

**WHENCE STATES FORM, WHY STATES FAIL AND HOW STATES CAN RE-BUILD: CRITICAL PERSPECTIVES ON CRISES OF ‘STATES OF FRAGILITIES’ IN AFRICA**

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**ABSTRACT:**

*The inter-state system is increasingly evolving into a global village of sort in the light of the ever widening gap of social inequalities between countries of the North and the South with its attendant spike in human miseries across the South. This has been occasioned by failing states capacities to deliver needed political goods for their citizenry, as especially rife in Africa in the recent time. Reasons for these trends are manifold and have been aptly captured by the current discourse on the crises of state fragilities in Africa in attempts to establish several causal linkages between multiple externalities and endogenous factors. This paper posits that, both external and endogenous factors are all complicit in the slide towards fragilities by African states. A plausible explanandum here seemingly will be that, ‘whence states form, why states fail, and how states can re-build’ are all stage-processes linked dialectically to their potentials to rebound or slide back into fragilities, failures or eventual collapse. The paper argues that, a state must already be weakened internally in its constitutive framework before other externalities can aggravate its slide into fragilities and eventual collapse. Therefore, the paper avers that, potentialities for such malaises are logically situated at the roots of state origins. Spike in numbers of state fragilities undoubtedly presents us with perhaps one of the most fundamental of all sundry strategic challenges to prospects for sustainable global peace and security in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. The paper highlights the strategic imports of these ominous trends and attempts to thinker out possible pragmatic responses to counter them in order to reposition African and indeed the global community on a better stand-plank so as to promote our shared ethos of a common humanity.*

**KEYWORDS: State Formation, Fragile States, State Failures, State Collapse, State Building**

**Introduction:**

The main thrust of this paper is an attempt to succinctly capture and highlight the strategic implications of the recent spike in failing state capacities across Africa resulting in a woeful human living index recounted daily by the international media and most times often swept under the carpet by the local media or at best only addressed salutary as if all is well with

Africa – the so-called cradle of human civilization. If you tune in on any news channel today, the optics and indeed the audios you get about Africa are quite mind-boggling to say the least. This is given the fact that the continent possesses what it takes in terms of natural resource endowments, salubrious inclement, large swathes of fertile geographical land mass profitable for large scale agro-productivity, including also a vibrant and youthful population needed to post perhaps one of the best human living indexes anywhere in the world. Sadly so, the reverse is the case as this paper will highlight in vivid terms plausible reasons for these trends in the proceeding sections.

Today, all across Africa, the air waves are inundated with media reports of tales of human woes and miseries one can equate to a life-time in hell itself. From instances of spikes in high risk- prone mass migration of refugees across the Mediterranean into Europe in search of greener pastures; to reports of hordes of internally displaced persons (IDPs) in locations like North-Eastern and North-Central Nigeria, in Libya, Sudan and the DR Congo to cite a few cases; and to reports of existential threats from pandemic diseases like the much dreaded Ebola virus, Lassa Fever and HIV/AIDs pandemics, Africa appears to be obviously asphyxiating under a septic pool of human miseries. .

The list of woes also include reports about broken down public infrastructures – impassable public highways that have increasingly become death-traps created by multiplicities of huge pot-holes opening up daily due to poor civil engineering workmanship. This includes also epileptic supplies of power and other life sustaining amenities. Reports also recount instances of very lax internal policing, immigrations and border controls, spike in criminalities, heightened state of internal insecurity orchestrated by the nefarious activities of terror groups like Boko Haram in North Eastern Nigeria and the marauding hordes brazenly wreaked daily by the Fulani Herdsmen also in Nigeria, including also the Al-Shabbab infamy in Kenya as well as the daredevil sea pirates on the coast of Somalia.

We also hear reports of perennial drought, famine and assertive desertification in locations like Chad and Niger; including also rising foreign national debt burdens, grinding poverty - resulting usually from poor annual national economic productivities, backlogs of unpaid salaries to public servants, spike in public sphere corruption and to a heightened state of political tensions across the continent due to bad leadership and bad governance initiatives. Indeed, the list of woes and miseries about Africa seems endless to say the least. If we then transpose implications of these awry trends onto the international scene, we can best capture how Africa's stature in the evolving new global village order is fast faltering and threatening to upturn fidelity of the new global order. Equally so, the evolving global village order is also fostering an ever widening gap of social inequalities between countries of the North and the South owing to the current drastic slide into sundry 'states of fragilities' virtually across this region. Reasons for these trends are quite manifold and have been aptly captured by the current critical discourse on the crises of state fragilities in Africa.

The general theme in the discourse on Africa attempts to (re)construct several causal linkages between multiple externalities and endogenous factors. Thus, while some scholars tend to privilege either endogenous or exogenous factors as stand-alone variables in their

analysis, this paper posits that, both external and endogenous factors are equally complicit in the general slide towards fragilities by Africa states. To highlight this assertion further, this paper asserts that, a plausible explanandum here seemingly will be that, '*whence states form, why states fail, and how states can re-build*' are all stage-processes linked dialectically to the potentials of states to rebound or slide back into fragilities, failures or eventual collapse. It is also argued further that, a state must already be weakened internally in its constitutive framework before other externalities can aggravate its slide into fragilities and eventually leading to its collapse. Therefore, the potentialities for such malaises it is argued here are logically situated at the roots of state origins in Africa. One dominant characterization of fragility in the general discourse on Africa consists of image casts of faltering state capacities to govern culminating in interferences by competing assertive shadow state structures bestraddle most times by religious demagogues bent on upturning the foundations of the evolving global village order.

These agents of doom jostle to forcefully take over large swathes of sovereign territories from fragile states in attempts to imposed banal self-rule over such territories. Where they succeed, they have been known to indoctrinate, groom and ship out perhaps the greatest wave of mass terror attacks across the globe as witnessed in the recent time. Against such a backdrop, one can say that spike in numbers of state fragilities across Africa, undoubtedly presents us with perhaps one of the most fundamental of all sundry strategic and security challenges to prospects for sustainable global peace and security in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. To understand further these trends, a concise refresh on the essence of the state in the following sections will seem apt at this instance.

The state or what Hobbes calls *The Leviathan* is perhaps one of the most ingenious social construct ever contemplated by man in the modern time. It is intended to help order human social organizations with a view to enhancing the quality of human life generally. From Socrates, Plato, Aristotle and to the more recent modern and post-modernist political thinkers and scholars alike, the general consensus has always been that, the quality of human life can best be guaranteed only within the permissible ambience of the sundry safeguards, provisions, normative order and existential certitude offered by the state via its institutional and normative outlays.

As it were, the state stands tall and proudly asserts the full weight of its legitimate authority as a sovereign over its territory, people and resource endowments. Its unique stature stems from being equipped with de facto and de jure right of dominance over every social organizational 'otherness' within its sphere of influence as well as a monopoly to legitimately utilize force to assert its authority as it delivers the much needed public goods to its citizenry. In applying Charles Tilly's (1975; and 1997) theoretical model on European state building dynamics in analyzing African trends, it is obvious the state statutorily needs to allocate to itself a four-fold strategic functions it must perform in order to sustain itself, its territory, its resource endowments and its human subjects. According to Tilly, these functions consist of the following: war making; state making; homeland protection and economic extractions functions. Thies (2007:716) however also concurs that these functions are ideally integral to the generic processes of state building. Hence a state will

falter or prosper in its stature or capacities along the threshold of a determination of whether it succeeds or fail in carrying out these statutory existential tasks.

The aims of these statutory functions are to produce a series of political goods which it must distribute equitably amongst its subjects. They include: provision of public and private security from all externalized existential threats; to it acting as a supreme legal arbiter of social disputes; as a protector of its territory, resources and people from all forms of contending internalized and existential human and natural threats to lives and properties; and as a provider of the enabling environments for inter-group social harmonies and opportunities for individuals and groups to engage in productive economic, political and social self-determinations at will.

Consequent upon the foregoing statutory provisions, the general expectations of citizens within the state is often premised on the assumptions that the quality and safety of their lives and properties, either as individuals or a corporate entity will be well protected at all times by the state. Thus, instead of fear of a Hobbesian characterization of a lifetime that is *'solitary, nasty, brutish and short'* (which describes in gory terms a general state of anarchy and ever pervasive potentials for endless wars during the pre-state era of human organizations), what every citizen dreams of within the state is an enabling ambience for *'socially interactive, peaceful, blissfully fruitful and elongated life span'* – to co-opt my inversion of the standard Hobbesian dictum here. Sadly enough, the quality of human life today across most state instances, especially in the so-called Third World regions Africa in particular, is only a tiny grey-shade that demarcates from the fringes of this gory Hobbesean pre-state image construct.

Sundry explanans have been advanced to rationalize these dysfunctions in states capacities across Africa. Theis (2007) asserts that a general failure of states to perform these functions in Africa is owed largely to pervasive ethnic rivalries. He also adds that, states that are relatively stable and progressive are those that are able to master and habitualize their extractive capacities while been able to strike workable compacts between the various ethnic groups in each state instance. Of all these functions, it would seem scholars (especially from the predatory theoretical genre) are seemingly unanimous on the view that, the extractive capacities of states, whilst complimenting others functions, it effectively trounces them in terms of its strategic import for the existential imperatives of the state.

Herbst (1990:123) also adds that the general lack of extractive capacities by the African state derives from the relative lack of externalized security threats that can lead to inter-state wars. In this instance, it is implied here that, war ideally is a veritable trigger for increased state taxation and other extraction capacities as Eurocentric trends have evinced. Buzan and Weaver (2003:222) however attribute the dysfunctions arising from such faltering capacities to extract ironically to OAU's (now AU's) stabilizing role in mitigating the threats of inter-state wars across Africa through the annulment of any quest to re-draw Africa's Colonial borders by force that forecloses eventuality of war. Africa has therefore experienced a steady slide into human miseries over time and a general decline in state statures across Africa.

The consequences of such a decline however appear quite dire for the quality of human existence. Human lives across the continent have been arbitrarily and willfully truncated by grinding poverty, pandemic diseases and a general growing existential security threats from the maleficence of shadow state actors like Boko Haram in Nigeria, ISIS/ISIL in Libya, Al Shabbab in Kenya and even the dreadful sea pirates on the shores of Somalia to mention a few instances. As the case may be, these ominous trends have since elicited the dedicated policy attention of sympathizers of Africa as well as research interests of pundits and scholars alike in the recent time. This is given the obvious strategic implications of these trends for the overall fidelity of humanity in general and global peace and security in particular. This paper will attempt to add a critical perspective to the general discourse on the strategic implications of the crises of ‘states of fragilities’, especially as they impact Africa – the so-called cradle of human civilization.

### ***Strategic Implications of ‘States of Fragilities’ for Academic Research and Policy Frames***

The gory trends or indeed unsavoury image-casts recounted in the foregoing presents us with very huge challenges in the areas of academic research and policy frameworks. I will treat four strategic areas which in my view, demand urgent actions:

- i) There is a dire need to critically chronologize the origins and dynamics of this human miseries currently unfolding across Africa with a view to ascertain the causal-effects of the key variables complicit in each instance of ‘states of fragilities’ on the continent.
- ii) There is need to also demonstrate that the causations between ‘*whence states form, why states fail and how states can re-build*’ have strategic implications for the characters and manners of state formations in Africa. The aim here is to devise ways and means to reposition the African state construct on a better pedestal and to create the much needed enabling environments for enhanced quality of human living across the continent. The assumptions herebeing that, the root causes of state fragilities that could lead to weaknesses, failures and eventually, to systemic collapse can effectively be located at the nexus of the characters of state formations in Africa (Ovie-D’Leone, 2008).
- iii) There is also need for the academia and the policy frames to explore useful synergies through broad-based collaborative exchanges in the areas of research, policy formulation and implementation with a view to driving genuine state capacity building activities that can upturn these ugly indexes recounted in the foregoing analogies.

In any case, to address these fundamental issues highlighted in the foregoing, this paper is structured into ten sections: *Section 1* introduces the general frame of analysis; *Section 2* attempts to operationalize some basic concepts that are germane to the general discourse in this study area; *Section 3* highlights the theoretical frame utilized; *Section 4* profiles a review of impirical literature in this area of study; *Section 5* highlights an analytical background to some of the dominant causal factors complicit in the general relapse of African states into ‘states of fragilities’, state failures and eventually state collapse; *Section 6* highlights the basic characterization of what a fragile state is in essence; *Section 7*

critically interrogates the strategic consequences of failing state capacities in Africa for the global community; *Section 8* unpacks the menu of the series of criteria often utilized by analysts and pundits alike in measuring ‘states of fragilities’; *Section 9* prescribes modalities for state re-building imperatives across Africa with emphasis on how we can marry theory and praxis in useful synergies; *Section 10* concludes the study.

### **Conceptual Framework:**

A careful review of current literature in this study area does evince the dominant usage of the following terms by scholars and pundits using different analytical and theoretical perspectives. They include: ‘state formation’; ‘nation and state building’; ‘nation-state’; ‘states of fragilities’; ‘fragile state’; ‘failing state’; ‘state failure’; ‘state collapse’; and ‘state of fragility indicator’.

➤ *State Formation:*

It is a term often used to describe a multi-staged process where any human social organization or community begins to activate its inherent rights to self-determination. This is specifically in the area of expression of its collective political will and corporate group social identity with intent to project a sovereign claimant over its territory, natural resources, people and to be so recognized internationally as a unique cluster of humanity distinct from the ‘otherness’ of other geographically contiguous human communities (Ovie-D’Leone, 2008).

➤ *Nation and State Building:*

*Nation Building* generically refers to the organic origins of a state instance and encompasses projection of the social image-cast of a people recognized internationally as uniquely different from other social entities. On the other hand, *State Building* amounts to “the establishment, re-establishment and strengthening of a public structure in a given national territory capable of delivering public goods’ to its citizens” (Fukuyama, 2004).

➤ *Nation-State*

The nation is a compact group of people sharing common history, ancestry, culture and racial stock, while the state or the nation-state projects a sovereign polity expression of that nation or a multiplicity of other coexisting national units over a distinctively defined geographical space.

➤ *States of Fragilities:*

This term is conceived here in this study and is taken to mean any instance where and when fragile states falter in their capacities to deliver public goods across the 12 criteria widely used by pundits and policy think tanks internationally to ascertain failing state capacities. These criteria are conceptualized as critical milestones in that ominous slide from fragilities onto total state failure or collapse (Rotberg, 2004). Other general complimentary views, especially as advanced by Ulrich (2004) tendentiously links fragility with ‘a general propensity by elites not to subject the state to democratic norms and the rule of law’. States of fragilities therefore, as adopted herein, also incorporates this dualism in an attempt to effectively marry the focus on state capacities evaluation or measurements using

the quantitative approach and the other democratic deficit approach index that incorporates the qualitative approach.

➤ *Fragile State:*

A fragile state is one which has demonstrated potentials to fail multiple tests out of the 12 listed fragility indicator measurements posted by State Fragility Index (2005) as well as one that manifests multiple indices of democratic deficits or gaps as advanced by Ulrich (2004). Again, the general assumption here is that such a state instance is also failing or unable to subject civic governance to democratic norms and the rule of law. The dual frame advanced here also dialectically compliments the earlier notion of ‘states of fragilities’ measurement.

➤ *State Failure Indicators*

From a generic point of view, a failed state simply implies the lack or absence of capacities to effectively govern a sovereign territory leaving veritable windows of opportunities for shadow state actors to fill the void. Bates (2008) defines state failure as the “implosion of the state and where the state transforms itself into an instrument of predation’ and effectively loses its monopoly of the means of force”. Rotberg (2004) also describes ‘state failure’ as a scenario where we have total ‘failure of public institutions to deliver positive political goods to citizens on a scale likely to undermine the legitimacy and existence of the state itself’. Consequently, it is the degree of delivery of political goods that largely determines the relative strength, weaknesses or potentials for state failures generally. Rotberg (2004:5-7) further presents us with a check-list for state failure indicators consisting of the following:

- i) Heightened state of social disharmony between groups
- ii) Lax or no border controls and ineffective policing
- iii) Spike in criminality and political violence
- iv) Corruption of public institutions and officialdom
- v) Decay in public infrastructures

Other scholars like Bogdandy (2005) have also added the following indicators into the generic checklist above. They include the following:

- i) Economic underdevelopment due to a very narrow mono-product national productivity baseline
- ii) Bad governance initiatives (consisting of a general lack of transparency, accountability, probity and legal decorum in officialdom).
- iii) Faltering democratic culture that readily back-stages the rule of law and effective operation of its due processes.
- iv) Overt external dependence for internal security and brazen external interference in a state’s internal affairs.

➤ *State Collapse or Collapsed State*

According to Rotberg (2003:10), a collapsed state is a “rare and extreme version of a failed state. In a collapsed state, political goods are obtained through private or ad hoc means [or they are either outsourced or high-jacked into the black markets by shadow state actors]. Security is equated with the rule of the strong. A

collapsed state exhibits a vacuum of authority. It is a mere geographical expression, a black hole into which a polity has fallen”.

➤ *State of Fragility Indicators*

This conception refers to an index that outlines a state’s potentials to fail in its capacities across the 12 sets of criteria utilized to measure ‘states of fragilities’ by the Freedom House Project and the Fragile State Index. This yardstick consist of a set of measurements spanning the rubric of Social, Economic and Political-Military inherent capabilities of states and where a state’s capacities to govern or perform its statutory functions are usually assessed. This frame also is made to incorporate the democratic deficit accounting as proposed by Ulrich (2004).

**Theoretical Framework:**

In addressing the sundry research issues raised here, the paper adopts a critical analytical frame of discourse that privileges Charles Tilly’s model of the predatory theoretical focus on European state building dynamics as a working frame. This preference is informed by the seeming usefulness of Tilly’s (1975[1997]; and 2000) centre-piont theoretical assertion for analyzing contemporary state building trends across Africa. He asserts that ‘*war made the European state and the European state made war*’ as part of a chain of three other statutory functions a state must perform in order to survive. The logic of this preference inheres in the irony and truism that European powers created European states and the same powers also created largely, most of the African states – save Ethiopia and Liberia that were never under any form of European Colonial rule. Consequently, this paper argues that, if most states in Europe (according to Tilly’s origins of states narratives) have since stabilized through the instrumentations of war and have since asserted themselves enviably on the global stage as key hegemons, the obvious conclusions one can only rational make in this instance about the rather awry trends across Africa will be, there must be some critical defaults in the manners of conceptions, and implimentation of the state constructs in Africa by European Colonial powers that are now currently experiencing what have been christened here in this paper as sundry ‘states of fragilities’(Ovie-D’Leone, 2008; and 2018).

**Empirical Review:**

The general discourse on Africa’s pervasive ‘states of fragilities’ has elicited sundry research endeavours across the academia in the recent time. Attempts will be made in this section to briefly review some key literatures in this area with a view to enforcing the strategic imports of the current research focus. This is given the fact that the African ‘state of fragilities’ syndrome is a hydra-head that has a far reaching implications for the global order and hence it needs to be tackled effectively using a multi-pronged approach that incorporates multi- and inter-disciplinary methodologies and tools as well as broad collaborative research synergies between the academia and policy frames across the continent. In this light, the following studies in this area will be quite instructive for achieving this goal here:

Patrick (2007), in his ‘*Failed States and Global Security: Empirical Questions and Policy Dilemmas*’, situates his study at the critical nexus of a determination of ‘states of fragilities’



from the stand point of analyzing causal factors responsible for failing capacities of states to effectively govern their sovereign territories. It relies extensively on the quantitative approach championed by the State Fragility Index (SFI) accounting methodology. Call, C. T. (2011), in his *'Beyond the Failed State: Towards Conceptual Alternatives'*, utilizes a complimentary qualitative approach to measure *'states of fragilities'* and situates his analysis at the nexus of the abilities of states and their institutions to proceed progressively and uninterrupted across three dimensions of the democratization and consolidation continuum. Where there are notable gaps, a state is assumed to be experiencing *'states of fragilities'*. The three dimensions of possible gaps in democratization which he posited consist of: capacity gaps; security gaps and legitimacy gaps.

Kaplan (2008), while focusing his attention on *'Fixing Fragile States: A New Paradigm for Development'*, interrogates the legitimacy basis of states and the characters of their constitutive structures with a view to ascertaining those factors, logics and trade-offs made between groups and individuals at the formative stages now complicit in sundry *'states of fragilities'*. This research focus will be instructive for instance in the ongoing attempts by Nigerians to restructure the federation. It is a move that will logically require a critical review of the logics of the 1914 Sir Lord Lugard's foray into political adventurism. In this stead, Nigerians need to determine the current validity and rationale for the Colonial logic of administrative convenience requiring a union of the North and Southern Protectorates and indeed if there is need to evolve new logics and national political compacts as a way to move the nation forward.

Gros (1996) in his own analysis titled, *'Towards a Taxonomy of Failed States in the New World Order: Decaying Somalia, Liberia, Rwanda and Haiti'*, traces the origins of states and the unique characters of their constitutive frameworks as basis to determine their potentialities for a general slide towards *'states of fragilities'*. This study also resonates the claimant of this paper that *'whence states form, why states fail and how states re-build'* are critical causations situated at the roots of origins of state formations and where the potential triggers for their slide into *'states of fragilities'* are sowed (obviously through human defaults or culpable commissions) quite early in the life cycle of a state.

Rotberg (2004), in his contributions titled *'When States Fail, Causes and Consequences'*, highlights the potentials for growth of criminal violence within the state as an indicator of a state's failing capacities to govern. It also amplifies the *'security first'* analogy as basis for determining the stature of a state's potentials along the *'states of fragilities'* continuum. Also Levitt's (2012) piece on *'Why Nations Fail? The Origins of Power, Prosperity and Poverty'*, adopts a different perspective from the general policy and academic focus on the *'states of fragilities'* discourse and instead chooses to highlight the vagaries of faltering capacities of state institutions from the perspectives of their inability to extract as the bane of *'states of fragilities'*. This study also promotes the causation that exists between over centralized national bureaucracies and propensities for public sphere corruption by civil servants and their lackeys in government.

Finally, Taylor's (2013) piece on *'State Failure, Global Issues'* assesses failing states capacities to control and govern their territories from the point of view of a general failure of elites to consummate workable political compacts and the impact of other social

pressures as well as other existential challenges emanating from within the states itself. This study highlights the crises of leadership currently besetting states like Nigeria in particular and indeed many other African nations in general. This trend however demands that African elites should find ways and means to (re)negotiate workable compacts needed to reposition their states on better pedestals and primed for enduring peace, security, growth and national developments.

**Causal Factors for ‘States of Fragilities’ in Africa:**

The range of causal factors complicit in ‘states of fragilities’ across Africa ideally are clustered under two dominant umbrellas: endogenous factors and exogenous factors. This is tandem with the logic advanced by this study’s title which effectively captures the general themes on the ‘states of fragilities’ discourse about Africa and with a highlight of how scholars are generally of the consensus that endogenous factors seemingly trump exogenous factors in catalyzing ‘states of fragilities’ across Africa. For instance, Rotberg (2005; 2004a; and 2004b) posits that, ‘nation-states fail because they are convulsed by internal violence and can no longer deliver positive political goods to their inhabitants. Their governments lose legitimacy, and the very nature of the particular nation-state itself becomes illegitimate in the eyes and in the hearts of a growing plurality of its citizens’. It is against this backdrop, that this paper has outlined in the proceeding section a cluster of plausible endogenous and exogenous factors that are unique to the continent and which have exerted high potentials to propel African states into ‘states of fragilities’ in the recent time (Ovie-D’Leone, 2018).

*Endogenous factors that can influence a state’s capacity to govern in Africa*

- i) Where there is little or no useful compact between the elites to govern according to democratic norms and the rule of law on one hand; and where we have a sharp disconnect between the elites and the masses who feel perpetually marginalized from the nation’s political processes due to pervasive ethnic colourations of national politics. Davidson (1992), Young (1988) and Kasfir (1983) attribute prevalence of ethnicity and the admixture of patrimonial authoritarianism to lasting legacies of alien Colonial civic administrative structures that conflate the polity and private space. In this instance, the state is cast in the mold of a vacant estate each group is at will to plunder as their private domain when ever they are able to seize political power by force or other means. RothChild and Olorunsola (1983) also highlight the vageries of inter-ethnic rivalries in heterogenous states across Africa. They assert that the ethnic unit becomes a veritable mechanism to mobilize and secure state control of resources. Kasfir (1983) highlights further the intensification of inter-ethnic rivalries in such blurred causations between the polity and society.
- ii) Where there is paucity of national funds to effectively govern owing to unwholesome public looting or where we have a dramatic national economic downturn arising from the adversities and strictures of wilful implementation of a national mono-product economic productivity system as well as over

centralization of national bureaucracy often leading to spike in public sphere corruption

- iii) Where we have failing capacities for effective taxation or a relapse into ineffective extraction activities by public institutions due to interferences by competing shadow states actors (as occurred during the civil wars in Sierra Leone and Liberia where the two governments were seemingly seen as equal rivals with rebels in extracting the states' natural resources – diamonds for export).
- iv) Where a state fails to formulate and implement feasible public policies aimed at capacity building in the areas of human capital development useful in indigenization of technology – often a prerequisite for a national industrialization take-off stage. Human flight and chronic brain drain are necessary fall-outs (Ovie-D'Leone, 2008).
- v) Where the unwieldy size of the sovereign territory of a state becomes difficult for effective policing and exercise of basic administrative control due to dwindling national income, interferences by shadow state actors often prowling on the fringes of such territories with intent to subvert authority of the state at the slightest opportunity.

*Exogenous factors that can influence a state's capacity to govern in Africa*

- i) Where the iron-clad grips of a former European imperial power are so deep-rooted like in most of the Francophone states across West Africa. This scenario often offers potentials for a general slide into 'state of fragilities' due to over reliance or over dependence on the external power as well as its resultant undue external interference in the internal affairs of such an independent state (Ovie-D'Leone, 2008).
- ii) Where the degree of international amity hitherto enjoyed by a state falters as a result of gross counter-mobilization on the foreign scene against an incumbent regime in any state instance. This too can become a trajectory for a slide into 'states of fragilities'. Examples of Nigeria under the late general Sanni Abacha regime in 1998 and Libya under President Mammār Ghadafi are good reference points here (Ovie-D'Leone, 2008).
- iii) Where there is a slight shift in the character of prevailing international politics or 'zeitgeist' - Linz and Stepan, (1990) reference to the prevailing mood of dominant members of the international community. When it wanes unfavourably towards an incumbent regime in any state instance, this can also lead to a slide into 'states of fragilities'. A good example is Zimbabwe under President Robert Mugabe before his recent ouster from power in 2018.
- iv) Where there is the presence or otherwise of strategic mineral deposits required on the foreign market, the so-call 'resource cause' syndrome tendentiously creates a domino effect that mitigates a state's capacity to govern. This is especially more pronounced in that portion of a state's territory where those minerals are located. This scenario can become very chronic if there is an on-going civil war and the rebel side gets foreign backings against the government forces. A good example is the current

situation in Congo DRC and the recent blood diamond trades in Sierra Leone and Liberia during the recent civil wars in both states. Theis (2007:719) asserts that, in Africa, the ethnic group is more political than cultural in its characterization. Consequently, the state tendetiously also defines ethnicity as well as the ambience for inter-ethnic competition often creating potentials for conflicts.

As is evident from the trends alluded to above under the cluster of exogenous factors, one can say that, the externalized factors tend to gain credence as culpable variables for fostering states of fragilities, only after the internal variables have created the festering grounds for the external variables to grow like moulds on damp surfaces. Consequently, the internalized variables always tend to trump the externalized variables as causal agents for creating 'states of fragilities' in Africa.

### **Characterization of 'States of Fragilities' in Africa:**

The Fund for Peace (a US-based international non-profit making organization active in the areas of conflict preventions, conflict risks assessments think tank and also progenitor of the Conflict Assessment System Tool – CAST) has provided us with a checklist to characterize any state instances that is already in 'states of fragilities'. This characterization model consists of the following variables:

- i) A general loss of control over a state's territory or the monopoly of the legitimate use of physical force within that territory – especially, where and when there is a shadow state actor dominant on the scene.
- ii) The general erosion of legitimate authority of the state to effectively engage in collective decision making apparatus within the state.
- iii) An inability to effectively provide public goods especially where there are backlogs of unpaid salaries for civil servants and dilapidation of public infrastructures.
- iv) An inability to interact effectively with other members of the comity of nations possibly due to pervasive sanctions, boycotts or outright blockages or drastic foreign capital flights.

### **Consequences of Africa's 'States of Fragilities':**

The consequences of a state experiencing 'states of fragilities' are obviously very dire and pose sundry challenges not only for regional institutions and contiguous neighbours, but the global community at large. The Fund for Peace offers us some inspirations in attempt to identify and address these maladies. In their checklist, the following high points are most prominent as plausible fall-outs of 'states of fragilities'. We can apply effective these models in analyzing the African trends. They include:

- i) Pervasive public sphere corruption especially in the nation's bureaucracies
- ii) Spike in the level of criminalities and social violence within the state

- iii) Emergence of shadow state actors on the national stage with competing interests at variance with those of the state – a scenario that is heavily laden with potentials for outbreaks of civil wars
- iv) A deluge of migration of internally displaced persons (IDP) as refugees within the state and also catalysts for mass migrations that pose grave logistic challenges to customs and immigration services abroad.
- v) A drastic economic downturn often catalyzed by a hyper inflation and a devaluation of the national currency. This obviously is also a drag on the global economy and a prerequisite for shadow state actors to assert themselves on the national stage.

### **Criteria for Measuring States of Fragilities:**

Several nomenclatures have been used to tag measurements for states of fragilities. These have ranged from the novelty proposed by the State Fragility Index – SFI (formerly Fragility Index (FI) introduced in 2005 by the *Foreign Policy Magazine*. We also have the Freedom House Index (FDI), the Human Development Index (HDI), the World bank Governance Development Index (WBGDI) and the Conflict Assessment System tools (AST) introduced by the Fund for Peace. However, within the academia and policy think tank frameworks, the most widely employed model is the State Fragility Index (SFI). The SFI incorporates two standard measurements of ‘states of fragilities: these are, the Quantitative approach model adopted by the Fragile State Index and the Qualitative approach adopted by other independent scholars like Rotberg (2004) and Ulrich (2004) in their various explanans.

### ***The Quantitative Approach and the Fragile State Index Yardstick***

The Fragile State Index applies a 10-point ranking each for 12 indicators of sundry ‘states of fragilities’ ranging from failing state capacities and democratic deficits or gaps spanning across social, economic and political-military determinants where a state’s inherent potentials to govern can be effectively monitored and assessed periodically to determine when a state starts to slide into ‘states of fragilities’. The clusters under each heading are composed as follows:

#### *Social Indicators for ‘states of fragilities’*

- i) Demographic pressures
- ii) Presence of refugees or IDPs in a state
- iii) Widespread group grievances
- iv) Human flight and brain drain from a state

#### *Economic Indicators*

- i) Uneven economic development
- ii) Pervasive poverty and general economic decline

#### *Political Indicators*

- i) Degree of a state’s legitimacy to govern
- ii) State of human rights safeguards and guarantees and adherence to the rule of law
- iii) Degree of compact or fractionalization between elites

- iv) Quality of the public service delivery systems
- v) Status of the security services and apparatus
- vi) Potentials or actuality of external intervention or interference in the internal affairs of a state

In the 2017 Fragile State Index ranking of over 177 states worldwide, at least 25 states in Africa (Nigeria was ranked at number 15) were adjudged to be worst cases of 'states in fragilities'. It is instructive to also note here that, the 'state of fragilities' assessment for states is not automatic but premised on two conditionality: a) a determination as to whether such a state is a UN member, b) a determination as to whether or if there is available large sample sizes and data for that country in the period under review. In any case, when assessed, states across the world are ranked across six coloured boxes shaded in a descending order of preference as follows:

- i) Box 1= Green (10 Points) – Sustainable
- ii) Box 2= Yellow (40 points) – Stable
- iii) Box 3= Orange (70 Points) –Warning
- iv) Box 4= Dark Red (100 points) –Alert
- v) Box 5= Dark Red (120 points) – Alert+
- vi) Box 6= Grey (No or disputed information)

### ***The Qualitative Approach that Privileges Democratic Gains in a State as a basic Operating Variable***

This measurement was evolved against the backdrop of critical queries advanced by scholars like Ulrich (2004) pertaining to some inherent weakness of the Fragile State Index accounting. The central argument here is that, the Failed State Index (FSI) fails to incorporate the useful Human Development Index (HDI) as well as a general tendency of this model to conflate 'fragility' and 'vulnerability' as operational indicators of underdevelopment. Resultantly, these scholars propose that, a better approach should be one that focuses on the depth of democratic culture within a state since democracy tends to encompass all other variables posted by the quantitative model. In this instance, whilst privileging the 'security first' considerations, Ulrich proposes three yardsticks for democratization measurements where states are expected to make appreciable gains: a) a state's monopoly of violence; b) a state's legitimate claims to and exercise of sovereign and political power, c) presence of and adherence to the rule of law. Like the SFI ranking of states, this model also incorporates a graduation of democratic gains which a state can make into its accounting. States are ranked as follows under this frame of analysis: Consolidated/Consolidating States; Weak States; Failing States and Collapsed States as variances in a continuum of 'states of fragilities' – this is an attempt to highlight areas where there are gaps or the so-called democratic deficits within a state.

### **Modalities for Implementing State Re-Building in Africa:**

The notion of state building is very pervasive in the general current discourse about Africa. It involves a dedicated chain of activities that can be placed in a graduated continuum. This

is what Kirby (1991:122) calls the '*cycle of state creation*'. In attempts to rate Africa's progression along such a continuum, Theis (2007) asserts that pervading trends evince a fact that Africa is still crawling at the beginning of this cyclical process since most states across the continent have failed woefully to habitualize some of the basics in their statutory existential functions. There are abounds a wide variety of theoretical postulation about how states can rebuild, especially in instances where and when they relapse into 'states of fragilities', state failures or outright state collapse.

However, it is argued here that the model provided by Tilly (1985[1997] and 2000), which succinctly recounts the dynamics of state building in Europe and the exigencies of war, seemingly hold better attractions for analyzing and guiding attempts to rectify trends of 'states of fragilities' across Africa. The logic of such an option inheres in the claimants that European powers created European states and largely speaking, African states are ideally European creation (Ovie-D'Leone, 2008). It is therefore by applying literally similar prescriptions to the 'products' of the same 'producer' that we can unravel the myths and realities surrounding the phenomenon ascendancy of European powers and states onto global dominance. Equally so, this also offers us a veritable stand plank to critically interrogate the woeful failures of states and the resultant demonization and denigration of the African state construct, especially in Eurocentric discourse in the recent time (Ovie-D'Leone, 2013).

Tilly's (1985; and 2000) theory is premised on an avowal of the utilities of war as a catalyst for effective nation-state building in Europe. His famous dictum: '*the European states made war and war made the European states*' has continued to reverberate right through the ages across the academia and policy frameworks. In any case, he also affirms the causations between capacities of a state to perform its statutory functions and its potentials to slide into 'states of fragilities' with three other strategic state functions. According to him, there are four clusters of statutory state functions wherefrom we can ascertain a state's strength, weaknesses or potentials for a slide into 'states of fragilities'. The four state functions are as follows:

- i) *War making functions* – where a state is assessed as per its ability or capacities to effectively eliminate all forms of external rivalries and any counter claimant to its sovereign powers and authority (the state is expected to build up its military and associated bureaucracies)
- ii) *State making functions* - where the state is assessed on its capacities to eliminate internal rivals and establish effective control over its sovereign territory, resources and people (the state is expected to show strong capacities in building an effective internal policing system and associated bureaucracies)
- iii) *Protection functions* – where a state is assessed as per its ability to offer adequate guarantees for individual and group rights in return for their voluntary acquiescence to the authority of the state over them (the state is expected to build independent courts and effective representative assemblies as safeguards for civic rights).

- iv) *Extraction functions* – where a state is assessed as per its capacities to build viable state institutions for economic extractions: taxation, economic productivity, industrialization and manufacturing as well as the enabling environment for transparency, accountability and probity in the public space. Theis (2007:720) asserts that in the absence of any viable prospects of inter-state wars on a grand scale across Africa, there is very little chance for the African state to forge a national ethos or re-align the usually contentious state-society relations in manners needed to enthrone enduring representative governments and the rule of law that generally promote extraction solid functions. Kingston and Spears (2004) including also Lemke (2003) highlight the mitigating factors of prevalence of foreign non-state actors like multi-national corporations currently engaged in the extractive processes across the African continent. Usually, they inform, the interests of these actors in engaging in extractions often run contrary to those of the local governments. As it were much of this intervening agency has not been fully accounted for in the discourse on failures by African states to effectively extract their resources for development.

***Applying Tilly's Theory to Africa's 'states of fragilities' Scenario***

As stated in the foregoing, Tilly's theory seems apt in critically addressing unfolding trends of 'states of fragilities' in the African context, but there is a need to re-adapt certain portions of this model where we certainly would have potentials to post inverse results he did not intend. With respect to:

- i) Tilly's war making functions, it would require the African states to build capacities in the areas of their military institutions so as to be able to present credible deterrence, this time, not against any maleficent state (since there has not been any real inter-state war in Africa since the last couple of years), but against competing shadow state actors like Boko Haram in Nigeria, Al Shabbab in Kenya, ISIL in Libya and the ethnic warlords and gory pirates off the coast of Somalia.
- ii) State making functions prosecuted by application of sheer force as proposed by Tilly, this cannot be a useful approach in state re-building anywhere in Africa. Obviously, this will be an open invitation to chaos and anarchy across the continent given the rather wide gulf of distrust between composite ethnos within African states. Rather, there is need to tweak or invert this Tilly's prescription a little bit and explore ways and means where elites can float workable compacts that actively aim at engaging all groups – major and minor to become equal stake holders in designing and implementing the national political project. Pruning down of bureaucracies to manageable proportions so as to reduce waste, corruption as well as community policing and regional autonomies for minorities, represent veritable formulas for achieving appreciable gains in Tilly's state making functions.
- iii) Tilly's protection functions, this too can be applicable in Africa from the standpoint of state elites going back to the African roots to extract useful



- models of traditional institutions, norms and symbols as ways and means to re-build feasible modern institutions and civic cultures. Public institutions across Africa have been known to suffer deficits of legitimacy due to their apparent disconnect with Africa's rather rich pre-colonial traditional institutional heritages. Citizens of a state – especially in heterogeneous ones like Nigeria, will feel more secured when they relate with institutions that promote some elements of their traditional values and symbols. Entrenching these traditional extractions in national constitutions presents us with veritable means to effectively secure the citizenry of any state instance in Africa (Bogdandy, 2005). Englebert (2000) informs that the general lack of political legitimacy across Africa's failing states contributes largely to potential sources or trajectories for their precarious situations at the moment.
- iv) The extraction functions, from Tilly's perspectives also advances utility of the use of force. This would only be effective in Africa where and when the elites are able to purge themselves effectively of their propensity to steal and squander public funds at will as is currently rife across Africa. In this instance, it behoves the elites to create an enabling environment characterized by transparency, probity and accountability of public stewardship at all levels. Scholars are of the consensus that, it will be foolhardy to compel or rationalize public taxation under the current pervasive atmosphere of high level public corruption now rife across Africa.

### **Conclusions:**

Against the backdrop of the foregoing analysis, the paper concludes that existing literatures suggests that, the Africa's state constructs are obviously tethering on the verge of sundry 'states of fragilities'. And given the abject human miseries now experienced across virtually all nations on the continent, there is now an urgent need to devise ways and means to rectify these maladies. As existing literatures in this area also tendentiously suggest, the roots of such 'states of fragilities' are ideally located at the critical nexus of the manners of state formations across Colonial Africa, including also, the awry manners of implementing state-building functions by Africa's crop of political elites.

Therefore, a logical takeoff point for any purposeful 'states of fragilities' rectification process will then require that elites across the various ethnic divides should be mandated possibly internationally with the right incentives or compulsion one way or the other to garner the political will needed to (re)negotiate new state (re)building logics that accommodate all disparate interests across the ethnic divides in each state instance. Where there is a dire need to out-rightly dismantle existing state arrangements owing to proven cases of gross and irreconcilable inter-group incompatibilities, the example demonstrated by the voluntary dissolution of the former Yugoslav Republic by the composing units, should act as an inspiration for the African elites (Ovie-D'Leone, 2008). No more should Africans be consigned to a life time of human miseries in existing amorphous and dummy state structures now beset with sundry 'states of fragilities' challenges.

The incumbent international treaty rule premised on the sanctities and inviolability of Africa's Colonial borders vide the seemingly austere provisions of the Montevideo

Convention effectively froze Africa's Colonial state borders at the inception of European Colonial adventurism on the continent. This is anathema to a renaissance Africa where it is hoped the Human Development Index (HDI) and the Quality of Life Index (QLI) would be effectively catalyzed when Africans are allowed to draw their own national borders themselves through mutual inter-group negotiations.

The paper however concludes on a cautious note that, there is a dire need now to urgently re-construct or re-constitute the foundational props of the African state conception. This move should logically flow as it were, from purposeful international capacity building on multiple fronts resulting in promotion of broad-based collaborations between the academia and policy frameworks spanning the realm of politics, society and economics as basis for convoking several sovereign national conferences across Africa. These fora are to be basis for mutual negotiations and to be monitored or sanctioned by the international community with a view to confronting head-long the hydra-head of Africa's 'states of fragilities' syndrome. The fact is, international recognition is a natural follow-up to any new state (re)formation, hence, a better way to gain instancy of international endorsement and recognition, is to get the comity of nations involved as informed observers and non-aligned umpires right from the very beginning in those processes of proposed rectifications of the incumbent 'states of fragilities' hydra-heads across Africa.

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