) opines,

> In line with the political factor, Europeans developed interest in spreading and expanding their hegemonic probabilities. In doing so they needed they felt the need to expand their territorial domination. While the accompanying economic determinant saw Africa as a source for raw materials as well as a market for their processed products.

In lieu, the defining objective of colonial domination revolved around the economic exploitation of Africa's resources, manipulatively clothed in the idea of enlightenment and civilization. Hence, the colonial masters did not only exploit Africa's resources during colonialism, upon their departure they integrated ASS to a global economy of domination and exploitation. Regrettably, within this economic structure post-colonial Africa remains the source of raw materials and market for processed goods. While the absence of political will and the domineering role of self-seeking political class in ASS in fostering an economic structure cannot be downplayed, the incidence of colonialism set the tune for domination and exploitation. The implications of this structure on building state capacity in the region remains multifaceted, affecting stability and fostering fragility in ASS.

Slavery, a top contender in the colonialism discourse, facilitated for the exploitative and forceful transfer of human capital abroad for the sole purpose of forced labor. It accorded the colonial masters an avenue to labor and exploitation void of wage or compensation. In minimal terms it encompasses the forceful abduction and transfer of persons for the purpose of exploitation. In lieu, Williams (1966) contends slave trade not only brought about immeasurable suffering for its victims, it also facilitated the expansion of European settlement and remains one of the major financiers of the industrial advancements in the Metro-Poles. In his account Rodney (1974) elucidates three possible outcomes of slavery; claiming beyond pauperization and depopulation, slavery derailed the young productive labor-force disrupting political history and the probability of development. Secondly slavery consolidated the interactions between the orients and occident's, centralizing the role of racism in racial segregation, domination and exploitation. Lastly he claims the dividend of slavery to the Europeans supersedes economic reward, reaped more than economic benefits from slavery, it also brought about increased population and alternative sources of wealth and industries.

Hence, the research posits, while slavery as experienced in the colonial era has ceased to acquiescently exist, its inherent negative consequence on the ASS remains enormous in both psychological and physical fonts. The legacies of slavery as obtained in colonialism exceeds socio-economic and political as it has also affected negatively indigenous cultures. Sub-sequentially, the mediating causal effects of slavery on the incidence of racial inequalities and discriminations, which abounds across racially heterogeneous societies, cannot be even in most advanced societies.

Another dimension of colonialism, which has immensely distorted social cohesion in post-colonial state, is culture. Conceived as the totality of socially accepted norms, values and beliefs of a people, culture does not only define group identities it also conditions social cohesion. The complications resulting from a colonially initiated cultural clash has severe implications for former colonial states. The forceful attempts at imposition and transplantation of alien culture on the continent, fosters a paradoxical clash of cultural civilizations, trapping ASS in a constant struggle of cultural reconciliation. From the perspective of the European enlightenment, culture entailed the conscious building of character. Hall (1976, p. 16) claims cultured as not static, nor genetically inheritable, as it cannot exist on its own, but remains the binding glue amongst members of a society. Hofstede (1980) on the other hand defines culture as the communal programming of the mind which extricates member of one group from another.

The inherent cultural impositions that accompanied colonialism altered the definitions and boundaries of socially adhered norms. Promoting the discourse of primitiveness in pre-existing culture, colonialism attempted at fostering a cultural uniformity around liberal democratic ideals. The inability of various nations and ethnicities that make up a typical post-colonial state to harmoniously co-exist remains the drive behind the incessant civil wars and ethno-religious-tribal clashes upon which state fragility derives and thrives.

State

Emergence of states remains the single most important attribute of the modern world. As recognized sovereign political entities, the single most significant properties of a state in the Weberian sense, is the possession of the right to monopolize the use of legitimate force. Kholi (2009) posits that in addition to centralized and coercive control over a territory, a significant determinant of all modern states is a well-established public arena that is both normatively and organizationally distinct from private benefits and pursuits. While for Miguel, Kholi and Yashar (2008) they contend, to provide public goods, states must rise above private interests that abound in any society. In its least, this entails the appropriation of the extractive, coercive and other capacity to the interest of the public. Robert (2004, p. 2) asserts states exist to provide a decentralized method of delivering political (public) goods to persons living within designated parameters (borders).

Regrettably, for a manifold of reasons, the distinction between private and public spheres in post-colonial ASS remains blurry. Contrary to expectations, the states in ASS are highly centralized, sustained by a network of political patrons and clients. The central role of states in the development discourse has brought about classification of state based on their capacity and the extent to which they are able to perform certain statutory roles. The inability of post-colonial states too proficiently provide services, monopolize the use of legitimate force, secure lives and property has led to their labeling fragile, weak or failed states.

The concept of 'state failure' derived in the 1990s, according to Di John (2010, p. 13) depicts the out-right in-capacity of a state to sustain itself as a member of the international community. In the preceding decade, failure became more pronounced. The following decade, failure was the main concept used in the discourse of unstable states. Robert (2004) defines state failure as the endpoint of a course of institutional and functional deterioration which is accompanied with state vulnerability and progresses through phases of weakness, failing and failure before reaching the stage of collapse. However, over the years the concept of fragile states has gotten more attention, owing to its categorization properties. Of the definitions of state fragility, a dominant discourse could be influenced by the Weberian and Machiavellian views of state. The idea of monopoly of legitimate use of force for Weber and the idea of a strong and all-encompassing state to the father of real-politik.

Penultimately, Rotberg (2002) claims fragility may arise for a number of reasons, such as economic power, the security and the level of political representation and responsiveness. Another idea of fragility as conceived by Rothkopf (2012) posits states could be defined as fragile, and that our current ranking is highly affected by the westernized view of what fragility and stability is. While Call (2010, p. 305) emphasizes the twin concepts of effectiveness and legitimacy. Others, such as Carment, Prest and Samy (2010) have argued that the

delivery of security is a capacity that is distinct in nature from the delivery of services such as water, health care and education, considering it is familiarly correlated to the state's ability to protect its authority. Cliffe and Manning (2008) in turn, add public finance functions as an additional, analytically distinct fourth aspect (rather than viewing them as a subset of effective state capacity).

By deriving the concept of state fragility on the extent at which public goods and services are delivered, levels of security and political representation respectively. The research posits state fragility as an active process. This is thought to be so, because levels of states fragility may relatively vary and signs or elements of fragility may not necessarily manifest evidently at all times. To better understand the subject matter of fragile states and the existence of a plausible correlation between colonialism and fragility, the concept colonialism and state theoretically.

IV. THEORIZING THE AFRICAN STATE

By far the most defining political advancement in the history of man remains the emergence of modern bureaucratic state. While there abound a range of theories to that effect, none seems to capture in totality the inherent realities that abounds in the process of state creation. Within the classical strand of political philosophy the domineering account of the emergence of states, are attributed to the likes of Aristotle, John Locke, Thomas Hobbesian, John Jacques Rousseau and the likes. Accordingly, Gauba (2003, p. 131) states Hobbes (1588-1679), John Locke (1632-1704) and Jean Jacques Rousseau (1712-78) are regarded as the main exponents of the social contract theory of origin of State. Some later thinkers such as Immanuel Kant (1724-1804), Herbert Spencer (1820-1903), John Rawls (1921-2002) and Robert Nozick (1938) made use of this theory to elaborate their own systems of thought.

Nonetheless, the theories of the social contract foundation of State have been carped of being ahistorical by not taking consideration the essence of history and chronology of events in human lives in state formation process. The social contract theorist's claims on life in the state of nature are inherently argued to be idealistic, utopic and unrealistic. In the absence of specificity as to the time frame of when man transited from the state of nature and entered into a social contract, further discredits these claims of state origin.

The coercive argument of origin of state, proffers a different account of the origins of state void of social contracts or its properties. Proponents of the coercive theory affirm that the State originated from conquest and coercion. Hence, claiming state it is the consequence of the subjugation of the weak by the strong. As captured by Anifowose (1999, p. 96) who argues in the later part of The 29th Century, some German philosophers argued that force was the most defining attribute of the State. That might made right and that power has its own justification. Hence, it was concerned that physically powerful

peoples were the best and the State as power was superior to other forms of human associations.

In this light, the coercive account disregards the notion of natural rights of citizens and disapproves of any resistance to the acts of political authority. Tilly (1985) in assent rightly argued that war made states and states made war. In another instance he also attributed the weak nature of states in Africa to the absence of warfare. Sharing a similar view Joireman (2004) claims war played a central role within the European account of development of strong and efficient states in Europe.

It is thus deduced that, the essence of extractive and coercive apparatus as the bane of state within this account. While it may suffice for the account of the emergence of state in Europe, it falls short of accounting for ASS and other part of the developing world.

In departure to the European account, the dawn of modern states in ASS took a dissimilar route, with the twin incidence of colonialism and independence playing central roles. According to Belluci (2010, p. 12) the African state was forged by indigenous inhabitant who fought to a greater or lesser degree, achieving domestic legitimacy, preceding models of *pax-americana,* which has victory in the anti-colonial struggle and was economically capable. Contrary to widespread assumption, independence on certain societies was less bloody than in others. Preceding independence nationalist parties in post-colonial Africa assumed the role the near impossible task a nation building. This can be attributed to the inherited alien institutions imposed by colonial administrator. Defined by weak state capacity and the almost non-existent private sector, the new states assumed enormous economic, social and political responsibilities. The far reaching state involvement in all spheres reflected the hastiness adopted to decolonize ASS and overcome colonial-capitalist control of the economy. In concurrence Ake (1996, p. 6) claims post-colonial ruling parties were pursuing not only nation-building and socio-economic development, but first and foremost seeking to consolidate their own power.

Hence, it is of the view of the study that only but a few former colonies had the capacity to address the challenges that accompanied the attainment of statehood. Characterized by hastily assembled institutions, with little familiarity or expertise to run them, most nationalist parties focused more on fighting colonial-capitalism and consolidating power as opposed to nation building. Such policies were evident in Nyerere and Nkrumah's attempt at socialist model of democracy. On the other hand, these new states were structured to promote colonial economic and political interests, without recourse to indigenous development.

In Nigeria for instance, the demise of the colonial administration was accompanied by the awakening of tribal, regional and ethnic sentiments. The internal crisis that emanated from the unilateral decision of the Igbo dominated Eastern Nigeria to declare statehood in Biafra Republic threatened the national unity of Nigeria in the years 1967-70 as it still does. The regression from nationalism to ethno-nationalism can be traced to the unconsented mashing up of various nationalities and arbitrary allocation of state borders. In a bid to niche out theories depicting the origin of state in ASS, factors such as colonialism, national elites, slavery, exploitation and independence comes to mind. Consequently, it is argued that the state in ASS and its subsequent capacity cannot be detached from colonial domination. As Said (1973) put it, even if we must acknowledge the pastness of the past, the present cannot be void of the past.

V. PARAMETERS OF STATE FRAGILITY IN CONTEMPORARY NIGERIA

Conditioned by certain exogenous and endogenous factors, the average post-colonial state in ASS is marred with a host of fallacies and inefficacies. Wunsch (1990, p. 23) describes the essential elements of the colonial state, claiming in philosophical terms, the colonial state was `elitist centrist and absolutist. The dominant discourse in the colonial administration was concentration of authority to establish, revise and interpret rules in a structure entirely removed from local, popular mechanisms of control. Even where this authority was shared, it was done because of operating realities with a local traditional figure. Of other dominant feature of the colonial Crowder (1964) claims the colonial administrators identified certain key figures such as tribal chiefs, whom were integrated into the administration and fostered the administration of persona rule.

For this study, the single most detrimental legacy of colonial domination remains the mashing up of various nationalities, ethnicities to make up contemporary nation states in ASS. The implication of this act abounds in the plethora of incessant ethno-religious and regional turbulence that defines the uneasy relationship between underlying ethnicities and nations. At its extreme, the inability to enthrone national interest above other, led to Rwandan genocide, Civil War in Nigeria and the secession of South Sudan and Eritrea from Sudan and Ethiopia respectively. Trapped between failed and fragile, most states are unable to provide basic amenities or carry out their statutory functions. Thus, the study explores the plausible of ethnicity in fostering the Nigerian Civil War and the Resurging demands for creation of Biafran state in most recent times.

The baneful outcome of the arbitrary amalgamation of contemporary Nigeria in 1914 by colonialist has taken a toll on the probability of national integration and deepened the incidence of ethnic clashes. Beside the unabated role played in informing the socio-economic and political outcome, ethnicity has arguably assumed a more precarious and dangerous dimension. Accordingly Nwachukwu, Austin and Nwosu (2014, p. 160) opine, ethnicity is seemingly experienced in every facet of our national life and has also been liable for a handful of Nigeria's miseries. Instances such as electoral misconducts and the incapacity to consolidate democracy

have their origins to a large extent in ethnicity. While harmful acts carried out in the name of ethnicity is not peculiar to any single region. In Nigeria, ethnic determined decisions have led to thirty months of civil unrest, resulting from the unilateral decision of the Igbo dominated Eastern Nigeria to secede.

Consequently, Abne (1969, p. 4) conceives the term ethnicity to denote a strife between groups in the course of which people emphasize identity and exclusiveness. Nnoli (1978, p. 5) corroborates the argument, claiming the concept implies a conflictual and competitive relations between groups that happen to come in contact. In a modeled sequence of ethnicity, Nwosu et al (2014, p. 161); postulates that when ethnic group interact, ethnocentrism is bound to be exhibited. While it constitutes the early stages of ethnicity, its attributes of limited beliefs, group identity, parochial orientation and group pride emphasizes loyalty and commitments to ones group, which in turn breeds the 'us versus them' paradigm.

Furthermore, the politics of exclusion and marginalization in post independent Nigeria has triggered ethnic consciousness, which has further affected the persistence fragility in the polity. Institutions ranging from political parties, regional social movements and the likes all bared the emblem of ethnicity and regionalism. In his account Nixon (1972) posits the arbitrary Biafran claim to self-actualization which began in May 1966, emanated as a reaction to attacks on people from the Eastern region whom a resident in the Northern part of Nigeria. The attacks which preceded the botched coup of 29th July, 1966 led by Colonel Ojukwu a serving officer of the Nigerian Army (NA), saw officers of Northern origin brutally murder a handful of their colleagues from the South and Eastern parts of Nigeria. While this research does not intent to further delve into the incidence of the coup, the underlying reference simplifies the understanding of a multifaceted ethnic driven unrest. The unfortunate incidence of 1966 arguably exposed the crack in nationalism as obtained in Nigeria, as the country remains a global hub to incessant ethnic, regional and religious clashes.

In this light, Igbokwe (2005) opines over decades preceding the civil war, the major preoccupation of the Easterners remained how to end perceived marginalization and comprehensively re-integrate into the Nigerian society and possibly attain their pre-eminent position as a power block prior to the civil war. In the hay days of military incursions, demands for Biafra remained relatively non-existent, owing to amongst other factors the repressive and authoritarian apparatus deployed by the Nigerian Army. However a return to democracy in 1999 created an avenue for a renewed demand for actualization of a Biafran state. Pertinent queries arise from the discourse include; what are the motivations and basis behind the renewed agitations? What is the propensity of the social base of such agitations? Or are these agitations elitist ploys? And what role for colonialism? The plausible answer to these queries constitutes the central thrust of subsequent analysis.

While the motivations behind the erstwhile agitations for Biafra 1966 have eluded a single causality, the renewed agitations arguably has its foundation in actual/perceived regional marginalization. According to Uwazuruike[1] (2005, 2008) the initial actions of the newly elected democratic government in 1999, fell below his expectations, citing the failure of the president to appoint persons of Igbo[2] origin as figure head of either of the country's security outlet. Duruji (2012, p. 336) claims to Uwazuruike, the movement spearheading the renewed agitation can to being resulting from his convictions, in what he considers an assault on the psyche of the Igbo after the civil war, citing the ethnicity as a determinant of federal appointment to high profiled political office in the country as well as uneven redistribution of wealth. Based on the position of Chief Uwazuruike it will suffice to claim that renewed agitations for Biafra, like numerous other social movements was propelled by regional elites, who then mobilize the masses along ethnic and regional lines.

Consequently, while the study does not intend to dwell in details on the subject matter of Biafran agitations, it remains a reflection of the legacies of colonialism on state fragility in Nigeria. The arbitrary amalgamation united contemporary against a common enemy, which is the colonialist. However, after independence nationalism soon regressed to ethno-nationalism in Nigeria as it is the case in a better of the African continent. While certain internal determinants may have played causal roles in the persistence of state fragility, the colonial way of creating states without nations remains the basis for ethno-regional related civil unrest.

VI. CONCLUSION

By way of summarizing the ongoing discussion, the study claims the devastating incidence of colonialism, to say the least set Africa South of the Sahara on a crash course. The failure to acknowledge differences in values, beliefs and norms across nations and ethnicities during the colonial administration, means that persons with diverse cultural and religious background are compelled into unconsented marriages that birthed nation states in Africa. Secondly, it opines the inherent inadequacies in the institutions set in place by the colonialist and imposed on the continent have further deepened the crisis of institutional capacity in the continent. Penultimately the study argues that the incidence of state fragility remains a gateway of incursion into domestic politics by foreign interests, reinforcing the uneven relationship of dependency and exploitation between Africa and the West. With recourse to the Nigerian experience, it is of the opinion of the study that there abounds the need to revisit the

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[1] Chief Uwazuruike, is a regional political elite with Igbo origin and founder of the Movement for Actualization of the State of Biafra (MASSOB).

[2] Igbo is one of the three major tribes in Nigeria, and they make up to population of the Eastern and Souther part of Nigeria.

recommendations national conference of 2014 held in Abuja Nigeria, with a view to addressing issues bothering around social and harmonious co-existence. It also opines the need for appraising the possibilities of constitutional amendments, especially in the areas of resources control, exploration, wealth redistribution, revenue allocation formula and centralization of power. It thus propagates for fiscal autonomy for states as it frowns at feeding bottle democracy, where the central governments owns the exclusive rights to resource explorations and allocates revenue on monthly basis to also tiers and arms of government.

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