HEGEMONY AND CRISIS OF STATE IN POST-COLONIAL SOCIETIES:

A THEORETICAL EXPLORATION.

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ABSTRACT

Scholars have explained the implications of colonization on the colonial societies, but none has explained the implications to include crisis of hegemony and crisis of state. And this is the thrust of this paper, an interrogation of hegemony and the state in order to explain why post-colonial societies lack hegemonic order and a stable state resulting in instability, violence and chaos making it difficult for post-colonial societies to experience growth and then develop. Crisis of hegemony and crisis of state are occasioned by lack of cohesive dominant class, the dominant class that is always in rancorous, violent and sometimes bloody factional struggle for power and because of that, the post-colonial societies do not have the peace to evolve hegemonic order, a process that will embody the dominant values and culture that will guide the society. Consequently, because of their belligerent dominant class, the post-colonial societies find it difficult to evolve a ruling class that will consolidate a state, as a result, there is no stable state to articulate meaningful policies for the development of the society. Thus, there is need to redefine state-society relations in the post-colonial societies, within a new paradigm of state formation that will reflect their colonial experience.

Keywords; Hegemony, Colonization, Post-Colonial Societies, Crisis of State.

INTRODUCTION

The post-colonial societies now constitute a field of study where literature on the subject is legion. The interest of scholars in the field is understandable as almost two-third of the countries of the world today were once under colonial rule. And the colonial masters, in the last five hundred years were Europeans. Thus, countries without a history as a colony, leaving aside the ex-colonial powers themselves are few and far between (Hague and Harrop, 2010).

The field of post-colonial studies is therefore wide and varied, and the widely divergent experiences of the colonized territories attest to this fact. Thus, if the term is used in its nominal meaning, countries like the United States of America, Canada, Australia, India and Nigeria will all be termed post-colonial societies. Consequently, there is considerable debate over the precise parameters of the field and in particular the definition of the term post-colonial, used in a general sense. Therefore, the post-colonial societies as a field of study, focuses on the interactions between European nations and the societies they colonized in the modern period. In other words, post-colonial societies are the modern territories that have been preceded by colonization.(https://scholarblogs.emiry.edu/post colonial studies/about-post-colonial studies.)

In post-colonial societies, particularly the settlers ones, the new arrivals sought to supplant indigenous communities, a goal that was ruthlessly achieved. In doing so, the colonizers brought with them segments of a European tradition which they recreated and adapted for the colonized territories (Hague and Harrop, 2010). Consequently, each colonial power deposited a unique state and country in its areas of control. And in Africa the effects of colonization, even though by different European powers, have been profound and indelible. And as agued by (Ake, 1981) the experience of western colonization remains the most decisive event in the history of Africa.

Our attention on Africa, in this paper, is not just because of the epochal effects of colonization on the continent, but because among the continents that experienced colonial rule, Africa remains the most backward, being the only continent that still depends on her colonial masters for food, and healthcare, economic and financial supports.

Even though scholars have explained the implications of colonization on African colonial societies, but none has explained the implications to include crisis of hegemony and crisis of state. It is time we shift attention to the problem of hegemony and the state in order to explain why post-colonial African societies lack hegemonic order and a stable state the result of which is instability, violence and chaos. In Africa, crisis of hegemony and that of state are occasioned by lack of cohesive dominant class, the dominant class that is always in rancorous, violent and sometimes bloody factional struggle for power and because of that, the ruling elites do not have the peace to evolve hegemonic order, a process that will embody the dominant values and culture that will guide the society.

In this paper therefore, attention is on Africa, as a post colony of the European powers, to explain how colonialism turned Africa into a theatre of unrest and chaos, because the continent does not have a stable and peaceful state with developed institutions and apparatuses. Also, there is no cohesive dominant class to construct hegemony. Thus, the paper starts by looking at the concepts of hegemony and the state and also explains their nexus. After that, the explains the African post-colonial state using colonialism as an explanatory scheme and concluded that the forceful amalgamation of disparate peoples of different cultures in a single political unit, called country, is a critical issue and a major challenge to the African crisis.

HEGEMONY: SOME CONCEPTUAL NOTES.

If we start with Hobbes and his state of nature, then we are in a situation of miserable existence where the future is not guaranteed. How do we then ensure the continuity of mankind and sustain a system for humanity? Or if we take the Marxian perspective, where society is an imbroglio of class conflict (Goodwin, 1982), then we have a situation where we shall encounter an endless struggle by social classes. How do we then ensure social relations that are devoid of miserable existence (Hobbes) or an imbroglio of class Conflict (Marx)? Among the numerous values that sustain a system, according to (Arora, 2014) political culture and hegemony stand out clearly. And that is because a system is sustained on the basis of certain values, traditions, ideas and culture, (Arora, 2014).That is why, (Harris, 1999) argues that culture consists of the overarching values, motives and moral/ethical rules and meanings that are part of what make a social system functions, which together with values, ideas and the entire set of institutions give expressions to human life.

Although the Marxian tradition sees capitalism as a system of class exploitation and oppression, the tradition also acknowledges the power of ideas, values and beliefs (Heywood, 2007), as what make domination possible; precisely because the private ownership of the means of production is, though necessary, but not a sufficient basis for capitalist domination (Marsh and Stoker, 1995). Herein lies the importance of hegemony in society, which, according to (Heywood, 2007) is understood as a cultural and ideological process that operates through the dissemination of bourgeois values and beliefs throughout society.

Antonio Gramscis' profound explication of hegemony is particularly instructive. He uses the term hegemony to describe how the domination of one class over others is achieved by a combination of political and ideological means (Arora, 2007). Thus, to Gramsci, the ruling class does not need to dominate the lower classes by force because they use the institutions of socialization, schools, religion, and families etc, to create a social hegemony. (Sargent, 2009). In other words, hegemony embodies leadership that is exercised by the ruling class in contrast to coercion that is exercised by legislative or executive powers, usually expressed through police intervention (Ritzer, 2008). As non coercive form of class rule, hegemony refers to the ability of a dominant class to exercise power by winning the consent of those it subjugates as an alternative to the use of coercion (Heywood, 2007).

The concept of hegemony is central to Gramscis theoretical framework, in that, it redefines the nature of power in modern society and also attributes a lot of importance to the struggle that takes place at the ideological, political and cultural levels (Marsh and Stoker, 1995). Gramsci puts a lot of emphasis, in developing the idea of hegemony, on the importance of ideological superstructure and the role played by consent within civil society as opposed to the use of pure force by the state (Marsh and Stoker, 1995).

Even though a lot of emphasis is on cultural leadership, i.e. values, beliefs and ideas hegemony also recognizes the role of the economy in society. Thus, leadership must also be at the economic sphere because hegemony includes the important and critical functions that are exercised by the leading group (dominant class) in the decisive nucleus of economic activities in society (Marsh and Stoker, 1995). Thus, hegemony, in capitalism, emphasizes the degree to which domination is maintained not only by economic domination, but also by political and cultural factors (Heywood, 2007). Again, to Gramsci, hegemony is the ascendancy of a class, not only in the economic sphere, but through all social, political, and ideological spheres and its ability

to persuade other classes to see the world in terms favorable to its own ascendancy (Arora, 2014). Hegemony is therefore a form of control exercised by the dominant class.

 Hegemony is meaningful to the extent that the dominant class is able to persuade the other classes of the society to accept its own moral, political and cultural values. In other words, hegemony is the exercise of power based on the consent of the people. Indeed, hegemony is a domination that is accepted by those who are being dominated. Consequently, whenever a dominant class is able to institute hegemonic order in a society, a situation will be created when force and coercion will not stand by the power that be but it is the willingness of the people that will grant legitimacy to the power holders (Arore, 2014). Again, the dominant class maintains hegemony not simply by force or the threat of force or coercion but also, and more importantly by consent (Arora, 2014). Hegemony, therefore, refers to the way that class domination is based, not simply upon coercion but, upon the cultural and ideological acquiescence of the subordinate classes (March and Stoker, 1995).

It is important to note that Marx laid the groundwork for hegemony and Gramsci further elucidated it. Marx made us understand that the class which has the means of material production at its disposal, has control, at the same time over the means of mental production, so that, generally speaking, the ideas of those who lack the means of material production are subject to it. (McClelland, 1980). And by material conditions, Marx means economic factors that determine the methods of the production of commodities and distribution (Das, 2009).

However, before Gramsci copiously elucidated the idea of hegemony, Marx had explained the problem of order in society, in terms of force, repression or the over-powering dominance of bourgeois ideology. And Marx's explanation focuses on the fact that the ideas of the ruling class were in every historical period the ruling ideas (Marsh and Stoker, 1995). In modern society, according to Marx, bourgeois interests always find ideological support in the beliefs about personal morality, extolling the virtue of hard work, individual successes, self control, frugality and respect for law and property, all which are ways of getting people to key into the dominant values of the dominant class (Collins and Makowsky, 1984).The bourgeois are therefore able to control the minds of the people because they control their means of livelihood and that is precisely because a man's consciousness depends on the material resources he has for formulating and communicating ideas, the material resources that are controlled by the dominant class.

Again, in the modern society, politics and economics have become inextricably joined (Baradat, 1997) which is why Lenin says that politics is a concentrated expression of economics (cited in Das, 2009), and political power in general, and the state, in particular, is the way or system of exercising full domination by one class or group over the others (Das, 2009). The competing class interests therefore, highlight the central importance of social conflict and domination in social life. And the dominant class has advantages in the social conflict (Pampel, 2007).

The idea of hegemony should be important to us in the ex-colonies precisely because not only does it help us to understand the place of domination and the nature of domination within the colonial imposed capitalist system but also reminds us that it is not enough to gain control of the economy and the state apparatus, it is equally necessary to gain cultural leadership i.e. in terms of the control over values, beliefs and dominant ideas over the rest of society. Thus, we need to understand hegemony from the perspectives of Marx and the postulations of Gramsci,to understand how hegemony is an important idea that is very

relevant in understanding the crisis of state, occasioned by the belligerent faction-ridden dominant class, in post-colonial societies, especially in Africa.

In sum, hegemony is about power and the essence of power is for domination, because domination is needed for the appropriation of surplus values. Who is in charge of the appropriation of surplus and how does he acquire the legitimacy to do so? This is where Marx begins by saying that the dominant class controls the economy and by implication controls the superstructures, where political power resides. And, Gransci added that the control of culture i.e. ideas, values and belief is equally very important.

What is important from all the above is that society is conflict- ridden, occasioned by the antagonism of social classes and therefore order is needed for social development. How do we then achieve order? To achieve order in society we must understand the complexity of any particular conjuncture, which is essential in examining the political, the cultural and the ideological dimensions of class struggle (Marsh and Stoker, 1995).Here in lies the relevance of hegemony which is about power, domination, subordination, force and control but much more importantly, consent.

Thus, hegemony is properly understood by understanding class relations as the key to understanding the dialectics of power and the dynamics of social life (Pampell, 2007), all within the context of the apparatuses of the state.

THE STATE: SOME CONCEPTUAL NOTES

The state is an enigma. Even though the state is the dominant concept in political theory/analysis nowadays, the concept continues to prove elusive to understand, precisely because there are many different interpretations of state. Consequently, history is replete with ideas about the state and as history had been interpreted in different ways so the ideas about the state had developed into diverse versions from the Natural. Divine, Social Contract and Force Theories (Fadakinte, 2013). Hence, there are many theories that seek to interpret the nature of the state. In spite of that, the state is, today, so central to political theory because the development of the modern state can be compared to the invention of the alphabet which happened once and since it happened, it has changed human existence forever (Hague and Harrop, 2010).

The state did not have a single origin or a regular and continuous evolution as various forms of states have arisen at different times and places as a result of causes by no means uniform (Gettell, citedin Mahajan, 2014).However, the modern state emerged from the embers of medieval Europe before which time European governance was dominated by the Roman church and feudal Lords. (Hague and Hanop, 2010). And ever since the modern state escaped from the church and feudalism, it has created the core political entity of our world (Hague and Harrop, 2010).
However, we shall here be looking at two theories of the state viz the liberal and the force theories. And that is because these are the two broad theories that are often embraced in political analysis as other types of theories are found between the two.
The liberal theory explains the state as comprising a complex of publicly funded bodies (state apparatuses) which include the legislature, the civil service bureaucracy, the courts and prison, the police and the armed forces. It explains power and how it is exercised to advance the interests and values of different classes and social groups in society (Youngman, 2000).For example, the liberal tradition stresses the importance of the private sphere, independent of the state in which individual rights are

protected and the individual citizen exercises freedom of choice. To the liberals, therefore, the state is a neutral institution which guarantees the "common good" or "public interest" and therefore operates in the general interest of all citizens (Youngman, 2000).

To encapsulate the liberal views of the state, the state focuses on the role or purpose of the functions of institutions which invariably are seen as the maintenance of social order. And that is because, the state is seen as a set of institutions that uphold order and deliver social stability. Again, the state is defined as the apparatuses of government i.e. as a set of institutions that are recognizably "public" because they (the institutions) are responsible for the collective organization of social existence and are funded at the public's expense (Heywood, 2007).

Again, five other key features that characterize the state, according to the liberal theory, are that it exercises absolute and unrestricted power because it stands above all other associations and groups in the society. Also, state institutions are recognized as public, in contrast to being private institutions of civil society. Again, the decisions of the state are accepted as binding on the members of society because such decisions are seen as being in the public interest. In addition, the state authority is backed up by coercion, which expresses the state as an instrument of domination because the state must have the capacity to ensure that its laws are obeyed and transgressors are punished. Lastly, the state is an association because it encompasses all those who live within the state's borders, making the state to have jurisdiction over a geographically defined territory (Heywood, 2007).

For this work, we shall adopt the force theory of the state in our analysis of the state. And that is because the force theory of state does not assume that the state is the natural expression of the whole of an evolving society, or as a community chosen by God, or as an organized community based on contract but as the means by which a small number of people impose their will on a reluctant majority. The origin of the state which is linked to the division of society into social classes, leads to the existence of class struggles and contradictions for the control of the state. With the force theory, the state ceases to be co-extensive with society and becomes more closely identified with what is called the dominant class (Goodwin, 1982).Therefore, the state neither originates in the will of society or it is maintained for the benefit of all sections of society. This is because the state does not come into existence for the fulfillment of a moral purpose nor does it emanate from the will of the people, but it originates in conflict and operates as an instrument of domination (Mahajan, 2014).

At a stage, economic development coincided with the division of society into antagonistic classes, the property and property less classes and the property class needed an institution to protect its property, and the state therefore came into existence for the protection of private property. Thus, the state is a product of class conflict and that is because with the emergence of private property, accompanied by the division of society into mutually antagonistic classes, the formation of the state became inevitable (Mahajim, 2014). Thus, the state originated with the origin of classes and class struggle in society and it is merely an instrument of exploitation in the hands of the dominant class and with the help of the state, the ruling class maintains its power over economically poor classes. So, the state has not originated because of social contrast or because of the will of all people, but has originated because of class division and class struggle in society (Mahajan, 2014). Thus, the state is an organization of the possessing class for its protection against non-possessing class.

The force theory holds that in a class divided society, the state, like any other social institution, cannot be neutral and stand apart from the conflicts between classes and other social groups, precisely because the state has a class character (Youngman, 2000).For example, the state as an institution represents the interests of the economically dominant capitalist class which manipulates state apparatuses as instruments to advance its own interests (Youngman, 2000). Again the state, being an institutional expression of class relations, with the capacity for independent actions, has its activities shaped by the structural constraints of the capitalist social relations of production (Youngman 2000).

Two critical functions are therefore performed by the state in a capitalist system. First, is to guarantee the conditions for capitalist accumulation and reproduction, and second, is to organize the legitimation of the capitalist socio-economic order (Youngman 2000). And these functions are performed by the state on behalf of the dominant class because the dominant class is able to impose hegemony on the other classes.

HEGEMONY AND THE STATE: THE NEXUS

If hegemony is the dominance of one group over another, often supported by legitimate norms and ideas (www.britanica.com/article19229) and the state is an organization of one class dominating over the other classes (Johari, 2012) then it is not difficult to connect the two, i.e., hegemony and the state.

Throughout history the appropriation of surplus value has always been a matter for contention, eliciting a struggle between the social classes. Thus, the various institutions, rules, laws and regulations with political, religious and other social institutions are basically about the appropriation of surplus values in society. Here lies the decisive role of the state (Jhingan and Sasikala, 2013).

It has been argued that in the beginning, the ruling class was not very cohesive but it became imperative for them to close ranks and be united when it was clear to them that their interests were opposed to the interests of other classes, indeed diametrically opposed. (Jhingan and Sasikala, 2013). Apart from the intra-class struggle within the ruling class, there was also the fierce struggle between the social classes. It was against that background that the ruling class had to organize a power for bringing about cohesion among themselves and for holding other classes to submission. Thus, power, which is about domination and distribution, is central to politics and it makes the ownership of power itself and its use to have some heated controversy. In spite of that, the concept of power and its use have made the role of the state both peculiar and controversial (Das, 2009). And the state, according to Marx is an engine of class – rule and this is what links hegemony with the state, precisely because, the dominant group needs to capture the apparatuses of the state in order to be able to oppress the other classes. Therefore, in order to avoid chaos, the dominant group that uses the state to protect its interests must not embark on naked and brute force to do so, but on persuasion and consent, i.e. hegemony

 As argued by Gramsci, the supremacy of a class and the reproduction of its associated mode of production, even though, could be obtained by brute domination or coercion but in reality there is no naked, obvious and visible brutality in the relationship

between the social classes in the process of social/economic production. Rather, and more so, in developed capitalist societies the perpetration of class rule and the domination of a particular class is achieved through, largely, consensual means i.e. through intellectual and moral leadership. Consequently, the dominant group must first exercise leadership before attaining power and after attaining state power, exercise both leadership and domination and it is by so doing that hegemonic process is established, a process by which the dominating class attains and maintains domination, by consent rather than force (Arora, 2014). Thus, hegemony involves the ways in which the dominant class ideas are disseminated and accepted. ([www.britannical.com/article 19229](www.britannical.com/article19229)") and the channels by which the ideas are disseminated are through state apparatuses and institutions. Again, Gransci argues that the state consists of the entire complex of political and theoretical activities with which the ruling class, not only justifies and maintains its dominance, but manages to win the active consent of those over whom it rules (Marsh and Stoker, 1995).

Hegemony therefore is central to political processes and it is achieved if and when one political force determines the rules and meanings in a particular social formation which is done by using state apparatuses. In other words, hegemony is about which political force will decide the dominant forms of conduct and meaning in a given social context (Marsh and Stoker, 1995). That is why hegemony requires the drawing up of political frontiers because there must be a struggle between opposed forces. Hence, hegemonic practices always involve the exercise of power because it is about one class attempting to impose its will on others (Marsh and Stoker, 1995).

The connection of hegemony to the state is, therefore, in terms of power and the concept of power, here, means a vast array of institutions through which power relations are mediated in society; such institutions include education, the mass media, courts, parliament, prisons, the armed forces, and the police, all that belong to and are controlled by the state and which are also the activities and the initiatives that form the apparatuses of the political and cultural hegemony of the ruling class (Marsh and Stoker, 1995). Thus, power, according to (Lasswell and Kaplan, 1976) is itself a value and an extremely important one, because to have power is to be taken into account in others' acts.

In sum, a dominating class, which embodies the political class, needs to capture state apparatuses before it can maintain its dominance at both the base (economy) and the superstructures (politics) of society. Thus, the dominant class combines force which is located at the base and hegemony at the superstructures to maintain the domination of other classes. In other words, the dominant class needs the state to firmly establish hegemony and create hegemonic order i.e. a process that embodies values, ideas, beliefs and consent. Thus, how is the African pre and post-colonial societies, to make us understand the conditions of hegemony and the character of the post-colonial state?

PRE AND POST-COLONIAL AFRICAN SOCIETY

Society has been defined to include in the widest sense every kind or degree of relationship entered into by men whether these relations be organized or unorganized, direct or indirect, conscious or unconscious, cooperative or antagonistic. It includes the whole issue of human relationships and is without a boundary or assignable limits. Put differently, society is the entire web of social relationship (Oyediran. 1998), that group within which men can live a total life rather than an organization limited to some specific purpose or purposes (Chinoy,1967.)

To (Gauba, 2007), society is an association of human beings which fulfils all their needs of life – from cradle to grave, binding men into multifarious relationships, the relationships that is determined by necessity, customs, morality, mutual understanding, agreement or even contract. Social relations cover a large variety of subjects to meet all the needs of human life – physical, emotional and intellectual, spiritual and so on.

Society is used to describe the whole community of mankind just as mush and a small group of a village. In its broader sense, it transcends the individual, state and national boundaries, e.g. the Islamic society and the free mason brotherhood (Asirvatham and Misra 1998).

However, society can be conceptualized in economic terms, stressing the fundamental need of man, which is the provision of material goods, which itself compels cooperation with others in production consumption relationships, involving competition for access to scarce means (Sanda, 1976).Again, society, refers to a group, small or large, whose members are united by social economic, political and religious affiliations (Srivastava, 2013). Indeed, society is a system of usages and procedures of authority and mutual aid, of many groupings and divisions of controls of human behavior and of liberties. (Srivastava, 2013).

It has been argued that in Africa, it is not easy to generalize about political and socio-economic patterns because so many different kinds of the conditions exist. In spite of the diversity, it is possible to discern certain common political, social and economic conditions and problems, which are consequent upon their traditional past, common aspirations and from their shared experience under imperialism, colonialism and neo-colonialism (Nkuramah, 1970). However, Pre-colonial Africa was not made up of homogenous societies as the continent was made up of varied units of societies (Thomson, 2010).

Africa was believed by the Europeans to be a place where the people before their affective occupation were politically decentralized, living in small villages, often naked, dominated by witchcraft and living in terror of their neighbours (Crowder, 1976). However pre-colonial Africa featured a variety of politics and empire states (Burnell and Randall, 2008).

However, at the end of the nineteenth century, Africa found herself in a situation where Europe had outstripped her technologically to such a point that it would no longer resist European occupation (Crowder, 1976).

The pre-colonial African society was characterized by the absence of social classes in the sense of a division between a capital-owing, or factory- owing, classes and a wage-earning (urban proletariat) and peasant class with a middle class of merchants, professionals and others in between as in the feudal society of medieval Europe. It was rather a society in which everybody was illiterate, doing pretty much the same thing i.e. peasant farming, fishing, petty trading, pottery, simple ironworks handcrafts

and living at pretty much the same level (Nwabueze, 2010). There was no accumulated capital, no employing class and no working class, which made the wage and salary earning class a creation of the colonial system in Africa. (Nwabueze 2010). Also, there was no bourgeois class because the principal mean of production in the agricultural economy of pre-colonial African societies was land and it was owned in common by the family, village or community. In addition, government in the traditional society was rudimentary and its functions and activities were extremely limited which excluded the existence of a ruling class of full time professional politicians and bureaucrats. (Lloyd, 1972). The more or less undifferentiated and non-stratified, classless societies of pre-colonial Africa were later transformed by colonialism to be like the European capitalist class society.

Pre-colonial societies were characterized by ascription, fatalism, self-sufficiency, loyalty to the family, strong kinship and ethnic groups, weak institutions, low levels of literacy and technology, and widespread superstition. In pre-colonial societies, social organization centered around the family and the clan, which led to the famous extended family system in which the obligatory system of gifts-giving and gift-taking made everybody his brother's keeper and ensured social cohesion. Thus, the distribution of land, labour, surplus and power within each clan was anchored to the family and kinship. (Onimode, 1983).

But, with the spread of private enterprise, brought to Africa by colonialism, together with the needs of the colonial administrative apparatuses, there emerged the petty bourgeois class which later became urban bourgeois class of bureaucrats,' reactionary intellectuals, high volume merchants and traders and they increasingly became part of the colonial economic and social structure (Nkrumah 1970).

Thus, social division of classes emerged in Africa as a by-product of colonialism and the social classes do not arise solely from economic relations of production, i.e. from relations between the owners of the means of production and the workers employed in production. Although the emerging social classes were yet to fully develop the distinctive characteristics of a class in the orthodox sense, in which the term has come to be understood since Marx, the social classes are in fact social formations representing more or less definite economic strata in society. It is therefore, incorrect to deny the existence of classes in colonial and post-colonial Africa merely because the new social formations are yet to mature into full-blown social classes in the orthodox Marxian sense. Thus, colonialism created the lowest rung of the social ladder, i.e the masses or the common people, comprising the overwhelming majority of the population in Africa. They consist of two main disparate groups; the rural peasantry engaged as self-employed, subsistence farmers, fishermen or cattle-rears', and the urban workers, employed on a wage by the state and the capital-owning entrepreneurs. The urban proletariat includes among its ranks, not only workers in paid employment, but also a teeming number of unemployed persons, loafers, and those eking out some existence as errand runners, hawkers, prostitutes, etc, and others who depend on kinship ties for subsistence.(Nwabeze,2010)

Social inequality, supplanting the relative equality of all, under Africa's pre-colonial classless societies, was the inevitable result of the colonial system of more or less unfettered freedom to engage in any business or trade, to enter into contracts on any terms mutually agreed between parties in furtherance of business or trade, and to appropriate to one's sole enjoyment the excess surplus value. The colonial society in Africa was, by reason of this, began the polarization of Africans into the groups of the rich and the poor, the educated and the illiterate and ignorant, the elite and the deprived masses comprising the peasantry and urban proletariat. The disparities became accentuated as a result of the transformation of the society from a colonial to an independent one. (Nwabueze, 2010). Thus, urbanization, one of Africa's notable heritages from colonialism, gave rise to a

yawing divide between, the urban areas as centers of western civilization, modernity and population concentration, and the rural areas, exploited, deprived and impoverished. (Nwabeueze, 2010)

With colonialism, communalist socio-economic patterns began to collapse as a result of the introduction of export crops such as coffee cotton and cocoa, which led to the disintegrated collective spirit and the collapse of communal values (Nkrumah, 1970). Thus, under colonialism, communal ownership of land was finally abolished and ownership of land was imposed by law and African chiefs who were the custodian of land in the interest and on behalf of the people became tools and in many cases paid agents of the colonial administration (NKrumah, 1970). However, colonial societies contained both traditional and modern characteristics and were far less focused on subsistence agriculture, while literacy increased, and village values became less pervasive and new social, economic and political institutions emerge to challenge traditional norms and behavior. (Rostow, 1962).Thus, in what way did colonialism create the unique conditions for the post- colonial state and crisis of hegemony?

COLONIALISM, THE POST-COLONIAL STATE AND CRISIS OF HEGEMONY

Colonialism is the concept which derives its meaning from the English word, colony which means a place or land settled by force by people from another country to whose parents or home government is in some degree subject (Watson, cited in Udokang and Awofeso, 2012). For (Mclean and McMillan, 2009), colonialism is the policy and practice of a strong power extending its control, territorially, over a weaker nation or people. It is the policy or practice of acquiring full or partial political control over another country, occupying it with settlers, and exploiting it economically.

Colonialism is summarized in the following words:

- The control or governing influence of a nation over a dependent country, territory, or people.
- The system or policy by which a nation maintains or advocates such control or influence.
- The state or condition of being colonial.
- An idea, custom, or practice peculiar to a colony.

Colonialism is a system of government adopted by foreign settlers to exercise political, military, and economic power directly over occupied territory in total disregard of the indigenous citizens' right to self-rule or self-government. (Udokang and Awofeso, 2012). Again, colonialism is the off shoot of imperialism as manifested in the ways the late nineteenth century imperialists conquered large areas of the globe.

Colonialism to ((Nwabueze, 2010) is the acquisition of sovereignty by one country or settlers from a foreign territory. Ekeh,(1980), asserts that colonialism is characterized as an epochal event whose supra-individual consequences have lingered on in fundamental ways long after actual colonization and the colonial situation have ceased to exist. Colonialism has definitely turned the course of African history and separated the pre-colonial from the post-colonial, and has inserted African histories into an integrated world history, (Ekeh, 1980), giving primacy to colonialism in the analysis of African politics and social formation. Osaghae, (2003), argues that it now appears that it is to colonial experience that any valid conceptualization of the unique nature of African politics must look.

It is important to note that at the time of its acquisition by the colonized country, the territory must be under a government, backward or civilized or must be inhabited by an organized community exercising its rights of possession, ownership and political control (Nwabueze, 2010).

What is significant about colonialism and which bears some relevance to us here is that when a state colonizes a foreign territory, the colonized territory becomes an extension of the colonizing (colonial) state. Thus, state creation is inseparable from colonization and it is therefore the incident of colonization that gives the created state the character of an epochal, landmark event which is of interest to scholarly and political analysis. (Nwabueze, 2010). Thus, colonized African societies, as extensions of European Societies became characterized by certain unique features, even long after colonial rule had ended, which is why post- colonial state are of interest to us.

THE POST-COLONIAL STATE

It is important to note that the state is the power house of modern society because it is the instrument of order. Thus, the key political institution in society is the state, precisely because it provides the methods and models for the aspiration of society, by being crucial to development efforts and also as the arbiter of the conditions of the lives of the citizens (McKay and Hunt, cited in Udokang and Awofeso, 2012).

Today, all the states in Africa enjoy formal independence from their colonial masters, but according to (Burnell and Ramdall, 2008) although most colonies are independent, the experience of subsequent decades under colonial rule shows how much the ghost of colonization still 1ooms over the post-colonial societies and, as argued by (Slate, 2006 cited in Burnell and Randall, 2008) the colonial background of the post-colonial societies still bear relevance to the realities of their present conditions, the conditions that are used in identifying them as post-colonial, with a pre-modern, traditional and backward past. Thus, the colonial past of Africa is of great significance in determining the future of the continent.

Colonialism disorganized African pre-colonial societies, imposed capitalism when there were no capitalist institutions or capitalist social classes to grow capitalism. Indeed, colonialism brought capitalism to Africa when the pre-colonial societies were basically feudal. And today, the impact of colonialism has been transformative rather than transitory (Burnell and Randall, 2008).

Consequently, capitalist state formation became inverted, in that, those with no economic power are with political power which makes politics, the struggle for power, to be severe, violent and bloody because any faction with political power uses the state to amass wealth. Thus, soon after independence factional struggle for power became severe and violent, precisely because the ruling group lacked hegemony as a result of the fact that the state had really not emerged, with the needed apparatuses, to be used by the same ruling group in constructing hegemony, control the state and be in a position to mediate the struggle for power. Consequently, the African ruling elites, immediately after independence, quickly re- appropriated the new state forms and the accompanying colonial culture, using state power to create its own world of meanings through administrative and bureaucratic practices. Although, at independence, the African post-colonial states rested on indigenous social bases, whist they were simultaneously being connected to international system. (http./encyclopedia.com/doc/IG2). Thus, the dominant

class, in Africa, which is the class that also thrived under colonialism because they championed anti-colonial struggle, is the same class which is benefitting under the post-colonial and neo-colonial periods. And its basic interest lies in preserving capitalist social and economic structures (Nkwarah 1970).

At independence, the indigenous elites inherited the instruments of the colonial state machinery but failed to either recover their past or construct an independent future for their society. This development made the post-colonial societies to evolve a unique state with peculiar characteristics that made them to find it difficult to get themselves organized, till today, because the post-colonial state lack hegemony. Consequently, in the post-colonial state, legitimacy and power were regularly challenged and power, in particular, became abused or misused while authoritarianism replaced democracy. (Arora, 2010). And these consequences were the result of the ruling groups being rarely homogenous in Africa which is why the ruling groups are mere coalition of competing factions, rather than a single cohesive class. (Thomas, 2010). This is also why the post-colonial state is bedeviled with internal competition within the ruling group and the factions rebuilt in mobilizing around ethnic identities. Consequently, the various factions want power but hold little class solidarity. Thus, each post-colonial state is held hostage by numerous complex and societies/nations, making the post-colonial state vulnerable to varied group dynamics. (Thomas, 2010).

Colonialism, as a historical factor in the development of the post-colonial State made African variant of capitalist formation to possess some unique characteristics. Thus, the post-colonial capitalist formation is devoid of certain similarities, which do not make her to be quite the same with other capitalist states of Europe, where the state is the classic state in the sense that it is the instrument of the capitalist class to maintain its domination over the other classes in the society (Nnoli, cited in Fadakinte, 2012). That was because in Europe the modern state emerged after the capitalists had evolved from the civil society and the capitalist class had already gained dominance over the local economy and they used that opportunity to dominate the political process as well. (Fadakinte, 2012)

Three critical characteristics of the post-colonial state can be seen from the above description. First, a capitalist state emerged in Africa when the society was not sufficiently in the civil society. In other words, quite unlike the developed capitalist states of Europe at that time, the African dominant social class aimed first at capturing state power prior to those of socio-economic powers, which made the economic and internal bases of the post-colonial state to be weak and the state became very fragile.

Second, the post-colonial state did not emerge from home grown capitalism to develop domestic social classes so that one class will want to mediate between indigenous classes whose interests were irreconcilable. The post-colonial state was therefore artificial because it was created by colonial capitalism and therefore did not possess the autonomy to function, and it depended essentially on external forces to maintain class hegemony.

Third, the African social formations had not sufficiently developed well-defined class structures when colonial capitalism imposed the colonial state, at the time the African society was still class amorphous and thus, there was no clear-cut alignment of all the class forces, which meant that, state formation process had just begun. (Williams, cited in Fadakinte, 2012)

The post-colonial state is best understood by six elements, the elements that were created by the colonial state. These elements are first, a foreign intervention, being an imposition from outside, ruptured pre-colonial political institutions and introduced an external dimension to African politics and society.

Second, the territorial definition of the society established by the colonial state was often arbitrary and did not coincide with pre-existing politics.

Third, the colonial state was usually established by force and maintained through coercive apparatuses of the colonizing state. Fourth, the regime type was authoritarian with very limited participation indecision making.

Fifth, the metropolitan state played an interventionist role in the economy, spreading capitalist relations of production.

Lastly, the ending of colonial rule was accompanied by constitutional settlements to secure a political and legal dispensation favorable to capitalist accumulations (Youngman, 2000).

Thus, because the colonial state is incipient and is engulfed in crisis, due to factional struggle for the control of state power, crisis of hegemony also became inevitable.

CRISIS OF HEGEMONY

It is important to note that without hegemony, to wild power becomes difficult and that is because what is embodied in hegemony and which is the source of the strength of the ruling class, is their spiritual and cultural supremacy (Gauba, 2007).

Thus, to establish its own hegemony, a group (class) must do more than struggle for its own narrow interests but must be able to present itself as the guarantor of the interests of society as a whole. And this is where the role of the party becomes crucial because to maintain hegemony, a class must have a party that is committed ideologically and culturally to the struggle as well as to the seizure of state power. Thus, power is the essence of the struggle but according to Gramsci, State power without hegemony is an insecure exercise (Mclellan, 1980).

As we have argued earlier, the capitalist class system is upheld not simply by unequal economic and political power but by ideological hegemony in terms of leadership and domination, which is the capacity of the ruling class to displace rival views, impose their own ideas and make same the "common sense" of the age (Heywood, 2011).

For example, as long as capitalist hegemony persisted, the proletariat will remain unaware of the contradictory nature of capitalist society and of the possibility of transforming it. And that is because a necessary part of the ideological hegemony of the capitalists is their ability to present their own interests are those of the society as a whole (McLellan, 1980).

Thus, a crisis of hegemony occurs when the dominant class is unable to carry its ideas through to the mass of the people, make the people accept its values as the dominant values for the society (Swingwood, 1979). Crisis of hegemony, for example, will lead to a disorganized dominant class which will make it difficult to have a ruling class to mediate the struggle in the civil society. So, such crises like election violence and ethnic bloody rivalry are all manifestations of the inability of the ruling elites

to make its ideas permeate society and create a shared culture and values. Consequently, because the dominant class is in constant factional struggle for power in Africa, no particular faction is able to maintain dominance, establish hegemony i.e. intellectual leadership, domination and cultural control, the result of which is instability. Therefore, political and social instability is a manifestation of crisis of hegemony. So, in Africa, because the society is class amorphous, no cohesive class has been able to stand for the state, hold and control its apparatus, to create hegemonic order.

Conclusion

Although African history is over two thousand years (Oliver and Fage, 1988) but what colonialism did to Africa within a period of one hundred years of its effective control of the continent is of epochal dimension. Whatever gains Africa had recorded in the past, and before colonial rule, were destroyed in less than one hundred years of colonization. Colonialism, an epochal movement left legacies that have destroyed the fabric of Africa and turned her to a continent in chaos. Today, Africa is the only continent that depends on food aid because she cannot feed herself. Africa is the only continent that is incapable of providing good healthcare for her people. Indeed, Africa is the only continent where non-Africans are in charge of her economy.

The most enduring legacy of colonialism, which has not been ruptured, is capitalism, a mode of production that brought series of crises to Africa, the crises that are now beyond African themselves. Colonialism imposed capitalism on Africa at a time the African societies were basically feudal. And with the imposition of capitalism at the base, when there were no capitalist social and political institutions at the superstructures, the African society became disorganized and post-colonial Africa became crises-ridden.

The above description is no doubt grim, it is however the true description of Africa, a continent in need of self appraisal. To begin with, it is important to trace the genesis of the African crisis in order to be able to proffer a reasonable and rational solution. Thus, we started this paper by giving some conceptual notes on hegemony and the state and also tried to explain the nexus of hegemony and the state, before a description of the African post-colonial state. What came out of our analysis and which is significant, is how colonialism disorganized the societies in Africa and created a colonial state is crisis.

At its inception, the colonial masters invented borders for their colonies which bore little relation to natural or social features. And unlike the state in Europe during the colonial period, the emerging state in Africa was one that has been successfully exported from Europe but effective functioning, no doubt, has rarely followed (Hague and Harrop, 2010). Consequently, the post-colonial state became a prize for which the ruling elites compete, resulting in the state lack of autonomy from social/group interests (Hague and Harrop, 2010).

The pre-capitalist order thus ceded control to nascent capitalist models of colonialism and gave colonial bureaucracies a world of their own and laid the foundations for the post-colonial state (Clarke, 2010). Thus, colonialism played its gruesome part in the distortion of Africa's social formations which is why till now, internal conflicts, inter and intra state wars, local rebellions, guerrilla conflicts, secessionism, famine, diseases, genocide and foreign onslaughts characterize the African continent, (Clarke, 2010).

Today, there is crisis of hegemony in Africa because the impact of colonialism led to a change in all spheres of African life due to colonial occupation which grouped different peoples of diverse cultures into a new political unit, (Crowder, 1976), leading

to the creation of a new geo-political framework within which Africans had to re-orient their lives. And one of the consequences of the new geo-political framework led to the decline in traditional political authority and together with completely alien colonial rule, it becomes obvious, how the colonial situation was essentially one of crisis (Crowder, 1976), manifesting in crisis of state, the absence of hegemony and hegemonic order, leading to factional struggle for power with its attendant political violence. Again, one of the consequences of the factional struggle for power, by the fractured dominant class, is over identity, in-group primacy and ethnicity which are deployed widely as vehicles to capture the state and retain power (Clarke, 2010) for the construction of hegemonic order.

And because there is no hegemony held by any class or group, we find that the group in power at any point in time turns the formal state systems, which are republican in character to real political systems that are authoritarian. Thus, in Africa, the leaders are neither monarchies nor total dictators and while they have constitutions, their constitutionalism is but a farce (Asirvathan and Misra, 2008).

In Africa, crisis of state created predatory politics for personal gain, often accompanied by violence, hollowing out African states and imposing a new burden on the mass of the helpless people (Clarke, 2010).

Thus, the reality is that private appropriation of state resources and the use of government money to build and expand personal rule lay at the very heart of the process by which most post-colonial regimes sought to govern (Boon cited in Gordon and Gordon, 2007). Consequently, resources needed for affective and broad scale development are drained away to support regime efforts to consolidate power (Gordon and Gordon, 2007). Therefore, the dominant class, who commandeered the post colonial state, reduces the optimism at independence to pessimism which has wrought frustration, confusion and hopelessness on the people.

If colonialism put together different peoples, some antagonistic, in the same political unit called country, thereby creating so much tension for the society because each ethnic group is now a faction, then the starting point in proffering solutions to the African crisis is to allow a people, with common history and culture, religion and language with possibly a uniform dominant class, to stay alone, so that a cohesive dominant class will easily emerge and use the apparatuses of the state to consolidate a political process on a hegemonic order.

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