Africa at Fifty: The Paradox of the Post-Colonial State

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ABSTRACT

As the continent celebrates fifty years of post-colonial rule, self-governance and state-building, the relevance of the state diminishes every day. The state is not only colonial in nature but also largely fictional in the minds of citizens. Conceived as alien institutions, plundering the state for parochial interest is seen as a virtue rather than a vice. These internal contradictions of the state in the continent with scanty means for survival lead to despondency and low morale. The army of unemployed youths take advantage of the opportunities cost for rebellion and violence against the state and other anti-social behaviour such as robbery, cultism, and a growing kidnapping enterprise. Hence, for both rulers and the ruled, disorder is more than a 'political instrument' that highlights the criminalization of the state and in ways that allow the formal means of governance to run side by side with the informal. While the paper critiques the paradigm of inherited statecraft against the backdrop of Neo-Liberal and Neo-Weberian perspectives, it suggests that the required change agent is effective nation-building as a precursor to state-building. Within the context of globalization, it is imperative to be attentive to the characteristic of the local population. The assimilation of the continent's bulging youth population, regional integration, the revision of ownership models and perhaps, 'economic sovereignty' hold the key to a stable and prosperous future. Assessing these formal and informal means makes a modest contribution to the literature and in understanding the contradictions of re-branding in a weak state in relation to the value system.

Keywords: Africa; Paradox; Colonial; Post-colonial; Nation-building; State-building, Neo-liberal; Neo-Weberian.

INTRODUCTION

The period 1960 to 2010 marked fifty (50) years since most states in Africa gained political independence from the former colonial powers (Young, 2012). Thus, 1960 is appropriately celebrated as the 'Year of Africa', even though the succession of independence ceremonies across the continent which punctuated that climactic year convey the slightly weary air of faits accomplis (Shipway 2008). The African Union celebrated its fifty years of existence in
May 2013 and its Assembly adopted the theme of the Summit as 'Pan-Africanism and African Renaissance'. The celebration was underpinned by the collective African aspirations namely: protection of their civilization, emancipation of the African people to fend off slave conditions, racism and colonialism among other historical injustices that were meted on the continent by global powers. But the focus of African Union has shifted from its original goal of 1963 when the Union was founded in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia as the Organization of Africa Unity (OAU) and instead it currently focuses on Africa’s development and integration.

However, the celebration of African Unions' fifty years of existence came at a critical moment in world history; for one, in respect of the level of self-awareness in the African psyche vis-à-vis the position in the world from a human development perspective. Different regions of the world have been experiencing human development within varied trajectories. Yet, there are fundamental issues that transcend continents and countries. The human rights as stipulated in the UN charter and the almost ending millennium development goals for instance, have been critical indicators of human development cited as benchmarks for societal transformation. Taking these as the first lot of reflection points, the celebrations should have served as the opportunity to reflect on and take stock of Africa in the past, present and future. The celebrations in Addis Ababa and other African capitals should have provided the much-needed platforms to engage in a continental-wide sincere evaluation of the African condition with a view to finding the pathway for a new generation of leaders to re-direct the continent on the right track that could eventually lead to socio-economic development and political integration. Following the transfer of power, the new corps of leadership envisioned not only a politically stable continent; they also imagined a more cohesive Africa, with prosperous economies driven by the continent’s vast natural and human resources. Almost six decades after independence this optimism of a politically stable, integrated, and economically flourishing Africa has remained elusive for most African countries. African economies remain undiversified with limited capacities for industrialization and economic development. African economies remain tied to western countries at the instance of colonialism, neo-colonialism and in the ‘post-colony’ era cum globalization.

The post-colonial African experience has not had any material positive influence on systemic development in the continent to the extent that the political and economic challenges in Africa are ‘high up on the global agenda’ that is dominated by the continent’s former colonial powers as if to confirm that there was no serious appreciation of the implications of political independence on transformation and economic development by the architects of the decolonization project. Despite being well placed to articulate the Pan-African agenda through their rotational chairmanship of the continental body, majority of African presidents have been busy with self-preservation and less on initiatives that promote regional and continental integration. Such performance at the continental level has reduced the African Union to a talking shop rather than a serious institution that could facilitate the leveraging of the developmental potentials of the continent through its diversity, resources and strategic position in the global order. In the context of such gaps in visionary and inspiring leadership at the heads of state level, the more pertinent questions are to what extent has the African Union guided the continent towards achieving Pan-Africanism and African Renaissance? What has the continent actually been celebrating? Looking at the continent from East to West and South to North, what can be noted as a significant change within the continent over the past 50 years or more?

While in many parts of the world, societies are ever more recognizing the importance of political stability and democracy as the underpinning for societal development, the African
continent is still bogged down by instability in a number of regions. From a political perspective, quite a significant number of African countries claim some form of 'independence' from their former colonial masters. The experiences in specific African country contexts suggest that the reasons for different struggles for independence have not changed. In the post-colonial era, contemporary Africa leadership has not had a mental or ethical re-calibration in terms of how they treat their own citizens, the society and public goods. Elite-capture of the state institutions, ‘stomach philosophy’, patronage, political corruption, nepotism and tribalism in public service and abuse of state power, resources and impunity remain the hallmarks of many governments in Africa. The government is never a government of the people, but belongs to the tribe of the leader. Long term perspective of governance for the sake of the common good, sustainability, regeneration, and innovation are rare concepts to most contemporary African leaders, hence, they tend to be reactionary to situations (both domestic and international) because most of the planning is informed by acts of political convenience and less by the fundamentals of politics and political ideologies (Ong’ayo, 2013). Thus, the dynamics including patrimonial as well as prebendal character of African politics cannot be glossed over. “In part, the silent incorporation of the colonial state legacy into the postcolonial state simply reflected natural inertial forces. The formal language of a state is law, and the legal codes assembled in a row of volumes on the office shelves of its agents were a colonial codification. Even where an alternative codified legal tradition was available, in predominantly Muslim states, a number of years passed before the ascendancy of imperial legal orders outside of personal status issues were challenged. The dossiers shaping the policy knowledge and guiding the actions of government servants were from the colonial files. “The default option for any bureaucrat is to continue the policies in place; a choice naturally pursued in the everyday actions in most instances” (young, 2004).

More than fifty years on, many Africans still dream of basic services such as clean drinking water, schools, medical care, basic infrastructure, decent housing and dignified living. Many communities in Africa continue to live under one dollar a day with the main sources of livelihood endangered by policies of their own governments. Despite the abundance of natural resources, or what has been described as ‘The Paradox of Plenty’ (Karl, 1997), large populations of Africans continue to live in poverty due to mismanagement of national resources and development inputs.

There is no doubt that colonialism was underpinned by a clear agenda whose outcomes were predictable. In attempting to analyze the role of the state in post-colonial Africa, it is relevant to recognize the existence of a number of arguments that tend to question, rationalize, justify or even marginalize the role of the state. For example, there is the inherent anti-statism that is informed by neo-liberal, neo-weberian, managerialist, and communitarian agendas, each of which in their way has influenced approaches to development and poverty alleviation in Africa. Then, there are others which stem from a complex assortment of radical and critical ideas associated with the anti-colonial struggle that challenge the global ascendancy of capitalism, liberal democracy, Western culture and neoliberal welfare theories. Against this backdrop, there is need to interrogate the nuance of the state in Africa whether or not political factors in the continent since independence have positively or negatively impacted on the systemic development of the continent.

The post-colonial state in Africa, as a successor to the colonial state was fundamentally a political construction unlike in Asia and Latin America where the emergence of states were more homogeneous. One of the consequences of this is that the different nationalities see the state as alien. The majority of ‘citizens’ have been unable to bond with the existence and
reality of the state. The institutional framework that has informed the post-colonial state has its foundation in a colonial state whose interests cannot be assumed (but unequivocally so) to be the same as the post-colonial state and yet after more than 50 years of “uhuru” it is obvious that the contemporary African market cannot be defined except with reference to the inherited and specific rights/obligations structure of the colonial state. Should the post-colonial state be an impartial, omnipotent and act merely as a social guardian or should it be a “predator” or a vehicle for primitive accumulation for politically powerful groups including state actors, comprising politicians and bureaucrats? Whether the post-colonial state has acted in the interests of the people it purports to serve and from whom it draws its legitimacy is a question that ought to occupy the minds of all Africans (Mawere, 2009). The argument that ‘the post colonial moment has passed’ (Young, 2004; Mbembe, 2001) is grossly erroneous. To be sure, the ‘cutting edge’ of contemporary African condition or problematic is essentially a function of the colonial experience; in a nutshell, it is the past of the present (Cooper, 2002).

It is quite clear that many African leaders easily retreat into an argument that even after extended terms in office, the lack of development is a consequence of colonialism and often refuse to take any responsibility for their own policy bankruptcy. Arguments are frequently advanced that since the rights/obligations in post-colonial Africa were determined through a colonial political process, and not by any scientific or natural law as many apologists of colonialism may want to believe, all markets in Africa have a fundamentally political origin. Therefore, it is then argued that it is politically naïve to make the neoliberal arguments about the need for a free market in Africa without exposing the ideological position of the person(s) making such arguments regarding the correct boundary for state intervention in a post-colonial state. It is often argued that if so-called free markets that existed in the colonial state were not able to produce socially and inclusive optimal results how can the same ideological framework be expected to address the needs of the poor in the post-colonial state (Mawere, 2009).

The legitimacy of the inherited rights/obligations structure becomes an issue that is frequently used to obscure the exploitation of the state by post-colonial African leaders. The reversal of the rights to land, minerals, and other resources that often have a colonial and political origin becomes the preoccupation of the post-colonial state with little or no regard to the consequences on poverty alleviation and economic progress. While we can claim rights to our land and minerals, do we have any arrangement to meet the obligations inherent in exercising such rights to the benefit of the collective? Is the state the most optimal vehicle for addressing the colonial injury? If so, what has been the experience of post-colonial Africa in redirecting the benefits of economic progress, if any, to the majority? Would Africa have been better served with a minimal or maximal state?

One has to draw on philosophical constructions that Locke (1689) and Hobbes (1651) considered in attempting to understand the proper role and form of the state i.e. “the state of nature”. The state was merely an instrument designed by sovereign citizens to enforce their own basic social contracts and not to oppress them. In short, a state should exist at the request of citizens to put into effect a mutually beneficial truce and its justification should not allow the state to do what citizens in their self interest can do better or sanction the expropriation of private property or permit the violation of human rights. However, many African states believe that they can be referees and players at the same time with no regard to the outcomes. What is evident is that the post-colonial African experience has failed to produce desired and positive outcomes that help to promote and protect the brand. As a result, the bar has been lowered by us collectively to the extent that it becomes complicated for citizens to objectively
decide on who should lead them, what kind of institutional framework to inform the state’s actions, the role of non-state actors, and make choices on the correct boundary for state intervention. The economic outcomes generated by our own leaders mean that Africa has to look beyond the state for salvation. Following the introductory section, are sections dealing with challenging the discourse on post-colonial state in Africa, the state of the nation-state in post-colonial Africa, and the concluding remarks.

CHALLENGING THE DISCOURSE ON POST-COLONIAL STATE IN AFRICA

Generally, the subjects of post-colonial state in Africa and African politics have both influenced (and been influenced by) relevant themes in the studies of comparative politics and indeed, international relations (see, Hyden, 2006; Harbeson and Rothchild, 2009). The study of African postcolonial politics can be properly understood only through an appreciation of the long parade of African history, including colonial and centuries of pre-colonial history (see, Rodney, 1972; Ajayi and Crowder, 1976; Davidson, 1994). As explored by Herbst (2000), the nature and condition of the African state has been, perhaps, the setback of the study of African politics in post-independence times, but it has necessarily taken into account the roles and both colonial and pre-colonial precedents. At the heart of the predicament of the African state has been the reality that as it is generally understood today the state has been a Western implant in Africa. Meeting the requirements of Western stateness has posed deep, even controversial, challenges for African political leaders and their citizens. The narratives on the nature of the colonial state as a genre of Western stateness and their enduring influence on post-colonial politics (Young, 1994, 2012) are germane in this context. The condition and problems of the state in post-independence Africa has been at the forefront of the study of African politics in an era when the economic as well as political failings of ‘new post-colonial states’ throughout the developing world prompted the rescue of the state within the field of political science from its reductionist treatment in both modernization and dependency theories (see Evans, et al., 1985). What then has been the role of the state and its significance in post-colonial Africa, at least, in the minds of Africans? This question is fundamental to the debate over the failure of post-colonial Africa to deliver a sustainable and economically viable alternative to a colonial, nay western model.

Any analysis of the state cannot be done in isolation of the class structure, class relations as well as the configuration of the international system. Postcolonial state can be considered in relation to various classes. The postcolonial state can be viewed as ‘a crucial connecting link between social and economic relations at both domestic and international levels and in the pattern of development’ (Dattagupta, 2001: 159). The post colonial states function within particular class contexts and also under constraints of international capital. A distinction perhaps needs to be made between "nation" and "society"; while the former "may be prearranged, the latter orders itself" (Brown, 1986). A good number of historical accounts remind us that the modern nation-state has a commencement, and in view of that, it is often forgotten, and a finale. But the methodical and structural distinction between the referents of nation-local groups, community, domicile or belonging, and state-governance, machinery of sanctioning laws, disciplinary codes, military, is time and again elided because the force of nationalism is often conflated with the aggression of the state apparatuses, a blunder compounded by ignoring the social classes involved in each sphere.
Ever since the process of decolonization, the institution of state has emerged as a central focus of study among political scientists and political economists. In the 50s and 60s, the postcolonial states derived their plans in the context of Keynesian economics, the Soviet experiment and the emergence of development economics. Diverse interpretations and theories have been offered to analyze the nature and role of the state (Kumar, 2005: 935). The major approaches including Liberal/Neo-Liberal, Weberian/Neo-Weberian and Marxist - interpreted the nature of postcolonial state according to their respective position to the state. The liberal approach considered the state as an instrument of modernization - socio-economic, political and cultural. Modernization theorists in the 50s and 60s treated the postcolonial state as the principal tool in transforming the backward and underdeveloped societies along progressive lines (Migdal, 1988: 12). Recall that the process of modernization in the West was the outcome of Industrial Revolution. In the developing countries, it was the product of decolonization. The prime motive of the overall modernization process was to recover from the underdevelopment created by colonialism. In this direction, the state vis-à-vis market took the initiative to modernize the society, polity, economy and culture. The postcolonial state focused all developmental efforts towards the fulfillment of the objective of modernisation - through an effective process of national reconstruction - reconstruction of their ideologies, culture, administration, economy, social norms and education structure. Social modernisation implies universalisation of values, achievement orientation, motivation and increasing mobility. Economic modernisation involves the transformation of economies from poor agricultural subsistence societies to modern industrial societies. It also strives to make a balance between public and private sectors in the economic development of the country. The state as the chief political institution, actively engaged in the process of institution building - institutions like political parties, legislative bodies, bureaucracy and system of elections based on universal adult franchise. Cultural modernisation aims at a rational outlook, scientific temper, humanism, egalitarianism and freedom. Thus, the interventionist role of the state can be seen not only as an instrument for development but also of modernization (Kumar, 2005: 936).

The liberals also considered the state as a mechanism for nation building. Again, it should be recalled that in Europe nation produced the state and in the postcolonial societies the state supposedly created the nation. The reality of wide social, cultural and economic cleavages and the multiplicity of identities at first deferred the emergence of a nation. Hence, the postcolonial states initiated a rigorous task of building a national identity by assimilating the varied cleavages. However, along with the nation-building process, the postcolonial states also engaged in the course of institution building. Both these processes were instantaneous. Meanwhile, the western paradigm used for these processes created a lot of tension rather than ensure a smooth functioning of the nation and the democratic institutions in the postcolonial societies. Failure to identify the phenomenon of diversities of different identities generated anomie trends in the forms of communalism, ethnic nationalism and regional identity, sessionism, etc. In the institution-building process also the state failed to alter the colonial content of political institutions. This in a manner resulted in its dysfunctioning.

A lot has been written on the subject of the capitalist State in the era of neo-liberalism. Two features of the "neo-liberal State" in particular have been highlighted (Patnaik, 2003). One relates to the alteration in the nature of the State, from being an entity apparently standing above society and intervening in its economic functioning in the interests of society as a whole, even at the expense of the unrestrained interests of finance capital, for instance, the State in the era of Keynesian demand management, to being an entity acting exclusively to advance the interests of finance capital. This change in the character of the capitalist State,
which is sometimes erroneously called the "retreat of the State", is manifest in the shift that occurs from its being a spender, an investor and a producer, to its new role in carrying out "privatization" and "disinvestment", all of which benefit finance capital and undertaking State expenditure deflation which accedes to a recurrent demand of finance capital (Patnaik, 2010).

Though, broadly descriptive, Michael Mann’s well-known neo-Weberian definition of the state is a territorially demarcated, differentiated set of institutions and personnel with a center that exercises authoritative rulemaking backed by the coercive powers of the state (Mann, 1983). Eric Nordlinger sees the state as reflecting the subjective preferences of policy makers who possess at least some significant degree of autonomy but are constrained by the states’ structural characteristics (Nordlinger 1988). State-centered theories of the state contrast with those that are society-centered, which include varieties of pluralism/elitism, Marxist/neo-Marxist explanations, and post-structural approaches. Arguably, the construct governance, insofar as it both describes and prescribes networked, consociational and conjoint relationships as the heart of public administration, has a society-centered logic to it. Timothy Mitchell counters that the state should be addressed as an outcome of detailed processes of spatial organization, temporal arrangement, functional specification, and supervision and surveillance, which create the appearance of a world essentially divided into state and society. The essence of contemporary politics is not policies formed on one side of this division being applied to or shaped by the other, but the producing and reproducing of this line of divergence. (Mitchell, 1991: 95). One likely approach to analysis of the Neo-Weberian State is that individual states are understood as remaining on their distinctive paths of institutional development.

Some neo-Weberian theories of the state are varieties of institutionalism, especially including historical institutionalism. Historical institutionalism may emulate Weber’s emphasis on legitimacy. Leonard Seabrooke argues, for example, that a reinvigorated notion of legitimacy provides us with a substantive neo-Weberian historicist approach that provides a deeper understanding of how both norms and material interests nature the state (Seabrooke, 2002). By legitimacy, a key element of Weber’s own thought, Seabrooke refers to a uniquely democratic component in policy making that counters the inclination of state-centered approaches toward functionalist explanations of the state, which are also labeled neo-Weberian, indeed, what we might call constitutional evolution or the evolution of the legal state (Lynn, Jr., 2008). In the same vein, the neo-Weberian state is a reaffirmation of the state as the main facilitator of solutions to the new problems of globalization, technological change, shifting demographics and environmental threat. It reaffirms the role of representative democracy (central, regional, and local) as the legitimating elements within the state machinery. It is also a reaffirmation of the role of administrational law suitably modernized in preserving the basic principles pertaining to the citizen-state relationship, including equality before the law, legal security, and the availability of specialized legal scrutiny of state actions; as well as the perpetuation of the idea of a public service with a distinctive status, culture, terms and conditions (Pollitt and Bouckaert 2004).

The Radical School or Marxists construe the state as an instrument of class control and an executive team for running the affairs of the bourgeoisie. Their attitude towards the postcolonial state was in harmony with their basic stand on state. For the Marxists, the postcolonial state was the principal instrument for the development of capitalism in the postcolonial era. The most relevant analysis of postcolonial states within the Marxist framework has been presented by the Pakistan scholar, Hamza Alavi. While, Alavi's
arguments are empirically based on Pakistan, it goaded other political scientists to analyse the postcolonial states elsewhere. Alavi argues that in western societies, the nation-state was a creation of indigenous bourgeoisie; in the colonies the process was different. The state in postcolonial societies is not established by an ascendant native bourgeoisie, but rather by a foreign imperialist bourgeoisie (Alavi, 1973: 148). The reason for the inability of the native bourgeoisie to establish such a state was that the colonial state equipped with a powerful bureaucratic-military apparatus and with governmental mechanisms subordinated them. After decolonisation the direct control of the foreign imperialist bourgeoisie over the state ended. However, its influence over the state still continues. According to Alavi, 'the metropolitan bourgeoisie, now joined by other neo-colonial bourgeoisie, is present in the postcolonial society'. Both the metropolitan bourgeoisie and the neo-colonial bourgeoisie represent the class base of the postcolonial state. In his analysis, ‘... the state in the postcolonial society is not the instrument of a single class. It is relatively autonomous and it mediates the competing interests of the three propertied classes - the metropolitan bourgeoisie, the indigenous bourgeoisie and the landed classes - while at the same time acting on behalf of all of them in order to preserve the social order in which their interests are embedded, namely, the institution of private property and the capitalist mode as the dominant mode of production’ (Alavi, 1973; 148).

In the 50s and 60s, the course of development adopted by the postcolonial states in Asia, Africa and Latin America after decolonization aimed towards state capitalism. Theoretically, their state-centered development strategies helped to strengthen capitalism. This is antithetical to the basic tenets of classical liberal economists who gave a minimal role to the state in the development of capitalism. The underlying principle for building state capitalism was to counter the hegemony of metropolitan capital which was dominant during the colonial period. The active role of the state was justified with the argument that the newly emerged indigenous national bourgeoisie was small, weak and suffering under the influence of metropolitan capital. The state acquired the ownership of major means of production, because the national bourgeoisie was not in a position to develop certain sectors of the economy (Berberoglu, 1992: 83). The state was forced to adopt certain socialist measures like planning and strengthening state sector units to promote capitalist development.

On the other side of the argument, the pluralists view modern society as a mixture of competing interests and the state acts as equilibrium in terms of power between different groups (Smith, 1996: 173). Pluralists do not believe in class divisions in society. However, they recognize the importance of groups and associations along occupational, gender, ethnic or religious lines. State is accepted as a dispute settler when conflicts arise between various interests over the allocation of scarce resources in the developing countries. Unlike the Marxist approach, the state acts as a neutral agent in relation to the interests of different groups in society. The postcolonial state mediates the interests of diverse communities and cultural groups in the process of nation-building and modernization. It also attempts to build a consensus mechanism in the developmental process. The Structuralist Development Theory of 1950s and early 60s argued that 'market failure is a pervasive feature of the underdeveloped economy with the corollary that the state has an important role to play in correcting it’ (Onis, 1991: 109). It also down played the central role of market in industrialization.

The postcolonial state has also been treated as a 'neo-patrimonial entity'. In Clapham’s view, though the state is formally based on rational-legal universal principles, it functions, in practice, as a vast medium of patronage and personal aggrandizement of power-holders
(Clapham, 1985: 45). As a matter of fact, the state in the Third World countries continues to be a neo-patrimonial entity because it has enough control over the resources. Since the state controls resources, power holders always develop a network of patronage for their material motives. As the state is the principal mobilizer of resources and the provider of goods and services to the people, political leaders are mobilizing the people towards their party. The developmental policies initiated by the government help the local leadership of the party to make a link between the government, party and the people.

On the contrary, Midgal argues that the postcolonial states are faced with an inherent dilemma. They succeeded in penetrating society, but proved ineffective in bringing about goal-oriented change. In his view the colonial values still continues to be the base of the postcolonial states and its social control are inherited from the colonial period. In the uneven process of modernisation, only the ruling elite internalized the modernist values and norms of the colonial legacy. The process of modernisation could bring new value systems, believes, norms and attitudes only to the elite. Larger society, on the other hand, upholds a diverse set of beliefs and recollections (Midgal, 1988: 28). Midgal's arguments have value in more ways than one. For the reason that the modern society arrived in the emergent new states not as a result of self-development (as in the case of the west) but through exogenous agencies like colonialism (Dattagupta, 200 1:31), the superimposed modernization left a large part of society still steeped in traditional values. The irregular modernity generated social variance which was manifested in the forms of ethnic, tribal, caste, regional and religious conflicts in the postcolonial society. It even negatively affected the functioning of democratic political institutions in the African continent.

Lately, the link between the postcolonial state and civil society and the masses has not been a pleasant affair. In most of the third world countries, the state overrules civil society and masses. State tyranny explicatied in the forms of recurrent use of military in suppressing the assertion of people, formulation of draconian laws, violation of human rights, to list a few. According to Chandhoke some of the main reasons for the emerging clash of state and civil society in the postcolonial world include: the 'weakness and the incapacity of the state in carrying out either social engineering or even management of crises', the militarization of politics, the retreat of the state in the economic arena and the manifest shift in the concept of development (Chandhoke, 1994: 200-201). The rising social dissatisfaction due to the neoliberal policies implemented in the postcolonial states at the instance of IMF and World Bank as well as lack of popular participation in development (estrangement of indigenous people in developmental process) continue to generate social tensions in the postcolonial societies. Moreover, the state as a law and order structure as well as social institution impinging thus on the autonomy of society to free itself of its mal development (Phadnis and Ganguly, 1989: 95). The failure of the state in resource allocation has led to the contention of civil society against the state. This is evident in the variety of new social movements. Such movements including insurgent cum terrorist groups, militias, cults, among others, are challenging the authority of the state and demanding more 'inclusiveness' in political, economic and social spheres. The disillusionment of masses and the assertion of civil society can be addressed by redirecting state priorities vis-à-vis the anxiety of the people at large.

THE STATE OF THE NATION-STATE IN POST-COLONIAL AFRICA: DISCONNECTS AND CONSEQUENCES

San Juan, Jr. argues that it has become obvious for postmodernist thinkers to denounce the nation and its corollary terms, "nationalism" and "nation-state," as the typical evils of recent
industrial society. The nation-state, its reality, if not its idea, has become a kind of malignant paradox if not a threatening enigma. It is often associated with violence and the terror of "ethnic cleansing." Yet, the United Nations and the interstate system still function as ostensibly viable institutions of daily life (Juan, Jr., 2002). Anthony Giddens defines nationalism as "the cultural sensibility of sovereignty" that unleashes administrative power within a plainly demarcated territory, "the bounded nation-state" (1985, 219). Even if it is purportedly becoming outdated under the pressure of globalization (Sassen, 1998), the nation-state is considered by "legal modernists" (Berman, 1995) as the prime source of cruelty against citizens and entire peoples.

Postmodernist critiques of the nation situate the debate in its ideological character. This above all concerns the nation as the starting place of identity for individuals via citizenship or national belonging, converting kinship into political membership. Identity implies classification by contradiction, inclusion based on exclusion underwritten by a positivist idea of representation (Balibar and Wallerstein 1991); though, Juan, Jr., et al. further argue that the nation is a creation of the modern capitalist state, hence, a historical ploy or contraption (Juan,Jr., 2002). In any case, "what makes the ‘nation’ integral to the nation-state...is not the existence of sentiments of nationalism but the unification of an administrative apparatus over precisely defined territorial boundaries in a complex of other nation-states" (Giddens,1987: 172). That is why the ascendancy of nation-states coincided with wars and the organization of the military bureaucratic machine. In this version, the state refers to the political institution with centralized authority and monopoly of coercive agencies coeval with the rise of global capitalism, while nationalism denotes the sundry configuration of peoples based on the commonality of symbols, beliefs, traditions, to list a few. Charles Taylor underscores the modernity of nationalism in opposition to those who condemn it as atavistic tribalism or a regression to primordial barbarism (Taylor, 1999). It may be helpful to recall the metaphysics of the origin of the nation elaborated in Ernest Renan's 1882 lecture, "What is a nation?" This may be considered one of the original loci of nationalism conceived as a primitivist rebellion against the centralized authority of modernizing industrial states. While Renan emphasized a community founded on acts of sacrifice and their memorialization, this focus does not abolish the fact that the rise of the merchant class marked the start of the entrenchment of national boundaries first drawn in the age of monarchical absolutism.

Historians have narrated the crafting of state power for the capitalist nations in Enlightenment philosophy. Previously, Jean Bodin and Hugo Grotius theorized the sovereignty of the nation as the spin of centralized authority and coercive power (Bowle 1947). The French Revolution posited the "people," the universal rights of man, as the basis of legitimacy for the state; the people as nation, a historical act of constituting the polity, increasingly acquires libidinal asset adequate to encourage movements of anti-colonial liberation across national boundaries. At this instant, this common principle of people's rights is generally considered to be the source of state power for the new nation, "the empowerment, through this bureaucracy, of the interests of the state conceived as an abstraction rather than as a personal fiefdom" (Ashcroft et al 1998, 153). It could be argued that a grave inaccuracy occurs when the nation and its legitimating standard of popular sovereignty becomes confused with the state bureaucracy construed either as an organ transcending the significance of any single class, or as the "executive committee" of the capitalists or neo-Liberals. A mechanical, not dialectical, process underlies this malfunction to unite the ideology, politics, and economics of the capitalist disorder (Juan, Jr., 2002).
In the trendy dialogue of postmodernists, nation and nationalism are made complicit with the demeanor of Western colonialism and imperialism. They become anathema to deconstructionists unreceptive to any revolutionary project in the "third world" enthused by emancipatory goals. Given his historicizing scheme, Fanon refuses any demarcation of culture from politics and economics. Liberation is constantly tied to the question of property relations, the social separation of labor, and the course of societal reproduction— all these trans-valued by the imperative of the radical transformation of colonial relations. National liberation and social justice by means of class struggle are mutually dependent. As Leopoldo Marmora observes, "While classes, in order to become predominant, have to constitute themselves as national classes, the nation arises from class struggle" (1984, 113). The popular-democratic aspiration for self-determination contains both national and social dimensions. Fanon understands that national liberation challenges the global conditions guaranteeing valorization and realization of capital, conditions in which the internationalization and nationalization of the circuits of capital are imposed by hegemonic nation-states (Juan, Jr., 2002).

The discourse on African political history in a broad-spectrum is clearly very problematic and applying theories of political science to them is a challenge because to all intents and purposes, such theories were fashioned for Western states, for norms and trends which hardly apply in Africa. Regardless of the intrinsic differences between African nations, their politics had many common factors in the prelude to independence. The most evident of these factors is that they were at the time mostly all ex-colonial, and hence searching for new identities as nation-states. While colonial rule had made up only a ‘moment’ of their history, it had alleviated much knowledge of the pre-colonial period. These states had their own peculiarities, were by and large really poor, and had to mend together a diversity of peoples from unusual backgrounds, negotiating tribalism and difference in order to construct a rational state. However, we need to guard against confusing historical periods and categories. Imagining the nation unified on the basis of secular citizenship and self-representation, as Benedict Anderson (1991) has shown, was only possible when print capitalism arose in juxtaposition with the expansive state.

Although the tug of liberal democracy and market economy is strong, as a referential symbol of ‘normality’ and as a global status of respectability given the huge problem of stateness that afflicts the continent, there is no longer a conviction that these correspond to the ultimate destinations. Rather, the interface between the pressures of globalization, the contradictory processes of state-rebuilding, and activated social forces may well be producing some new equilibrium — one that is influenced by norms of constitutionalism and capitalism but falls far short of the theorized end-point (Beissinger and Young, 2002: 466-7). Structural changes or the divergent forms which most states in the continent have taken notwithstanding, post-colonial Africa has not been able to completely move beyond the colonial malaise due to the legacies of that era, especially considering the format which the transfer of power took coupled with the continuing global hypocrisy. Indeed, contrary to Young’s assertion, Abdi and Ahmed Samatar underscored this colonial paradox when they opined that:

“Critical thinkers have certainly written off the African state in its post-colonial form…However,….their analytical animus is focused on the capacity of the state in history rather than the state per se. In other words, African development has stalled because the state is of the wrong kind and, therefore, a re-thinking of its form seems to be of utmost necessity” (Samatar and Samatar, 2002:49)
In the 1960s, one of the most obvious trends in Africa was a shift away from political pluralism and towards the one-party state. Nonetheless, it’s fairly clear that there were enormous differences in the variants of one-party rule which came about, and it is also a fact that military coups intervened to avert this phenomenon in several cases. Often, the lack of prior party politics produced a cult of personality around a leader who often consolidated power in to his hands alone. To a large extent, much of post-colonial Africa proclaimed some alliance to socialism, even if the tradition in which this was practiced across the continent was very different. Few African socialists claimed any affinity to Marxism, but by the mid-1960s, much of the continent was practicing some measure of economic socialism, through state-controlled industry. Up to the mid-1970s, African post-colonial states appeared to have the benefit of a robust hegemony over their populations. Rulers seemed bent upon and close to realizing what Jean Copans (1980, 248), writing about Senegal, termed an ‘integral state’. This unencumbered dominance over civil society by comprehensive instruments of social control through single party and administrative encadrement, a pervasive security apparatus, and a total monopoly on print and other media gave the would-be integral state the appearance of unchallenged strength (Schatzberg, 1988; Young, 1997).

History has witnessed a multitude of efforts to “nation building”, that is, policies enacted by rulers to build homogeneity amongst their populations. Tilly (1975) observes that “almost all European governments took steps which homogenized their populations: the adoption of state religion, expulsion of minorities, institution of a national language, eventually the organization of mass public instruction” Hobsbawn (1990) observes that “states would use the increasingly powerful machinery for communicating with their inhabitants, above all primary schools, to spread the image and heritage of the `nation”, while Anderson (1983) notes that “the official or culture-language of rulers and elites usually came to be the official language of modern states via public education and other administrative mechanisms”. In contrast, European elites did not enact such policies in their colonies (Christopher, 1988; Michalopoulos and Papaioannou, 2012); yet once these colonies gained independence in the 1950’s and afterward, many introduced policies to create a national language and national identity, similar to the policies of 19th Century Europe (Alesina, et al., 2013). But these were never followed up in order to achieve their objectives.

Lately, ‘state building’ and ‘nation building’ have sometimes been used interchangeably; however, state building generally refers to the construction of infrastructure for a functioning state, while nation building- the construction of a national identity, also for a functioning state. So, why did 19th Century elites see homogenization as imperative? Why not in their colonies? “Nation building” as a process which leads to the formation of countries in which the citizens feel a sufficient amount of commonality of interests, goals and preferences so that they do not wish to separate from each other has become an urgent political socialization project across the constituents states of Africa. Since independence, post-colonial Africa has been engaged in “state-building”, rather than “nation-building”, and so, political socialization has been in reverse order.

The debates on ‘state’, ‘nation’, and ‘nation-state’, cum nation/state building projects are often described within a liberal normative framework as covering the areas of development, humanitarian assistance, governance and the rule of law in order to transform societies into mirror images of western societies with institutions based on a market economy and democracy (Newman, 2009: 26-53).
CONCLUDING REMARKS

The challenges of colonial and post-colonial Africa are quite similar, though, in different variants and degrees and the issues are as complex as they are paradoxical. Postcolonial politics in Africa have been, and continue to be, still very much works in progress. Current approaches for building successful, viable, stable states have changed noticeably over continent’s first half-century of independence via dependence on various hypothesized keys to transcending basic and endemic manifestations of political and economic underdevelopment. The majority of African citizens through their liberation movements sacrificed a lot to bring about what they expected to be a democratic dispensation only to find themselves in an ideological confusion of such proportions as to negate the moral and political justification of the liberation struggle. The struggle against the colonial state was motivated by a collective desire to assert the rights of citizens to determine their own destiny without being manipulated by the few. These generally dissolved amid political disarray with their objectives largely unrealized.

However, from the 1970s onward, post-independence African countries’ rendezvous in world affairs coincided ever more with dominant external influence upon the objectives and nature of African politics. This tendency has persisted in diverse and shifting forms into the 21st century. The swiftly and overwhelmingly changing contours of late-20th and early-21st-century global politics and the international economy have intertwined, at least until recently, with major weakness and political rot in African politics as well as widespread economic underdevelopment. These circumstances have spawned sharply divergent formulations of what has been required to rise above them. The influencing vectors shaping these formulations have been numerous, varied, and contrasting. They have included: enduring legacies of colonial rule along with emergent international regimes enshrining democracy and human rights; competing orthodoxies in the academy and in policy arenas concerning the character of the state and its appropriate roles in development processes; as well as African cultural norms, as they have endured and been reformulated in colonial and post-independence times, juxtaposed to increasingly pervasive liberalizing and secular mores of the West, notably with respect to gender and religion (Harbeson, 2012).

As a corollary to the foregoing, there has been a number of other unpredictable yet, profoundly influencing world changing events such as the changing roles of the Bretton Woods institutions; the aftermath of the Cold War as well as revolutionary information technologies; ascendant BRICS - Brazil, Russia, India, China, and South Africa including other emergent economies; increasingly salient environmental imperatives and lingering consequences of the events of 11 September 2001; all of which continue to impact on post-colonial Africa.

The impact of these upon post-colonial Africa cannot be underestimated. Africa’s socio-economic problems in the post-colonial era are profoundly related to the policies of European colonial rulers. For instance, the practice of Indirect Rule, Mono-cropping, to list just two and the hazards they brought were of a common complaint; as were the lack of adequate infrastructure to support the new states. African nation-states, when they became independent, were left in rather precarious condition. While not of the illusion that Africa would have been in a better circumstance if it had not been colonized, it probably would have been in a more African situation, and would have found its own path towards modernity.
There is, in any case, some arrogance about the position of the West, and China is currently proving us all wrong by going its own way:

Can we in all right declare that the motives of Africa’s political actors in the post-colonial era have been informed by the maximization of collective or material self interests? Does Africa’s post-colonial experience serve to denounce the role of politics as a legitimate way to correct the colonially determined market outcomes according to the collective will? Many of the post-colonial African leaders have not been reticent to bring politics into economics using a technocratic view of the responsibility of the state. Arguments have been advanced that seem to suggest that only enlightened and educated people should govern Africa notwithstanding the absence of any empirical evidence confirming the proposition that poverty can be materially alleviated through state intervention. There is a need, therefore, to expose the fundamental problems with the technocratic view of the role of the state that has prevailed in post-colonial Africa that attempts to crowd out the role of good governance and raison d’être in the transformation process.

After more than five decades of political independence, Africans need to re-examine the relationship between political socialization and political culture in crystallizing the process of nation building in the continent. Nationalism encouraged national consciousness and unity that made it possible for the nationalist leaders to emancipate the African peoples from the shackles of colonialism. Thus, their failure to sustain nationalism on attainment of political independence after the transfer of power, accounted for the inability of the nationalist leaders to mobilize the citizenry through political socialization to evolve right political culture supportive of the political system. This phenomenon created the problem of nation building. The implication was the failure of Africans regardless of their individual ethnic, class, religion or linguistic differences to come to identify with the symbols and institutions of the state and share a common sense of destiny. The paper argued that the legacies of colonialism and the subsequent challenges of the post colonial era are cross-pollinating.
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