The failure and collapse of the African state: on the example of Nigeria

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Introduction

Africa was forced into modern state making through the processes of imperialism and colonialism, processes that marginally integrated African states into the international political economy, primarily in the interest of the colonising states as victuallers of raw materials for industrial production and markets for the same. Successful decolonisation implied the transfer of political power to a political elite that was born and bred in colonial practices, structures, ethos and, invariably, interests. Thus, the protection of their class interests, which implied the maintenance of colonial ethos and interests, precluded any impetus towards altering the marginal position of African states in the international politico-economic system. This had debilitating consequences for economic development and state institutional capacity and stability as this elite exploited state power to compensate for the lack of a material resource base, which in turn resulted from the commanding structures of their economies being controlled by firms from the colonising and other foreign states. The pursuit of economic development was therefore basically sidelined. Instead of contributing to economic development, development assistance policy was used to maintain this elite in power; and Cold War superpower politics made the issue of supporting African rulers, irrespective of their governance qualities, even more pressing for the superpowers. African governments for their part maintained their relationship with the departing colonial masters based on a complementarity of interests by granting expensive contracts to foreign firms, increasing investment opportunities for those firms and enriching themselves through deals with the firms. Foreign aid, foreign trade and foreign investment therefore contributed to the maintenance of African rulers in power.

Using state power for wealth accumulation led to a 'sit-tight' mentality[1], made politics a violent zero-sum game and sowed seeds of discord amongst the component parts of the states by politicising ethnicity and religion. Political violence led to military dictatorships and even civil wars and the superpowers and former colonial masters remained undaunted in their support for whoever came to power irrespective of the means. The end of the Cold War and its concomitants of demands for economic and political reforms on African rulers not only laid bare the ephemeral nature of the state but also precipitated a process of failure and collapse in most African states. Thus, the historical trajectory of the modern African state accounts to a large extent for its perennial weakness and proclivity to failure and collapse. What is a state and what do we mean by its failure or collapse? How do we explain the neglect of economic development in Africa by African rulers which is invariably connected to state weakness and collapse? Are there differences between the African statemaking process and those of more

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[1] A 'sit-tight' mentality refers to a situation whereby rulers refuse to leave power irrespective of their regimes' attenuated legitimacy by rigging elections, imprisoning and even killing opponents and critics, and making false promises. Military rulers indefinitely postpone the promised dates of handing over power to democratically elected leaders with trumped-up reasons, thereby making violent counter-coups and even civil wars the only possible means of removing them from power.

established states, say in the northern hemisphere? And if so, could these differences be said to account for the dismal situation of the African state?

2. Defining a State, its failure and collapse

A conception of state failure or collapse has to commence with an understanding of what a state is, because 'a failed or collapsed state is characterised by what it is not'[2]. Max Weber defines a state as 'a human community that successfully claims for itself the monopoly of the legitimate use of physical force within a given territory with determined boundaries – the notion of territory being one of its characteristic features'[3]. Leaning on Max Weber, Joel Migdal defined the state ideally as 'an organization, composed of numerous agencies led and coordinated by the state's leadership (executive authority) that has the ability or authority to make and implement the binding rules for all the people as well as the parameters of rule making for other social organizations in a given territory, using force if necessary to have its way'[4]. Critical to this idea is the monopoly over instruments of violence and coercion by the state within a given territory and the acceptance of this monopoly by the society. Equally critical is the claim of the modern state to the capability of administering these assignments in three classical areas of normative order: norm setting by means of legislation, sanctioning in cases of deviation from the norm and the execution of sanctions. Weber further makes the point that the distinguishing feature of the modern state from its predecessor is its impersonality: the detachment of the office from the occupant and a rational-legal basis of exercising authority. The logic of this development (from personalised to impersonal state), which was equally dealt with by Weber, has been somewhat lost in the current piecemeal treatment of the aetiology of state collapse.

The concepts of state failure and state collapse have been victims of conceptual ambiguity of our times as these terms were used interchangeably[5]. Initial attempts at conceptual clarity via distinction between the two concepts were undertaken by Tetzlaff[6] and Rotberg[7]. Tetzlaff conceives of state failure as a long-term and multidimensional process whereby state collapse is the distinctive endpoint of this process. He identified two dimensions to state failure: the loss of legitimacy – the gradual attenuation of the authority of the state due to refusal of dissatisfied citizens to obey the state on the grounds of their perception that the state is incapable or repressive or both; and loss of efficiency – the increasing malfunctioning of the institutions of the state (which may be due to lack of resources or debt burden) which makes the government irrelevant to the citizens.

Rotberg's observation is similar to that of Tetzlaff and sees state collapse as the endpoint of a process of institutional and functional decay which commences with state vulnerability and progresses through stages of weakness, failing and failure before reaching the stage of col-lapse. This progression is not automatic as it could be terminated at any stage through political engineering (good governance)[8]. Rotberg's point of departure is that modern states exist to provide a decentralised method of delivering political goods to the inhabitants of their territo-

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[2] Clapham, Christopher, 'Failed States and Non-States in the Modern International Order', a paper presented at the Conference on Failed States, University of Florence, Italy, April 2000.

[3] Draghici, Simone, 'Max Weber: The Profession of Politics', Plutarch Press, Washington DC, 1989

[4] Migdal, Joe, 'Strong Societies and Weak States', Princeton University Press, 1988.

[5] The concept of state failure was introduced by Helmen and Ratner (1993) while the concept of collapse was introduced by Zart-man: Zartman, William I. (ed.), 'Collapsed States: The Disintegration and Restoration of Legitimate Authority' , Lynne Rienner Pub-lishers, Boulder, Colorado and London, 1995. Several ensuing publications used the terminologies interchangeably.

[6] Tetzlaff, Rainer, 'Afrika zwischen Zivilisierung und Zerfall des Staates: zu den gewaltsamen Umbrüchen nach dem Ende des Kalten Krieges, in Institut für Afrika-Kunde' (Hg.): Afrika-Jahrbuch 1999. Opladen: Leske und Budrich, pp. 34-47, 1999.

[7] Rotberg, Robert, 'The Failure and Collapse of Nation-States: Breakdown, Prevention, and Repair', Rotberg, Robert (ed.), 'When States Fail: Causes and Consequences', Princeton University Press, Princeton and Oxford, 2004.

[8] The conception of good governance referred to here is mine and not the orthodox World Bank's.

ries. 'But it is according to their performances – according to levels of their effective delivery of the most crucial political goods – that strong states may be distinguished from weak ones, and weak states from failed or collapsed ones.' He constructed a hierarchy of political goods with security, especially human security at the apex, proceeded by provision of law and order, free and open political participation, medical care, educational facilities, physical and social infra-structures etc. in that order. Strong states generally perform well (albeit with variations) across this spectrum but weak states do not. 'The more poorly weak states perform, criterion by crite-rion, the weaker they become and the more that weakness tends to edge toward failure, hence the subcategory of weakness that is termed 'failing' (ibid. 5). Failing states become failed states if this deterioration is not arrested. Failed states are, for him, typified by violence, 'but it is not the absolute intensity that identifies a failed state. Rather, it is the enduring character of that violence' (ibid. 6); as a result of its persistent emasculation of the state. Thus, 'a failed state is a polity that is no longer able or willing to perform the fundamental tasks of a nation-state in the modern world' (ibid. 7). Failed states are further typified by deteriorating and destroyed infra-structures, flourishing corruption, low Gross Domestic Product, indebtedness to international financial institutions (IFIs), disrespect for the local currency, loss of legitimacy etc. Again, this state of affairs could gravitate to collapse, a very rare situation that is typified by quasi-disap-pearance of the state, if not checked. For him, 'a collapsed state is a rare and extreme version of a failed state. Political goods are obtained through private or ad hoc means. A collapsed state exhibits a vacuum of authority. It is a mere geographical expression; a black hole into which a failed polity is fallen' (ibid. 10).

Similarly, Zartman considers state collapse from the perspective of the inability to fulfil the functions of a state which he summarises as the sovereign authority, decision-making institution, and security guarantor for a populated territory (ibid. 5). Although he did not present a stage-by-stage deterioration of state capacity, he came to a similar conception to Rotberg's in which state collapse is 'a situation whereby the structure, authority (legitimate power), laws and political order have fallen apart and must be reconstructed in some form, new or old' (ibid.7). Having done justice to conceptual clarity, it remains necessary to attempt an explanation of the pervasiveness of these phenomena in the African continent.

3. Bad Governance and State Failure/Collapse in Africa

The bottom line of most theoretical explanations of state collapse in Africa is bad governance and thenceforth, the promotion of good governance and democracy has become a critical pillar of development policy, albeit currently unsuccessful in Africa. The major problem with the promotion of democracy is that there is no generally accepted theory of democratisation to guide the process. It therefore mirrors a confusion of agendas. Whereas the liberal dominated international development institutions and scholars stress the promotion of human rights and democratic principles as the panacea to underdevelopment, history teaches us otherwise. Contrasting the historical development of third world states with that of modern European states, Ayoob[9] postulates that the enormity of expectations from the international community on the infantile third world state is actually part of the problem. He states that the fundamental problem of state making for the third world is that they lack the time which state-making requires to come to maturity and that the rush to achieve this mature standard plunges the already weak state into a crisis of legitimacy. A standard that took the matured European states hundreds of years to achieve is being expected of the third world only a few decades after independence. 'The problem for the latter', (the third world states), 'has been compounded

by the fact that they are under pressure to demonstrate adequate stateness quickly, as well as to perform the task of state-making in a humane, civilized and consensual fashion, and to do all this in an era of mass politics.' Coupled with this are the demands of competition with the established stronger and better organised states in the international system, which makes it obligatory for the third world countries to achieve their goals in the shortest possible time or risk being ridiculed and cajoled. The only way out for these weak states is to telescope and collapse some of these time-consuming processes together to save time. This placed the third world states in a security predicament. The problem is further compounded by the demands of the international system that these states treat their citizens humanely during these early stages of state-making. The Europeans states never experienced this pressure, Ayoob maintains. They had the opportunity of state-making, unencumbered by demands for respect for human rights and democracy. These demands came later when the states has already solved the problem of internal cohesion and marks a significant difference to the international context that European states had to contend with. We thus have something similar to a theoretical guide: democratisation requires time and a relatively stable, humane and civilised state. The problem with this analysis is that I find it too simplistic, at least in its application to Africa. Its maxim is: give the third world states more time and they will mature and democratise. I think this is wrong. I acknowledge the fact that states need time to mature, but most importantly they need a ruling class that is dedicated to the pursuit of economic development which will then strengthen state institutions and democratise the society as and when possible. Without dedication, time will not be used fruitfully, and it is the imperatives of good governance and democracy that make a ruling class dedicated to the pursuit of economic development as we shall soon see. Another possible lesson from Ayoob's analysis is that the international community should leave weak states alone to develop and to democratise at their own speed. This is dangerous because. as I will soon argue, the rulers of most African states are not interested in pursuing economic development. They use power to amass wealth which makes the personalisation and misuse of power inevitable. Personal power thwarts institutionalisation and has weakening effects on the state.

Appropriate as the World Bank's bad governance analysis may be, I think it represents a conflation of multiple effects with causation because according to my observation of sub-Saharan Africa, bad governance is not simply the cause of state collapse; rather, bad governance and state collapse are secreted in the interstices of the above-described trajectory of the emergence of the modern African state. Governance has been defined as the 'manner in which power is exercised in the management of a country's economic and social resources for development'[10]; and bad governance implies the management of power in a manner that does not promote economic development. The question therefore becomes: why should power be used in such a manner that does not promote economic development? Following a study of the history of developed and developing states, I adumbrate that a set of imperatives that propelled rulers of economically strong and politically capable states to promote economic development, which invariably required the establishment of strong state bureaucracy and the introduction of democracy, are missing in Africa; again as a result of the developmental trajectory of the African state. With this form of analysis, I hope to correct the piecemeal approach to the study of the causes of state collapse that has become customary in current studies by concatenating economic development and strong statehood on one side with economic underdevelopment and weak statehood on the other. What are these imperatives and how do they influence economic development and state administrative capacity?

3. 1. Imperatives of Good Governance and Democracy
The history of developed and developing states demonstrate that a set of imperatives propelled

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[10] World Bank, 'Governance and Development', The World Bank, Washington D.C., 1992

state makers to resolve to pursue economic development, strengthen state institutions and democratise. These imperatives include:

a) The necessity of the state to sustain itself through taxation.

b) The exigency of the state to maintain internal stability in order to ward off external aggressors.

c) The ability of the state to derive revenue from elastic bases.

d) The separation of economic from political power.

e) With reference to the late-developers, a further impetus, nationalism, or 'the desire to catch-up with the West' has to be added.

These imperatives may not be exhaustive, but they are fundamental in ushering in the promotion of economic development and democracy.

a) Recalling the historical development of European states, Charles Tilly notes that war and its preparation played a significant role in the emergence of robust administrative and durable state structures. Preparation for war and deployment of coercive means in war saddled leaders with two dilemmas which could best be resolved by regular administration of lands, goods and people in order to maintain the subjugation of conquered people, on the one hand, and the erection of an infrastructure of taxation, supply and administration in order to ensure continuity, on the other[11]. War involved warriors in extraction, a situation for which they have to provide internal peace and stability. Extraction of financial resources (taxation) involved the states in economic development and induced cooperation between the warriors (state makers) and resource bearers (bourgeoisie). The two groups thus become stakeholders in the state-making project. Thus, a cooperation between the warriors (state makers) and resource-bearing group in the European society (bourgeoisie) created the modern European state as wielders of coercion who 'drew for their own purposes on manipulators of capital' (ibid. 15). This cooperation had the effect of binding several social strata in society together because economic development is the intersection of the interests of divergent social classes which facilitates the mobilisation of the society. Thus, nationalism becomes an instrument of social mobilisation for economic development. Hannah Arendt was referring to this development when she wrote that 'the bourgeoisie has developed within, and together with the nation-state'[12]. This development is behind Marx's initial definition of the state as an executive committee for managing the affairs of the bourgeoisie[13]. Such relationships promote the tendency towards institutionalisation and foster a symbiotic interest in the functioning of those organisations that arises to structure the interactions (modern bureaucracy), as Weber explained. Leftwich[14] was therefore right to state that 'for Max Weber, (…) the modern state and its bureaucratic character was as much the consequence as it was the condition of capitalist development'. So the imperative of survival created and sustained the institutions of the European state and thus strengthened the state. This imperative is absent in Africa because African rulers depend mainly on external sources of revenue for state management: rents from foreign firms for the extraction of raw materials and development aid. No wonder they could neglect the promotion of economic development (good governance) for so long.

b) In the infant stage of modern state formation in Europe, instability invited external invasion and states that could not successfully resist such invasions simply perished[15]. So, the necessity of survival compelled modern European states to maintain internal stability through responsive governance. Institutions and their organisational structures were the means of this

[11] Tilly, Charles, 'Coercion, Capital and European States: AD 990-1990', Blackwell Publishers, Oxford., 1992.

[12] Arendt, Hannah, 'The Origins of Totalitarianism, Harcourt, Brace and World', 1951, New York.

[13] Marx, Karl, 'Manifesto of the Communist Party in Marx/Engels', Selected Works, Vol. 1, Foreign Languages Publishing House, Moscow, 1859/1958.

[14] Leftwich, Adrian, 'States of Development', Polity Press, Cambridge, UK, 2000.

[15] Jackson, Robert H., 'Quasi-States: Sovereignty, International Relations and the Third World', Cambridge University Press, 1990.

response. In Africa conversely, there is no international insecurity as African rulers took steps to create a 'peaceful' atmosphere among themselves. Among the initial articles establishing the Organisation for African Unity was one dealing with the inviolability of the colonially drawn borders. With that, African rulers secured themselves internationally and could even afford to wage wars on their own citizens without fear of an external aggressor exploiting the situation to attack them.

c) This imperative of state survival was equally significant for the emergence of democracy in Europe. In this case also, the role of the economy was critical. Monarchs were first compelled to share power with parliaments because they needed to derive revenue from bases that were elastic, i.e. revenue bases that grow if positively motivated and vice versa. Accordingly, 'the more elastic the revenue base, the greater the degree to which the sovereign had to give control over public policy to those whose money he sought to appropriate for public purposes'[16]. It has been noted in this context that parliaments first appeared in England as a medieval monarch was compelled to bargain with citizens because he sought to tax 'movable property'[17]. Here we see a connection between the financial imperative for state survival and democracy. The situation in Africa is markedly different regarding this point. The main revenue sources for sub-Saharan African states (except South Africa) are inelastic (raw materials and development assistance) and therefore do not make for the pursuit of economic development through good governance and the strengthening of the state's bureaucratic capacity.

This factor (derivation of revenue from elastic sources) is of utmost importance in the modern political economy of good governance because modern economies depend on functioning infrastructure – good roads, markets, electric power, transport and communication facilities, educational and health systems etc - in order to function effectively and contribute to growth and development. The provision of these facilities has been the responsibility of the state (at least up until the triumph of neoliberalism) and has thus contributed to the exercise of state authority through state institutions with the consequence that developmental governance and state institutionalisation go hand in hand.

d) Another factor that influenced the emergence of strong statehood and democracy in the Western world was the separation of political power from private wealth. In Western Europe for example, the French Revolution of the 18th century and the democratic revolutions of the 19th century divested the monarchies of their political power while leaving them with considerable economic power. Prior to that, the commercial and industrial revolutions had influenced the emergence of an economically powerful group that did not directly control state power. Subsequently, economic power in Western Europe resided with the capitalists and the royal families while political power resided with the petit-bourgeoisie. The experience of the USA in this regard was also similar. Two scholars note that the Anglo-Americans were previously in control of economic and political power but as time went on, the wealthy moved from the White House to the boardroom, leaving political power to the leaders of the immigrant communities[18].

The separation of political and economic power is necessary because it elicits a symbiotic relationship between these two most powerful groups in society that make for good governance: the wielders of political power (state makers) depend on the wielders of economic power (resource bearers) in order to finance war and public administration while the wielders of economic power depend on the wielders of political power for peace and stability and a functioning infrastructure. This relationship is organised around state institutions. Analysing the success of the newly industrialised Asian societies, Kohli introduces a metaphor that

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[16] Bates, Robert H., 'The Economic Bases of Democratisation' in Joseph (ed.), State, Conflict and Democracy in Africa, Lynne Rienner, Colorado, 1999.
[17] Mitchell, Sidney Knox, 'Taxation in Medieval England', New Haven: Yale University Press, 1951.
[18] Dahl, Robert, 'Who Governs? Democracy and Power in an American City', New Haven, 1961.

is very illustrative in this case: 'If one thinks of the process of industrialisation as a chariot, one can imagine states and entrepreneurs as two horses that may pull it'[19]. Critical to this relationship is that these groups are endogenous. There are no external sources that prop up state governments when they are incapable of sourcing their revenue bases internally. Thus, considered from a historical theoretical perspective, the same political and economic logic of state making contributed enormously to the pursuit of economic development as well as strong statehood and democracy; and this logic is that of good governance. The common denominator of the logic is the determination of the political class to guarantee its survival in a hostile environment. This logic is absent in Africa because the dominance of the commanding heights of the African economies by foreign firms impelled African rulers to use state power for personal aggrandisement (corruption) and thus become the indigenous group that control political as well as economic power. They could therefore neglect the pursuit of economic development and democracy without consequences to their regimes. In a sense, pursuing economic development could be detrimental to their interests as new classes might emerge and wrestle political power away from them.

It is therefore illogical to detach the emergence of development and democracy from the character of the state. The import of this analytical scheme is that a state system that is based on self-preservation and self-sustenance is necessarily a favourable precondition for state strength (institutionalisation and democratisation) which is primarily predicated on economic well-being (development). The European and American experiences are equally analogous to the Asian situation. The economic successes of the East Asian Tigers could not be adequately explained outside the purview of the strength and imperial ambitions of China and Japan, which considerably shape the East Asian state system. Being situated between two regional superpowers with imperial ambitions, the message for these states is clear: they have to get strong or risk loosing their sovereignty; and state strength being predicated on economic power means that these states must strengthen themselves economically in order to maintain their sovereignty. The sovereignty of Taiwan and Hong Kong remains a thorny issue in international affairs. And just about sixty years ago, Korea was a Japanese colony. Is it surprising that these states are among the rising 'Asian Tigers' of today? There have been other explanations of the economic success of the 'Asian Tigers'. For example, Susan Strange attributes it to the enormous economic assistance to these states from the USA to prevent their being sympathetic to communism[20]. True as this may be, it fails to explain why African states which also received such assistance from the West as well as from the East did not achieve much with it. My point is that the resolve on the part of the ruling elite is absent in Africa. The developmental process of these states has been piloted by the state institutions (bureaucracy). In the case of Japan, Johnson maintains that a determined and insulated bureaucracy has been the driving force behind the nation's economic success. He thus states that in Japan, 'the politicians reign and the state bureaucrats rule'[21]. The background to this determination has been the hostility of the world and the desire to guarantee survival in it, as Johnson maintains[22]. Thus, a fifth imperative, with reference to the late-developers, could be the desire to catch up with the West.

e) Modern states outside of Europe (East Asia, some former communist states, Botswana) that have seriously pursued and achieved a modicum of development has been propelled in this direction not only by the desire to survive in a hostile world but also by the desire to catch up with the West and subsequently be in a position to resist Western imperialism. Most former socialist states that achieved economic development during the Cold War were partially propelled by this desire. The competition between the two ideologies and the will not to lose did play a role too. And in all these cases, state institutions have been pivotal; of course encouraged by the

[19] Kohli, Atul, 'State-Directed Development: Political Power and Industrialisation in the Global Periphery', Cambridge University Press, 2004.
[20] Strange, Susan, 'The Retreat of the State: The Diffusion of Power in the World Economy', Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996.
[21] Johnson, C., 'Introduction: the Taiwan Model', in Hsiung, J.S. (ed.), 'Contemporary Republic of China: the Taiwan Experience 1950-1980', Praeger Press, New York, 1981.
[22] Johnson, C., 'MITI and the Japanese Miracle', Stanford University Press, CA, 1982.

political class. It has been noted that the 'distinguishing character of developmental states is that their political purposes and institutional structures (especially their bureaucracies) have been developmentally driven, while their developmental objectives have been politically driven. For at the heart of these states, fundamentally political factors have shaped the urgency, thrust and pace of their developmental strategies through the structures of the state'[23]. African states lack this imperative. Exploiting state power for wealth accumulation led to politicisation of ethnicity and religion which obliterated the emergence of a feeling of community and thus, gave African states a non-developing character.

The significance of this community feeling amongst the constitutive parts of a modern nation state in the erection of strong statehood has been stressed by Kalevi Holsti[24] with the concept of 'horizontal legitimacy', a factor which is deficient in modern African states and which invariably influences the lack of 'vertical legitimacy' as these constituent parts hardly owe allegiance to the state. However, Davidson[25] adumbrates the thesis that this deficiency in horizontal legitimacy is traceable to the colonial origins of the modern African state that brought several nations under one state umbrella. Both Davidson and Holsti express the view that the colonialists' non-recognition and denial of the existence of precolonial African states is the core of this problem. Furthermore, Davidson makes the point that symbols are very important in foisting cohesion on a nation-state which he exemplifies with the English King's Crown and the Golden Stool of the Asante. His counterfactual analysis stresses the possibility of a feeling of national affiliation among Africans if the precolonial states had been used as the basis for the postcolonial African states, a quality that would have bestowed the postcolonial African states with more stability and social cohesion. The rejection of the precolonial African states as the bases for the postcolonial states is a further reflection of the complementarity of interests between the departing colonialists and the new African political class: The colonialists had to reject the possibility of precolonial African states in order to justify colonial ideologies of domination which see the African as inferior and lacking in the organisational capabilities demanded by state making. And the new African political class rejected it because the colonial setting was the basis of their domination and accepting precolonial African states as the bases for the postcolonial states would simply make nonentities out of these elites. Colonial administrative structures, ethos, laws and boundaries were therefore accepted as the models of postcolonial African states, to the detriment of those societies. 'So these, being alien models, failed to achieve legitimacy in the eyes of a majority of African citizens, and soon proved unable to protect and promote the interests of those citizens, save for a privileged few' (ibid. 25). The spiritual component provided by the Golden Stool presented a rallying basis of identification, the lack of which made the establishment of the modern African State a burden for the black man. I will use the example of Nigeria to illustrate how the black man has been bearing this burden.

It remains however to be added that the neglect of economic development and state institutionalisation by the ruling class could be traced to the foreign orientation of this class which makes the (foreign) promotion of good government and democracy essential as this class does not necessarily depend on the economic activities of its citizens to maintain its political dominance. The situation was markedly different in precolonial Africa that was truly independent. To illustrate, Labouret[26] recounts that the necessity of state survival through taxation in the Dahomey empire led the minister of agriculture to administer and subsequently institutionalise livestock census in order to enable him calculate the tax (payable in livestock).

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[23] Castells, M., 'Four Asian Tigers with a Dragon's head', in Appelbaum, R.P./Henderson, J. (eds.), 'States and Development in the Asian Pacific Rim', 1992; Leftwich, Adrian, 'States of Development', Polity Press, Cambridge, UK, 2000; Pempel, T.J., 'The developmental regime in a changing world environment', in Woo-Cummings, M. (ed.), 'The Developmental State', Cornell Univ. Press, Ithaca, New York, 137-181, 1999.

[24] Holsti, Kalevi J., 'The State, War and the State of War', Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996.

[25] Davidson, Basil, 'The Black Man's Burden: Africa and the Curse of the Nation State', Three Rivers Press, New York, 1992.

[26] Labouret, Henri, 'Africa before the Coming of the White Man', Walker and Company, 1962, New York.

This organisation of taxation equally played a role in the development of the Dahomean calendar that had thirteen months reflecting the thirteen hunter groups that had to supply the king with meat every month. It may sound like an exaggeration to designate these developments as institution-building but that is what they are, only at an infantile stage; and no king could afford to abjure those institutions the way the African rulers of today do. Again, rulers of African precolonial states engaged in economic development in order to optimise taxation by conquering trade routes and production centres. For example, the desire to effectively control trade on salt and gold (the two most important articles of trade) led the Old Ghana Empire to war against the Berbers and Morocco in order to control not only the trade routes but also the salt and gold mines. "Neither the salt supplies nor the gold supplies were originally within the domains of Ghana, but it took steps to integrate them either by trade or by territorial expansion. Ghana struck north into the Sahara, and towards the very end of the tenth century it captured the town of Awdaghast from the Berbers – a town useful for the control of the incoming salt mined in the middle of the desert. Similarly, Mali and Songhai sought to secure control of Teghaza, which was the largest single centre of salt mining. Songhai took the prize of Taghaza from the desert Berbers and held it for many years in the face of opposition from Morocco"[27]. These attacks needed a strong military force and the proceeds were also used to strengthen the military. Most African leaders of today weaken their militaries by politicising them and denying them needed funds, preferring to set up private armies to guarantee their preservation in power. Precolonial African states had features of constitutionally guaranteed civil rights and liberties. In the Ashanti Empire for example, the charter consisting of seventy-seven laws presented by Asantehene (King) Anokye was to serve as the constitutional basis of the state. The charter identified the structure of and division of labour in government; and sought to regulate the relationship between the state and the citizen. In several other parts of Africa, the emergent indigenous African political culture made provisions against dictatorship by allowing criticism of rulers by the ruled. Minstrels and traditional historians had the rights to criticise the Kings without fear of reprisals. In the Old Oyo Empire, the Oyomesi had the right to force the Alaafin (King) to commit suicide if he misuses his power. African rulers of today misuse their powers and disrespect their constitutions with impunity as long as they can pull the wool over the eyes of the international community. And with these examples I come to a theoretical conclusion which states that truly independent statehood without foreign financial dependence gives the impetus to state institutionalisation through cooperation with indigenous resource bearers.

4. The Failure of the Nigerian State

The Federal Republic of Nigeria emerged as an independent nation from British colonial tutelage in October 1960. More than a century of British imperialism and colonialism in Nigeria brought the commanding heights of the Nigerian economy under the control of primarily British, and other Western firms. Gradual implementation of a decolonisation programme granted Nigerian politicians control over regional governments leaving the colonial government with control over foreign affairs, before finally divesting itself of power in 1960[28]. Not being active in productive activities, those politicians lacked a solid economic base and with regional political power in their hands, they proceeded to use same to compensate for their lack of a solid resource base. Thus, corruption became paramount in the political affairs of the country. For example, the Justice Sutton report published on the 16th of January, 1957, indicted Dr Nnamdi Azikiwe, the leader of the National Council of Nigeria and Cameroon (NCNC), the party in control of the government in the Eastern Region, for investing public funds in the African Continental Bank (ACB) in which he had an interest. This led Azikiwe to transfer all his rights and interests in the bank to the Eastern Nigeria government which henceforth owned the bank. Similarly, the

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27 Rodney, Walter, 'How Europe Underdeveloped Africa', Howard University Press, 1982.
28 By 1957, the three regional governments of the North, West and East had come under the control of Nigerian politicians.

report of the Justice Coker Commission of Inquiry indicted Chief Obafemi Awolowo, the Premier of the Western Region and leader of the Action Group (AG), the party in control of the regional government, for diverting public funds to the tune of 7,200,000 pounds from the government coffers to those of his private firm, the National Investment and Property Corporation. 'We came across evidence of reckless and indeed atrocious and criminal mismanagement and diversion of public funds. We are satisfied that Awolowo knows everything about the diversion of large sums of money … into the coffers of the Action Group'. The Western Regional Government therefore acquired all the property belonging to the firm. A similar fate befell the Midwestern Region in 1967.

The phenomenon of corruption was to become even more pervasive in independent Nigeria, prodding politicians to do everything possible to win or maintain power. Violence became synonymous with the struggle for political power all over Nigeria. After the conflict that arose in the Western Region escalated to include murder, fist-fights in the parliament and election-rigging in 1965, Major Nzeogwu ousted the Federal Government in a military coup in January 1966. In his broadcast to the nation justifying his actions, he said, 'the aim of the Revolutionary Council is to establish a strong united and prosperous nation, free from corruption and internal strife. Our enemies are political profiteers, swindlers, the men in the high and low places that seek to keep the country divided permanently so that they can remain in office as ministers and VIPs of waste …' (ibid. 28). This justification was to be repeated with only minor semantic alterations by subsequent coup plotters up to the 1990s, a vindication of the fact that things have not changed[29]. Although Major Nzeogwu freely gave up power to the most senior military officer, General Aguiyi-Ironsi, the coup was seen as ethnically motivated, resulting in the murder of General Aguiyi-Ironsi, the pogrom against Igbos (Nzeogwu's ethnic group) in Northern Nigeria which subsequently led to the 30-month Nigerian Civil War of 1967-1970.

Enormous gains from the sale of crude oil, as a result of OPEC price increases in 1973 and 1978, increased the impetus of the Nigerian politico-military bureaucratic class to primitive accumulation. The Indigenisation Decree of 1972 and the Land Use Decree of 1978 were promulgated to facilitate primitive accumulation[30]. Corruption increased and became the guiding principle of participation in Nigerian public life. In the process, the issue of promoting economic development was totally relegated. Indigenous production of goods was neglected because importation (of consumer goods) opened further avenues for embezzlement of public funds. Even toothpicks were imported. Credits were taken from international financial institutions to finance corruption, thus bringing Nigeria into indebtedness despite revenues from oil. For example, the Shagari administration of 1979-1983 inherited 2.8 billion Naira in foreign reserves from its predecessor and earned an additional 40.5 billion Naira during its tenure. By the end of its tenure in 1983, Nigeria was indebted to the tune of 10.21 billion Naira (ibid. 28). This grew to about US$33 billion by the end of the 1990s.

Projects that were supposed to launch Nigeria into industrialisation likewise became an avenue for self-enrichment thereby increasing underdevelopment and existential hardships for the populous. For example, Nigeria has spent billions of dollars on the establishment of steel mills which do not function. The same goes for oil refineries. The supply of electric power has remained erratic at best with constant power cuts. This contributed enormously to the reduction in capacity utilisation of Nigerian industries, even down to 1% in some sectors[31].

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[29] Nigeria experienced eight military coups between 1966 and 1993. Dimka's coup of 1976 and Orkar's coup of 1990 were unsuccessful.

[30] The Indigenisation Decree sought to give the Nigerian indigenous private sector controlling shares in foreign firms following the argument of the dependency school that foreign control of African economies promotes underdevelopment. The programme was unsuccessful because the shares were bought by politicians, top military officers and top bureaucrats, not real businessmen. The Land Use Decree conferred the ownership of land to the Nigerian state, making the state the sole beneficiary of its contents; for example, mineral resources.

[31] Central Bank of Nigeria, Annual Report, 1992.

National censuses are not meaningful to development planning, due to their politicisation in order to increase access to public funds.

In all these corrupt practices, foreign firms and governments colluded with Nigerian politicians, military officers and bureaucrats to siphon money out of the country. In 1985, Brian Sledgemore, a British parliamentarian, disclosed in detail how Nigerian officials, with the connivance of the Johnson Matthey Bank in London, siphoned over six billion Naira in fictitious imports. The testimony of Nazir Chinoy, the manager of the Bank of Credit and Commerce International (BCCI), to the US Senate Committee investigating the corrupt activities of the bank following its collapse in 1991, revealed how the bank paid large sums in kickbacks to Nigerian officials for services rendered. A former Nigerian civil servant and later Sarduana of Sokoto, Alhaji Dasuki, became the bank's chairman in Nigeria with Alhaji Yar' Adua (elder brother of the current president), a former top military officer and deputy head-of-state, as a close associate. This bank played a critical role in the 2.8 billion Naira scandal of 1978. Subsequent to the collapse of the bank, its name in Nigerian was changed to African International Bank (AIB) which immediately received a 500 million Naira grant from the Nigerian Central Bank in 1991. Similarly, the Justice Awoniyi Commission of Inquiry into the Bi-Water Scandal implicated the British government's Export Credit Guarantee Agency for siphoning off 75% of the 100 million Naira external loan granted to the Niger State Government[32].

The effects of corruption, neglect of economic development and politicisation of ethnicity and religion served to incapacitate the Nigerian bureaucracy and destroy the country's social fabric. The rejection of an IMF loan by the Babangida administration in 1986 coupled with the subsequent implementation of a Structural Adjustment Programme (SAP) worsened the economic state of Nigerian citizens, leading to riots and violent demonstrations. The salaries of public servants are hardly paid, increasing the demand for bribes. A functioning public transportation system barely exists. Health and educational facilities are dilapidated, with unemployment and inflation soaring constantly higher. The national currency (Naira) has plummeted to about 160 to one Euro. Armed robbery with deadly consequences for victims has become the order of the day with reports of the police colluding with armed robbers. The military is extremely weak as a result of its politicisation. The Nigerian state has lost the capability to provide security for its citizens, much less provide them with public political goods. It is therefore no exaggeration to say that the Nigerian state project has failed.

The effects of the neglect of economic development are more glaring in the Niger Delta, that suffers from environmental pollution resulting from oil exploration and gas flaring and the resulting destruction of agricultural activities and aquatic life. The prioritisation of the concept of public social corporate responsibility in the process of implementing neoliberal policies in the 1980s provided the Nigerian state with an excuse to finally abandon its responsibilities in the Niger Delta to the oil firms, with the consequence of violent inter-community conflicts and a total loss of allegiance to the state[33]. This fact, coupled with the truncation of the military handover of power to civilian authorities by the Babangida administration in 1993, finally shattered the hope of a better Nigeria that had been raised in the struggle for independence. The communities started clamouring for resource control. The murder of Ken Saro Wiwa (the champion of the struggle for a better deal for the Niger Delta) by the General Abacha dictatorship in 1997 spawned a myriad of violent groups demanding resource control. These groups started financing themselves by kidnapping foreign oil workers while also exploiting the easy access to international markets provided by neoliberal globalisation to sell bunkered crude oil and purchase weapons. As a result, Nigerian soldiers sent to the Delta 'to maintain

[32] Nwankwo, Arthur Agwuncha, 'Nigeria: the stolen Billions', Fourth Dimension, Enugu, Nigeria, 1998.
[33] Neoliberal policies were forced on the Nigerian state by international multilateral creditors as a condition for further maintenance of credit lines

law and order' find themselves engaged in exchanges of fire with casualties. Today, soldiers and policemen dread being sent to the Niger Delta. The Nigerian state has lost the monopoly over violence in this and other areas. In Onitsha, for example, hoodlums regularly attack the prison yard and free inmates. Several groups question the existence of the Nigerian state with demands of either restructuring or leaving it. These include civil liberties organisations like the defunct Alliance for Democracy and the PRONACO (Pro-National Conference), and secessionist groups like the OPC (Oduduwa Peoples Congress), the MASSOB (Movement for the Survival of the Sovereign State of Biafra) and MEND (Movement for the Emancipation of Niger Delta).

The failure of the Nigerian state could not possibly lead to its collapse because it takes a conscious action on the part a disgruntled section of a fragmented elite to bring a state to collapse. The Nigerian political elite is still united in the philosophy of personal enrichment through access to state power, and a conscious attack on the state could possibly deny the elite this opportunity. Attacks on the state are therefore a preserve of the youth who do not have the clout to destabilise the central order.

Conclusion

There are basic theoretical understandings to be derived from this essay. The first is that African states need indigenous resource bearers for economic development because only indigenous resource bearers are in a position to challenge the state to pursue economic development, provided that states depend financially on the taxes derived from internal economic activities. Adhering to the advice of foreign resource bearers (international capital and multilateral credit institutions) has not been positive for African economic development. And this leads me to the second understanding: dependence on foreign sources of income weakens a state as it forces state managers to develop alliances with external actors to the detriment of the broader society. The promotion of democracy is a welcome development for the simple fact that it puts democratisation and respect for human rights on the agenda. However, creating the imperatives of good governance and democracy could be more fundamental in ushering in the pursuit of economic development and democracy. This is where development assistance could start.