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Understanding Political (In)stability in Nigeria: Colonial Force, Postcolonial Farce and Africa's 'Two Public'

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Abstract
Peter Ekeh's 'Two Public' – primordial and civic – is a novel invention to understanding the socio-political and economic life of African society. The two public espouses the existence of dual moralities resulting from colonialism while highlighting the divisive role of this colonial legacy in contemporary African politics and how it continues to undermine the possibility of unified praxis in postcolonies against the hydra-head manifestations of imperialism cum neocolonialism. This paper examines why the moralities of both publics differ? Why does the two public and its dual moralities matter in contemporary African politics? We evoke decolonial epistemic lens to explore the etiology of (Westphalian) state and how uncritical subscription to it constricts understanding of the character and functioning of postcolonial enclaves masquerading as states. The study utilises secondary data and concludes that uncritical quest for stability in postcolonial states is tautological as the state never was.
Keywords: Decoloniality, postcolonialism, (post)colonial state, political instability, 'Two Public'.
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1. Introduction

In my opinion, our case very much resembled that of a sick man who had spent a long time in closed room. The heat in that closed room had become so intense that the man was in anguish. Suddenly a violent storm blew, smashing all windows and doors, and strong currents of cold air began to lash the body of the sick man, who was still perspiring. The sick man needed a breath of air. Instead, a raging hurricane assailed him, and fever began to devour his body. This was exactly the case of our society. It was indeed [and still is] a dangerous case. (Praeger, 1967 quoted in Mutiso and Rohio, [1987] 2007: 502).

The above excerpt by Gamal Abdel Nasser vividly captures the torrential transition of violence from its colonial foundations to its postcolonial crystallisation. The analogy of "a sick man" and his dashing hopes for respite bespeaks of a larger tale of the succession of horrors, albeit transformation, that hitherto characterise the post-colonial state in Africa. The post-colonial state has been characterised by conflicts of varying degree and dimensions, which has earned it a notoriety for instability in the comity of states. This characterisation of the post-colonial African state is however not new; what is novel is unearthing instability as part of its foundational basis that not only embodies contradictions but also predisposes it to unending contestations.

Students of politics are inundated with theories of state that presupposes political states are human creation and product of consent. Though there is theory of force and divine origins theory among others, the broad consensus revolves around contract, which explains the predominance of social contract theories from Thomas Hobbes, John Locke through Jean Jacque Rosseau and John Rawl as crystallisation of the modern state. Although most social contract theorists acknowledged that the state of nature and the resulting contract were not actual but philosophical explications to underscore the origins, purpose and function of the state, they nonetheless serve as the basis of, and justification for, the modern state. For instance, the coming together of the thirteen colonies to form a union of states (i.e., the United States of America) and its subsequent declaration of independence could be likened to the philosophical state of nature and the social contract respectively. Similarly, whereas the evolutions in England, Wale, Scotland, etc. to the existing United Kingdom is not devoid of this logic, the same cannot be said of extant African states. Nowhere in Africa do we find extant states that have crystallised in and of themselves; majorly, they are external enactments and forced contraptions.

Nevertheless, this conception of state is commonplace that it has almost become a norm in political literature to talk of the state and even make unscrupulous comparisons as if all states are the same; as if they share common

context, and; as if they serve the same end. However, nothing could be further from the truth. About one-third of the world's population have been colonised by Europe at one point or another and their evolutionary path altered through slavery, colonialism, and even annihilation (Sakue-Collins, 2021; Falola, 2012; Awolowo, 2007). The implication being that the extant form, structure and purpose of previously colonised societies are outcome of such incursive trajectories which has structured them after neo/colonial ends. For instance, while it is true that some states radically delinked themselves from their erstwhile colonisers at 'independence', most however have maintained close ties with theirs, which manifest in the form of foreign policy outlook, ideological inclination (i.e., liberal-capitalist) and neocolonial cum imperial affiliation (i.e., Commonwealth of Nations, *Colonies francaises d'Afrique* later backronymned to *Cooperation Financiere en Afrique centrale*), etc. Thus, rightly conceived, while all states are human creation, to feign consensual origins for all states is ahistorical. States origin and purpose differ according to context and this speaks to their trajectory, function and relationship not only with those entrapped within them, but also with other like entities.

Nonetheless, philosophies of the origins of state seem to be referring predominantly to Euro-American state and not all states, and those that have been characteristically marred with contestations of varying kinds are the exceptions, not the rule. What this means is that most of the contests and conflict across Africa are, or have been directed towards, or indirectly linked, to the (post)colonial state (Arowosegbe, 2008; Ake, 2012; Ekeh, 2012; Sakue-Collins, 2021). So that at the core of political instability is contestation for power and or allocation of resources/values, which raise questions of (il)legitimacy, rightfulness and authority of the state. These conflicts and instability predate the post-colonial state; it is rooted in imperialism cum colonialism. This way, instability in post-colonial Africa is a carryover of pre-colonial and colonial struggles, and resistance to foreign invasion, protests against regimes of occupation, and opposition to internal domination (Ekeh, 1975 [2012]; Ake, 2012; Awolowo, 2007). The contention is that 'instabilities' are expressive forms of resistance to the political state – resistance which draws from protests against pre-colonial incursion, colonial occupation and its continuing post-colonial domination. Exploring this line of enquiry, and appropriating Peter Ekeh's *Two Public*, furnishes this study with prism to examine how opposition to alien domination has been redacted and branded as post-colonial 'instability'.

Ekeh's two public and the allegory of the "wise foolish man" illustrates how an entire society frowns at an apparently upright act. More importantly, it draws attention to how what ordinarily is considered morally (up)right is turned on its head as a way of protest to alien domination and control of local people. The morality of the two public espouses or tells of a far more important tale that is yet to receive the much-needed attention: why would a people, a society, have two moralities for a single phenomenon? Or, to put it more affirmatively: is obedience to arbitrary rule not in service to arbitrariness? Are there moral reasons or grounds to obey a 'state' that is expressly, by its composition/constitution, illegitimate? At what point did African nations sat to discuss, or agreed on, form, structure, content, and purpose, of what now obtains as states' practice? To address these questions, we examine a broad array of literature on colonialism, anticolonialism, state and state formation as well as nationalist and anticolonial nationalism to highlight the undercurrent of expressive forms of resistance to alien domination, often dubbed socio-political unrest or, what is more often than not referred to as, political instability.

To do this, this paper is divided into six sections following this introduction. The first outlines the theoretical and methodological issues underlying the study. It situates the study in postcolonial and decolonial epistemic lenses and rely on secondary materials as the basis of analysis. The second theorises the state and instability, by arguing that the origins of the European (Westphalian) state differs from that of the (post)colonial state in Africa and, as such, their purpose and function differ. The third interrogates Peter Ekeh's Two Public as a materialisation of the inherent tension/conflict in the imperial project subsisting as postcolonial states in Africa. The fourth explores resistance to colonial rule as legitimate struggle against foreign domination and local oppression. The fifth, postcolonial farce, examines protests and proliferation of sub-national struggles as redaction of resistance to colonial occupation and post-colonial continuation of oppressive regimes; and the sixth section concludes the study.

2. Theoretical positioning

This study is anchored in postcolonialism as its theoretical framework and analytical frame of reference. Postcolonialism is adopted as a "broad commentary on present models of politics, economy, and ethics" to interrogate the constraint to self-determination through uncritical subscription to dominant models of development (Grovogui, 2013: 264). It holds an intricate relationship between knowledge (i.e., of one's world), language (its articulation) and representation i.e., how the social world works (Arowosegbe, 2016; Sakue-Collins, 2021). Language, knowledge, power, representation, resistance, etc., are key concepts identified by (the theory) postcolonialism as invaluable to understanding postcolonial societies, especially in relation to (un)development. Some of its major exponents are Edward Said (1978), Homi Bhabha (1994), Bill Ashcroft (1995, 2006), Achille Mbembe (2001), Dani W. Nabudere (2011), Sabi N. Grovogui (2013) and Jeremiah O. Arowosegbe (2016).

Besides the broad consensus that the current reality of the post-colony draws heavily from the pool of, and cannot be dissociated from, her colonial past, two things stand out: colonialism did not end with formal decolonisation

but continues in subtle and covert forms and, drawing from this, the dislodgement and replacement of colonial institutions with neo-colonial ones only serve to buttress the disarticulation of the former colonies, particularly through dependence (Arowosegbe, 2016; Sakue-Collins, 2021). As a body of knowledge, postcolonialism rejects rationalists and humanists claim to universal knowledge, especially where such claim is rooted in Eurocentrism as possessing the finest forms of reason. It maintains that the continuing articulation of coloniality is embedded in language as the basic medium through which hierarchies are created, recreated, reinforced and, by which "power is perpetuated and through which conceptions of truth and reality become established" (Ashcroft *et al.* 2006: 106; cf. Grovogui 2013: 248). A key assumption of the postcolonialism is that much of the continuing effects colonialism such as 'corruption', over-dependence on the West, and stagnated development are result of failure of postcolonial elites to severe colonial lactation and evolve organic policies, programmes and institutions that speak directly to postcolonial challenges and transform colonial signs into postcolonial significations.

Postcolonialism contends that there is often a gap of misreading between what is said (to be) and what happens and that this can be understood frequently by critically examining how (neo)colonial structures shape postcolonial policies and institutions through language. It holds an intricate relationship between knowledge (i.e., of one's world), language (its articulation) and representation (i.e., how the social world works). It emphasises language as a fundamental site for struggle in the creation of truth and construction of social reality.

2.1 Coloniality and decolonisation

It contends that a significant portion of the institutions that have risen, either in substitution, replacement, and or to fulfil the vacuum created in the wake of decolonisation carry with them, to a more or lesser extent, seeds of subservience to colonial domination (Mbembe, 2010; Fasakin, 2021). At the dawn of decolonisation, the colonial structures that had enthroned force was rejigged rather than revamped. Inheriting the force and violence of colonialism, the postcolonial state replaced the former in theory and the emergent postcolonial elites substituted the departing colonisers in conduct and practice (Sakue-Collins and Mohammed, 2023).

Everywhere we read with increasing degree of certitude that colonialism has officially ended and that the un-development of previously colonised societies is the outright failure of those societies to chart a path of development, usually patterned after their erstwhile colonisers. While it is not out of place to highlight the role of agency in postcolonial societies in pioneering the improvement of the living condition therein, little attention has been paid to the role of the undisrupted structures and institutions that have continued to produce disarticulated elites, determine policy disorientation and mis-formulation which teleguide socio-political processes in ways that are expressly detrimental to the wellbeing of post-colonial societies (Mbembe, 2010). This undisrupted continuation of colonial traditions cum institutions in the wake of formal decolonisation is what has been termed coloniality (Quijano, 2000; Ndluvo-Gatsheni, 2015; Arowosegbe, 2016). Coloniality is defined as "long-standing patterns of power that emerge in the context of colonialism, which redefine culture, labour, intersubjective relations, aspirations of the self, common sense, and knowledge production in ways that accredit the superiority of the colonizer" (Mendonza, 2016: 114).

This means surviving long after formal overthrow of colonialism, the idea which informed it continues to permeate the consciousness of people in post-colonial societies and limit imagination of social and contemporary life (Sakue-Collins, 2021). Therefore, coloniality refers to a reworked and constant reworking of the philosophy of imperialism cum colonialism, theorised and espoused in ways anew that incorporates within it, but subsumes, the aspirations of the hitherto (overtly) colonised in the interest of the erstwhile colonisers. It is a reworking and re-articulation of the means, mechanisms, and technologies of expansion, control, exploitation and domination of the colonised so that long after overt control (i.e. colonialism), the colonised still suffers from the structural and continuing effects of colonialism (Spivak, 1999; Ndluvo-Gatsheni, 2021). It therefore represents a dominant condition wherein, previously colonised world is still being subjected to colonial conditions and situation whereby, colonial consciousness is actively incubated and reproduced by the colonisers who, though left physically a while ago, remained present through their creations and minions (or puppets, if you like). It is in the context of the above, the Peruvian sociologist, Quijano Anibal (2000) posited that coloniality is modernity as one and ongoing process underlying all Eurocentric social engineering.

In this re-enactment of the technologies of colonialism, the postcolonial elite takes over from the colonisers; the freedom of the postcolonial elite is directly proportional to the servitude of the masses; the wealth of the post-colonial elite is directly proportional to the impoverishment of the masses; the education of the elite and their children is dependent on the miseducation of the citizens and their wards; and the health and wellbeing of the political class directly depends on the ill-health, misfortune and discomfort of the masses. In effect, the security – in its broadest sense – of the post-colonial elites who, in actual practice are 'more citizens' than others, depends on the insecurity of the masses who, in effect, are treated as subjects or second-class citizens in the same country. This way, as Mendonza (2016: 114) observes of colonial condition that "the freedom of the European and the colonial settler depends on the unfreedom of the colonized", the consolidation of the post-colonial state and prosperity of the post-colonial elites depends on the impoverishment of the masses (Sakue-Collins and Mohammed,

2023). It is in this sense Yimovie Sakue-Collins and Isa Mohammed (2023) argue that the increasing tendency to protect the post-colonial state to the detriment of its inhabitants not only removes the security of human being which necessitates the formation of political society; it is the re-enactment of the violence of colonialism. The effect is that the force and violence of colonisation and impoverisation breed (new forms of) abhorrence for, and corresponding resistance to, the post-colonial state and its subsisting structures.

Therefore, coloniality is both similar to, distinct from, but complex than, colonialism in several ways. It carries within it several logics of colonialism: dehumanisation of the colonised, expropriation of resources to the core, racialisation and segregation of its populace, and extolling of the 'winning virtue' of the (western) outsider (i.e., in taste, consumption, and valorisation of the non-material or spiritual). These logics, reworked in post-coloniality, manifest as dehumanisation of the masses by the elite; aggrandisation of wealth for generations unborn; ethnicisation of politics, and crystallisation of begging from outsiders who themselves cannot survive without the postcolonial societies; and the weaponisation of poverty and politicisation of religion upon the masses. For instance, while in colonialism the colonisers extract and expropriate human, natural and material resources to the home country of the colonisers for its growth, development and well-being, in coloniality, the ghost of colonisers exploits, export and facilitate the migration of professional (and non-professionals alike), finance, and natural and material resources to the home of the erstwhile colonisers for the stagnation, decline, and impoverishment of the former colony. Atypical of this working is financial flight where post-colonial elites stash loots in safe havens (i.e., London, Paris, Swiss, etc.) to the benefit of the duo – the elites and erstwhile colonisers – but to the loss of the postcolony, and the annual but wasteful embarkation of educational, religious and medical tourism euphemistically dubbed scholarships, pilgrimages and medical check-ups respectively (Mohammed and Sakue-Collins, 2021).

In the same vein, racialisation as a key component of colonisation's philosophy finds its re-articulation in coloniality as 'tribalism'. 'Tribalism', a phenomenon derived from the racial slur 'tribe', must not be mistaken for the activities of indigenous nationalities pejoratively referred to as 'tribes'. Rather it should be understood as an attitude of mind and disposition in conduct of inferiority, akin to racism, which predisposes its victim (or object) to act covetously and consciously in attempts to preserve itself from the possibility of losing its falsified privileged position or superiority (Ani, 1994; Quijano 2000). This partly explain the presence of excessive greed and egoism in racism, colonialism and, now, coloniality. Otherwise, how else do we explain or rationalise the stealing of billions of naira to tunes capable of sustaining a lineage for at least three generations, by a single individual, in a single lifetime? Olusegun Obasanjo has affirmed this inexplicability when he wrote of his then vice president, that "the money Atiku [Abubakar] stole when he was my vice is enough to feed 300 million people for 400 years" (Obasanjo, 2015: 31-32). Just the same way brigandage, plunder and aggrandisement of resources characterised colonial encounter around the globe is conscious but inexplainable.

This study therefore draws upon postcolonialism to interrogate how the ideological (or its lack thereof) leaning of post-colonial state and its structures, especially force and violence of deprivation, is refracted and redacted from colonialism. Thus, postcolonialism is employed to examine how the origins of the (post/colonial) state in Africa varies from that of its counterpart in Europe; to analyse how this variation predisposes the former to function arbitrarily; how this origins and variation meant that the (post)colonial state is, by its very nature, anything but stable; and to highlight that, underscoring 'instability' is the inevitability of resistance to, and protest against occupying forces of, imperialism cum colonialism continuing as oppressive regimes of post-colonial societies.

3. Theorising the State

Classical questions on origins and rationale of the political state are not concerns in futility. They are rather concerted effort to underscore the purpose of the state, its functions, and its continuing relevance in contemporary times (Bourdieu, 1977; Ake, 2012; Toros, 2016; Fasakin, 2021). The state is generally theorised as an escape from the vicissitudes of nature and the vagaries of humans, especially the egoistic tendency to exploit and dominate others. The state in this sense is a curative for the conditions of the state of nature; to contain the exercise of whims, eschew force domination, and further the well-being of all (Appadorai, 2004; Misra and Asirvatham, 2004). At the core of this is its very purpose, the *raison d'tre* or purpose of the state, without which it need not arose and outside which it has no basis subsisting (Appadorai, 2004; Misra and Asirvatham, 2004; Sabine and Thorson, 1978). This however, it seems, does not apply across board; the origins and purpose of states seem different i.e., the Westphalian state vs. the (post-) colonial state. The Westphalian (European) state and the post-colonial (African) state which derives from it seem different. The former's origin is predicated on consent or consensus of some sort while the latter's is premised on coercion or compulsion, and their purpose are not unconnected with their origin. That is to say the origin of a state and the purpose underlying it are intricately linked and this determines its functional manifestation (Ekeh,1975 [2012]; Osaghae, 2012).

Thus, on the one hand, it appears some states have emerged to mitigate the violence predominant in the state of nature and curtail the excesses of egocentrism in order to cater for the well-being of all, i.e. as evident in United Kingdom's Magna Carta, the United States' Declaration of Independence, etc. (Ebenstein, 2006; see also Hobbes,

Locke, etc.). On the other hand, other states appear to be creation of violence and the continuing use of violence to sustain it and cater for the ego of its (colonial) creators and its (post-colonial) guards, the postcolonial elite, i.e. as evident in the signing of annexation, protectorate, amalgamation treaties and neocolonial agreements styled 'constitutions' in Nigeria, for instance, in 1861, 1900, 1914 and1960-3, respectively. (Mbembe, 2010; Ekeh, 2012; Ake, 2012). This invariably is a distinction not often made in theory between the Westphalian state in Europe and the (post)colonial state in Africa but, even worse, one that has not received sufficient intellectual interrogation on its impact in practice. In other words, the post-colonial state is a refraction of its colonial predecessor which mimics, but is not the exactness of, its Westphalian counterpart. This re-working of (post)colonial violence and its instrumental purpose underscoring some states, particularly the post-colonial state, have not gone unchallenged in post-colonial societies (Ekeh,1975 [2012]; Sivanandan, 2004; Mbembe, 2010; Sakue-Collins, 2021).

Thus, it begs reason, if not an anathema, to talk of the states in Africa without reservation. The notion of state or the Westphalian state vis-à-vis the (post)colonial states in Africa is a contradiction in term and, to refer to or use them interchangeably without caution is, a misnomer in practice. Apart from Ethiopia, and the exception of Liberia whose manumitted status is clear, what exists in Africa are pockets of imperial experiment in corporate politics. The so-called states are economic liaisons and annexes, commercial outposts, and resource warehouses created by the imperialists for the good and glory of European empires (Quijano, 2000; Mendonza, 2016). The structures and institutions which undergirded the imperial outposts subsists today as postcolonial structures and the re-articulation/re-enactment of its logic albeit formal end of colonisation and change of personnel/interests is coloniality (Quijano, 2000; Sakue-Collins, 2021). Interrogating the state this way inclines us to reason why access to the post-colonial state in African is akin to wandering into a treasure chest and hints on the proclivity to loot/steal the commonwealth as a characteristic feature of the post-colonial guards.

The state in Europe and those in Africa have basically different aetiology, serving different purpose and, as such, predisposed to different pursuits. If the origins of the European state have been theorised, rationalised and justified as an escape from the vicissitudes of (the state of) nature and the idiosyncrasies of 'mad' kings (James I, Louis X, etc.) in Europe (Appadorai, 2004; Misra and Asirvatham, 2004), then the origins of the (Westphalian) experiment manifesting as postcolonial state in Africa needs to be critically re-evaluated, theoretically re-asserted, and practically deconstructed/demobilised as the handmaiden of imperialism effected by the violence of colonialism and continuing through the dispossession of neocolonialism. The forceful, as against consensual, origins of the postcolonial state in Africa is not unconnected with the abhorrence and resistance which has greeted it since its earliest formation and transformations as marketing consortium, occupying forces, colonial administration and, now, postcolonial domination. What this means is that the postcolonial state in Africa has never been stable but rather has been fraught with resistance and contestation of one form or another, from indigenous people. In other words, the postcolonial state has been characteristically unstable since its very basis necessitates contest and conflict.

This contest and instability are written large everywhere across the continent. From the British-Nembe War led by King Koko and British-Lagos War led by King Kosoko to the Mau Mau Revolt, Aba Women Riots to pockets of undocumented protests here and there, the postcolonial state in Africa is one of a single tales – force creation and necessarily requiring violence to maintain (Sivanandan, 2004; Sakue-Collins, 2021). The imperial project that has transformed into the postcolonial state has been characteristically unstable. To elaborate on this, the study now turns to Ekeh's 'Two Public' to highlight the persistence of existential tension within the postcolonial state.

4. Interrogating the 'Two Public'

Peter Ekeh's 'Two Public' – *amoral civic public* and *moral primordial public* – is one of the most novel inventions of African social sciences to understanding African societies after Euro-Arabian invasion. Ekeh espouses the *Two Public* as a theoretical statement which highlights the divisive role of colonial legacy in contemporary politics and how this divisiveness continues to undermine the possibility of fostering a united, common and coherent praxis in the post-colony. It identifies the existence of two publics with differing moralities in the post-colony; one favouring traditional (i.e., family, language, ethnicity, or 'informal') ties and the other favouring state, civic or 'formal' commitments, and; Ekeh used it to stress not only the perception, attitude, duties and rights of citizens to the state, but also how they co-function in contradictory ways to undermine, first, the colonial state and then, the post-colonial state in Africa (Ekeh, 1972, 1975 [2012]; see also Osaghae, 2012).

Ekeh defined the amoral civic public as:

> Public realm which is historically associated with the colonial administration and has become identified with popular politics in post-colonial Africa. [It is] based on civil structures, the military, civil service, and the police [and] have no moral linkages with the private realm … it is amoral and lacks the generalized moral imperatives operative in the private realm and in the primordial public (Ekeh, 1975: 92).

While the moral primordial public refers to:

> [P]ublic realm in which primordial groupings, ties, and sentiments influence the individuals' public behaviour. This is called the primordial public which is moral and operates on the same moral imperatives as the private realm (ibid).

From the foregoing, it seems a defining line between the *Two Public* corresponds to dominant notions of 'formal' versus 'informal', where the latter represents the traditional formations/ties that were usurped by colonial encounter to pave way for the former, the domain of the (post)colonial state. If taken, this raises serious issue as to why the existence of dual morality in a society? Why has the masses of Africa refused to transfer their allegiance, hitherto held in traditional authorities, to the new, emergent, and overarching superstructure, the (post)colonial state? What underline these differing moralities?

Kate Crehan (2012), writing concerning the attitude of citizens in relation to closely-knit traditional communities and loosely-knit modern structures such as the state, argues that the latter is predominantly accepted as a usurpation of the former. For her, communities, representative of collectives before the interruption of coloniality/modernity, are good and "an older, organic, human form of social organisation that was supplanted by the impersonal and bleak social relations characteristic of the modern industrial world" (Crehan, 2012: 109). The point is that the dichotomy between the traditional order and modern colonial reordering reinforces a conflict of legitimacy. The distinctive private and public realms hinted by Ekeh's Two Public carry with it values such as warmth, cooperation, and consensus analogous to the former, while anomie, competition and conflict is analogous to the latter. In a way, underscoring the gamut of these divides is questions of legitimate versus illegitimate authority, and their attitude towards such formations (Ekeh, 1975). In other words, the contentions revolve around issues of consensus and compulsion, consent and force, collective good and personal interest, etc. corresponding to public and private realms respectively.

Thus, instability so called, is invariably the consequences of the dual perception of citizenship and its potential for conflict; protest against artificial creations, response to violent or coercive structures/institutions, and resistance to illegitimate authority (Ekeh, 1975 [2012]). It is from the foregoing that this study interrogates the coloniality of instability and argues that it is a continuation of resistance to domination and regimes of oppression albeit new forms. Resistance that is visibly present in the disposition of Africans in relation to the post-colonial state and, as Eghosa Osaghae rightly observed:

> "it is 'real', and can be seen in the differential attitudes and relations that most ordinary Africans have towards their primary communities (the 'us') and government (the 'them' [representative of the post-colonial state, itself seen as a representative of the colonial enterprise or its full manifestation or personification]). In most parts of Nigeria, for example, government is characterised as an alien contrivance that has no 'father' or 'mother'. Consequently, it is a common saying that government's business is nobody's business, and people are not expected to work hard for it or defend its interests (Osaghae 2012: 241).

But how do you expect the attitude of the people to change or their "conception of the state as a foreign institution" to be altered when, a decade after the supposed disbanding of colonial rule, colonial institution remained intact, unaltered and being reinforced. Moreover, how could you expect any charge in conception when years after formal decolonisation it remained a forced institution with total disregard for the consent of the people. (quote Oyodiran and Gboyega 1979: 178 in Osaghae 2012: 242). The post-colonial state is irrevocably unobliged to perform the duties of a guardian, to act responsibly in line with its supposed equivalent in Europe and America. This explains why the post-colonial state, in its current configuration and undisputed state, cannot comprehend the responsibility of guardianship beyond its colonial structurations. In many, if not every, respects, the alienating nature of the colonial state is effectively represented in the post-colonial state and manifests in the inherent failure of the post-colonial state to provide for the basic welfare of its citizens, even in the guise of having replaced its colonial conductors. Thus, Osaghae (2012) had reasoned that, drawing from Peter Ekeh's two publics, the primordial public emerged to fill the gap created by colonialism and its dysfunctional post-colonial state apparatus as an "exit site" and or "shadow state" as a recompense for alienation and provide for the people what the state has failed to do "through self-help efforts" (Osaghae 2012: 238-239).

4.1 Contextualising the Two Public

A careful examination of Ekeh's distinction reveals that the basis of the differing moralities draws from history, tradition and perception of the origins and purpose of the state i.e., whether it is natural or artificial, if it is a product of consent or coercion, and whether or not it is internally-evolved or externally-imposed. For instance, there is a connection between differing attitude towards the natural (i.e. family, language, clan, and national, etc.) and the artificial (i.e. the state, the government, and its associated institutions, etc.), so that the former elicits reverence and support from the masses while the latter elicits derision, and is despised and as such resisted by the people (Ekeh, 2012; Crehan, 2012; Mbembe, 2010). This means underscoring these relationships is consent as the basis of the natural order, which inclines the public to accord legitimacy to it authority and command its reverence, while coercion as the basis of the artificial order, which predisposes it as illegitimate and naturally invites

resistance to it both in attitude and conduct.

The primordial realm is seen as an older, original, organic, and natural human form of social formation that was supplanted by the newer, mock, artificial, inorganic, superficial, impersonal and self-seeking human social organisation characteristic of the modern state of the Westphalian fame. The primordial realm stands in contrast to all that is foreign, alien, imposing, and alienating i.e., the (post)colonial state and its institutions. The primordial sphere is considered a relatively intimately realm: founded on affective ties between people, with cooperation built on consent, and nurtured through consensus, not the nexus of law, coercion and force (Ekeh, 2012; Osaghae, 2012). In this understanding, the primordial realm not only reveal why it contrasts with the amoral civic public (characteristic of the spheres of the postcolonial state) but more importantly communicates why transferring the allegiance of the former to the latter have over the decades proves ineffectual, especially as there has been no concerted effort to render the latter conducive for human habitation absent force.

Another incisive aspect of Ekeh's '*Two Public*' is, one which many scholars have aptly purported and supported, the presence or existence of differing morality in the two publics. Moralities which approach the same phenomenon with different attitudes as it occurs within the different publics. For instance, there is broad consensus among scholars, as with Ekeh himself, that stealing, in whatever form, is greeted with repugnance in the primordial public and meted with indifference and sometimes, even, accolades in the civic public. What is frowned at in one realm is hailed in the other realm; what is considered improper in one public is considered proper in the other public. This suggests the transient and unstable character a given phenomenon acquires as it navigates through the different publics. The question that must not be ignored is: why would a society exude different 'morality' towards the same phenomenon? Why would people respond differently to the same phenomenon as it occurs across the different publics? Why does it appear as if the (moral) value accorded to one realm (i.e., primordial public) is esteemed higher and above the other realm (i.e., civic public)?

To be sure, the morality of the two public is an affirmation that alien rule is alien rule regardless of the guise by which it appears, and that its passage from colonial conductors to neo-colonial drivers or palace guards does not render it less criminalising and legitimate. And, perhaps more importantly, a demonstration that alien rule will be resisted at all cost, which appears to be the recurring phenomenon oft-dubbed political instability (Ake, 1985; Grovogui, 2013; Mendonza, 2016). A broad consensus among scholars is that with the duality in ideologies of the nationalist struggle to replace alien rule rather than reject (the raison d'tre of) alien rule, what was bequeathed at the eve of decolonisation is, to borrow Claude Ake's phrase, mere "change of guards" rather than a reconfiguration of alien rule and its alien apparatuses, epitomised in the disenchanted political state that emerged.

5. Resistance to colonial rule

Resisting alien rule appears to be an inevitable part of human heritage; from Asia and Latin America up to Africa, colonial rule was vehemently resisted. European colonial rule which, at its peak, spanned over 12,700km of the Earth's landmass was not without challenge and defiance. Though resistance to European colonial rule has not been extensively documented, decolonial historical records show that everywhere Europe forcefully exerted itself, it not only left sorrow, tears and blood in its wake; it was received with pockets of resistance by locals (Thomas and Crow, 1997; Thompson, 2001). Following James C. Scott's lead, Tamara Sivanandan (2004: 43) asserts that there were "myriad of everyday forms of resistance to colonialism, particularly among the colonised peasantry" which were considerably "rebellious or "insurrectionary", whose frequency and intensity make them seldomly documented.

However, in the Third World Atlas (1997), Alan Thomas and Ben Crow provide useful maps of the major uprisings against European colonial rule in Africa, Asia and Latin America for a century between 1790-1890. The maps show struggles of resistance to initial European incursion and conquest ranging from the "wars between the British and the Zulu in 1870s and the Dutch and the people of Aceh in Sumatra in 1873-74), to the numerous rebellions against European rule" in Jamaica, India, Indonesia, New Zealand, among others (quoted in Sivanandan 2004: 42). In a related sense, in *The Weapon of the Weak*, Scott noted a form of peasant resistance that was more or less against postcolonial subjugation than colonial oppression. Though, writing with reference to anticolonial protests, the context and manifestation of remonstrations he highlighted bespeaks of postcolonial condition where resistance to alien rule/domination is subtly articulated. For him, these pockets of undocumented struggle were expressive forms of everyday opposition to domination, colonial or postcolonial. In postcolonial context, the "rebellious" and "insurrectionary" nature of Scott's undocumented peasant resistance relate to the broader and extant conditions of class subjugation (ruler-ruled binary mentality), contest (struggle for ownership and control of states' resources), and antagonism ('we' versus 'them' or 'winner takes-it-all' mentality) which now characterise the postcolonial state. A situation wherein, in spite of the fact that the replacements of the colonisers were all Blacks and Africans, they seem to have mastered the art of suffering and pillaging problems on one another, building on the structures of their successors. They even create new conditions, where none exists, and invite or pave ways for non-Africans to re-exploit, re-assert and heap burdens on themselves (or one another).

This is not in any way to suggest that the modern political formation that subsist as state is of European

ingenuity. Instead, what is important to note is that, by and large, the 'nationalistic' and imperialistic essence the extant nation-state has taken, which the postcolonial state is either deficient in or has been unable to grasp internally and externally, is majorly the unity of origin and purpose of the state. Brennan has persuasively argued that "it would be inaccurate to assign the origins of the nation-state to Europe in the first place" because, the nation-state became prominent only "after the markets made possible by imperial penetration had motivated them" in Europe (1989: 21). The rise of the middle class at the twilight of feudalism, the hijack of state machinery, and the placating role of liberalism as a justifying ideology/philosophy during that periods are commonplace. So that the proliferation of the nation-state system by Europe is at once the spread of, and consolidation for, the market system, which by now is officially in and part of the political formation – the state (Brennan, 1989; Misra and Asirvatham, 2004).

Thus, the nation-state (or postcolonial state, more specifically) draws its defining character, outlook and purpose from the European mold, which is characteristically (or essentially) imperialistic, repressive and oppressive. Africa as a society prior to Euro-Arabian incursion is littered with well-organised social formations, purpose-driven institutions, and systematised patterns of authority organised around the purpose of the formation and regulated by the people (Ani, 1994). The Asante people, for example, had a "given territory, known territorial limits, a central government with police and army, a national language and law, and beyond these, a constitutional embodiment in the form of a council called the Asanteman", with polity which, even going by Eurocentric standards, "proceeded to behave in the best accredited manner of the European nation-state" (Davidson 1992: 59). The point is that, not that Africans are opposed to the political state or its presence is something alien for which they must resist. Rather, they are opposed to its alien basis; its force, its end, and the very purpose it sets to accomplish.

6. Postcolonial farce

While colonialism was among other things essentially authoritarian, practically exclusionary, and economically exploitative, an unequivocal parallel is evident in its replacement as post-colonial condition. The postcolonial condition is one where the state (and its guards) has successfully re-written the colonial article of faith so that successive postcolonial elites are poised "to embark on policies that [have] created non-democratic, non - accountable, and non-transparent institutions at the heart of the economy" (Legum, 1999: 44-45). In the *Heart of Darkness*, Joseph Conrad painted a vivid picture of the violence of colonialism when he spoke through the character Marlow:

> They grabbed what they could get for the sake of what was got. It was robbery with violence, aggravated murder on a great scale … The conquest of the Earth, which mostly means taking it away from those who have a different complexion or slightly flatter noses than ourselves, is not a pretty thing when you look at it too much (1982: 10).

Marlow's sentiment, though specifically describing Belgium's colonial rule in Africa, is representative of, and expresses, the enormous suffering still continuing at the core of the neocolonial enterprise actively coordinated by the postcolonial state (Sakue-Collins and Mohammed, 2023). Just as the imposition of colonial rule – its authoritarian politics and policies of exclusion – did not go unchallenged, so have the succession of postcolonial guards – its exclusionary politics and politics of extroversion – been under recurrent contestations at every turn. Edward Said aptly observed this (post)colonial continuities in the post-colony decades after formal decolonisation, arguing that postcolonial societies only graduated from dealing with imperial bigots to "tribal chieftains", civilised murders to "despotic barbarians", and narcissist economic crusaders to "mindless fundamentalists" (1993: 276).

The struggle over resources, contest over right to self-determine social values, and competing claims over legitimacy to allocate societal resources and values, however, was not only between colonial and anti-colonial forces; it transcends this divide. It also involved struggles between anti-colonial forces/interests themselves and, very importantly, between majority and minority groups, between those who are adept to traditional values and those uncritical of the disruptive imposed values of coloniality/modernity, between those who succeed the mantle of discrimination and marginalisation and those who fell under the scourge of marginalisation, and between those who now benefit from entrenched regimes of oppression and those bearing the brunt of such usurpation, dispossession, and violence. Also, somehow, this sense of marginalisation and the imperative to overturn it in favour of one's own enclave underpin the trend whereby, more often than not, any group, interest or force that finds itself at a position of advantage almost instinctively institute systems of marginalisation and exclusion in service of its myopic interest. The implication is that marginalisation, exclusion and oppression take on a self-fulfilling role of reproduction, and contests, struggles and instability become *sui generis* and the defining character of the post-colonial state.

In Nigeria, continuing from decolonisation struggles, almost all political disturbances, or 'instability' if you like, have been directed to the very foundation of the subsisting colonial edifice, the post-colonial state. From the embarrassment of Northern Members of the Lower House of Representatives in Lagos (1956) on the Motion for Independence and the reprisal attack on Southern Delegates in Kano; from the expression of fear and perceived

structural imbalance by Niger Delta elders at the Willink's Commission of 1958 to the Census Crises of 1962; to the rise and proliferation of ethno-nationality vanguards such as the IYC, INC, MASSOP, MOSOP, OPC, among others, expressing discontent with the forced creation and dissatisfaction with its extant post-colonial guards. Here and there, agitations, protests and contests of varying kinds have characterised the colonial fiat, Nigeria. These contours, gray lines and suspicions are not unfounded. As a matter of fact, they not only underscore dominant paths varying crises have taken; they remain expressive forms of deprivations and recurrent push and pull begging for critical interrogation of this colonial bastion.

It is in this context Gamal Abdel Nasser's emphasis on the imperative of the *Two Revolutions* becomes instructive. Nasser had asserted that, the first revolution, being political, is to free the masses of the people of Earth from the domination of aliens and occupying forces and to recover their rights to self-determination. And the second, being social, is to free the people from class domination and put an end to social injustices imposed by dominant interests on all the inhabitants of a given country (Praeger, 2007). This way, the first revolution is to free the people from invaders, aliens and external forces while the second revolution is to end internal domination, subversion of commonweal (however it has come to be) as well as freedom from domicile and friendly parasites. Here, we need no rocket science to discern the former as protest against the occupying forces of imperialism eulogised as colonial rule and its garrisoned guards while the latter represents protests against post-colonial ruse and its "tools and instruments" disguised as post-colonial state and elites (Praeger, 2007: 501). Thus, from the prism of Nasserism, resistance/contestations (or revolution, if you like) more often subsumed under instability is not only inevitable but a natural course of progression for a people drenched in the oppressive schemes of imperialism cum neocolonialism. These revolutions, for him, whether one at a time or simultaneously, embody a progression connecting the one to the other such that, if social justice for all the inhabitants of a given country is to be assured then, both must be construed as a long match without discountenance to historical specificity and or disjuncture(s) where possible.

The fact is that for all its fanfare and pageantry, the state that emerged after formal decolonisation was a simulacrum of colonialism itself and the postcolonial elites that have hitherto dominated it are predominantly mannequins of the officiating ministers of colonialism. This means the eruption, here and there, of 'conflicts' are similar to the struggles against initial conquest, domination and control. The surge of organised group assault challenging the postcolonial state, the agitations of ethnic nationalities and, more recently, the disaffection of the youth/masses which culminated in the #EndSARS protests are but replay of history that has largely gone unattended to in the current historical making or politics.

Today, not only are the conditions/circumstances that favoured colonial domination and exploitation present, their presence has been exploited and exacerbated to facilitate large-scale subservience while simultaneously minimising possible outburst of resistance to postcolonial politics of extraversion. Ethnic rivalry which was effectively exploited by the colonialists to diminish and delay unity of opposition to colonial rule has been revamped to give birth to the misnomer called 'tribalism', a social slur and phenomenon which mobilises the oppressed behind the oppressor as 'one of our own'. Authoritarian rule that was deployed by the colonisers to impose on and exclude the colonies in the management of their affairs has been remodeled to the proverbial 'god-fatherism' and 'anointed candidate' syndrome which imposes idiots, thieves and minions as 'popular choice' or 'peoples' choice'. The Colonial Guards who, though largely indigenous people, protected the colonisers whilst they unleash violence on their own people have been restructured and rebranded as 'Police Force', brutalising and terrorising already petrified masses while protecting those who sanction and support their petrification.

For these reasons, it appears to us that, the emphasis on political instability is misplaced. Instead, it seems far more important to understand what appears to underscore what we might see as the everyday forms of protest and resistance to an irredeemably false political arrangement denying the people/masses any sense of political belonging, self-determination and or political responsibility. From the vapid but ubiquitous conduct of public servants blanketed as 'corruption' as a form of protest to a government/state they know not what it stands for and who it serves, to the thieving elites (economic, religious, bureaucratic, political, etc.) who milk the commonwealth to feed/finance their greed and the inner circle of their 'clans' albeit discretionary, to the atavistic bigots who see everything from ethnic lens and revel in out-doing their fellow-oppressed victims under buzzwords such as 'tribalism' and region and religious jingoisms, are but expressions of protest to an alien order with no clear purpose.

Here we have in mind the unattended forms of defiance of, and resistance to, an illegitimate conglomeration parading/masquerading as the postcolonial state. A state, the people, albeit inescapable commitment to, do not see themselves as part of; espousing purposes the people are yet to identify with; and with political class who conceive of themselves as dividend-wielding and active shareholders in the corporate-politics of European partnership. In other words, the proliferation of 'instability' is an expressive form of survival from the violence of an ever-expanding and regenerative oppressive system – imperialism cum (neo)colonialism.

7. Rethinking political stability

To talk of a political state is to think of a political community whose origins and purpose emanate from the will of

the people, the very people whose will it is purposed to fulfil, at least so the theories of states have variously established. However, the proliferation of the modern Westphalian state does not imply equal and same origins underlying their emergence. Some states have emerged as the result of agreement among seemingly different people and interests, while others are product of socioeconomic considerations of foreign interests imposed on people living in a given area. Thus, whereas some states are formed out of consent and consensus according to the dominant theories of state, the post-colonial states are beaten into shape by coercion and compulsion. The implications of this are far-reaching but chief among them is that the state that emerged from, and subsist as, post-colonial condition was never bound to be stable; it was inherently and characteristically bound to be unstable due to resistance and or contestations of varying kind.

This proclivity to be unstable finds vivid manifestation in resistance, contest and conflicts that have characterised the (post-)colonial state ever since its conception to its crystallisation. Thus understood, instability in Africa is not an objective phenomenon but rather a constellation of socioeconomic cum political and historical discontinuities. It is an expression of resistance to forces and interests alien to and disruptive of the common will of the people. From precolonial wars of resistance through colonial riots and uprising, to post-colonial resentments, agitations and protests, the imperial project which subsists as state calls for postcolonial reconstruction. In this sense, if anticolonial nationalism birthed national independence in Africa, then postcolonial resistance and rebellion will have to pave way for a recalibration and reconfiguration of the outcome of the former – the postcolonial state.

In practical terms this means critical interrogation of the foundation, rationale and imperative for the continuing existence of the extant post-colonial state. Sincere merger and coincidence of the aspiration of the people and the will of the emergent structure. And, careful and calculated (re)articulation of the philosophy, purpose and means of achieving the end of the emergent political structure. A reconfigured state therefore, must first, see that its basis emanates from the will of the people to be so configured and, second, its purpose is rooted in the needs of the people. This way, the emergent or reconfigured political formation in Africa would be derived from traditional African values, though subject to critical evaluation, and replace western values of individualism, unhealthy competition and harsh anomie of market system with collectivism, cooperation or consensus-building and the warmth of organic solidarity in order for it to cater for all, and not to feed the greed of few.

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