
MIGRATED SOCIAL STRUCTURES, PREBENDALISM AND INSTABILITY IN PLURAL SOCIETIES: EXPERIENCES IN NIGERIA

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Abstract

Every society desires peace, cohesion, order, fairness, and stability. Without these, there would be no meaningful progress, and development. The quest for social order, in plural societies, therefore depends on the level of stability. Post-colonial African societies today are experiencing varying levels of instabilities which has hindered peace, and security. This paper therefore sought to examine the role of migrated social structures on the prevalence of prebendalism and instability in a plural society. Attempts have been made to understand the causes of these instabilities. Instabilities in post-colonial Africa resulted from cultural contact with Europeans. The objective of this paper is to examine the effects of migrated social structures on the prebendal behaviour and instabilities in plural societies like Nigeria. The prebendalist theory by Richard (1986) was used to anchor the arguments of this paper. This paper argues that as a way of stemming the growing prebendalism and instability in Nigeria, serious efforts should be made to encourage meritocracy and inclusiveness which would help reduce the incidences of instability occasioned by exclusionism and prebendalism which has led to ethnicity as different nationalities engage in unhealthy competition, rivalry, and lack of trust.

Keywords: *Instability, Primordial Public, Prebendalism, Social Structures, Trust-Network*

Introduction

Every human society has distinct ways of living and regulating the conduct of its members. This was irrespective of race, ethnicity, tribe, colour, or creed. Such organization and regulation were not peculiar to Africans, or any other group of people. Thus, all human groups or societies were self-regulating according to their social structures and ethos (Onuoha, 2015). These regulating forces are always perceived to be external to the individual but exert significant influence on the conduct and life of every member of any given society. Such external forces that control individual behaviours in any community are, according to Durkheim,(1895), “social fact” which are ingrained in the social structure of any given group or community. Social structure has been described as those forces in society that constrain ‘the individual’s activity in a similar way, setting limits to what people can do as individuals and how they must do them. It is usually external to individuals but regulates their behaviour without much resistance. Any form of resistance to the norms of the society as dictated by the social structure is regarded as deviance, and as such, is sanctioned by the community. Brym (2004), argues that the social system, which is a relatively stable pattern of social relations, affects the innermost thoughts of members of society, their feelings, and influences individual actions. This helps shape the lives and aspirations of members of any given community.

Social structure as a concept, is understood from three levels. These are macro level, the meso level, and the micro level. All three are relevant in understanding the creation and functions of the social structure. The macro social-structures are those social forces that include the primary social institutions and institutionalized patterns of relationships that regulate human conduct. These institutions are always interrelated and interdependent. Prominent among them are the family, religion, politics education, economy, and bureaucracies. In between the macro and microstructures is what sociologists call the meso level of social structure. This deals with the nature of the social networks organized within the social

institutions and institutionalized social relationships. The nature of relationships in a plural society, at the ‘meso’ level, is heavily skewed towards tribalism and ethnicity which in turn breeds prebendalism which invariably affects the society negatively in plural societies. Social networks are mostly built around primordial cleavages. (Ekeh,1975). These, in turn, act as structuring forces that shape the kind of opportunities available or not to members of a plural society. This to a great extent, determines our life chances. At the micro-level, social structures manifest in our everyday life as we interact with people. This manifests in form the of norms, mores, and customs that regulate our conduct every day and in every circumstance.

So, the way any society develops, and functions is embedded in its social structure. African societies, before their contact with various cultures from Europe (Portuguese, French, English, German, Spanish, Belgian, etc.), had different social structures that regulated the lives, conducts, and behaviour of individuals in the different/distinct societies that made up the people called Africans. Hence, every tribe grew and developed according to its social structures and cultural base that regulated societal and individual aspirations. Social structures served the purpose of helping individuals and societies live fulfilled lives, happy and in harmony with people from other nationalities or groups without acrimony.

This scenario persisted until individual tribal groups began to have contact with European cultures that overturned the age-long indigenous social structures that allowed different groups to live in peace, harmony, and have mutual respect for one another. Though social networks are evolutionary. These changes fundamentally and permanently altered the way a society organized itself. Hence the cultural contact between African and European societies significantly changed the social structure of African societies by super-imposing what is referred to as ‘migrated social structures’ on the indigenous people of Africa. These migrated social structures led to new social formations that have brought the emergence of plural societies into larger structures called ethnic groups/ nationalities. These social structures developed new patterns of relationship or network that eventually created prebendal behaviour among members of the emergent societies and the attendant political, economic, social and security instability in virtually all African states and particularly in Nigeria.

This paper, therefore, set out to examine how cultural contact between Africa and Europe has affected indigenous social structures by imposing new ones that have become relatively permanent through the migrated social networks from Europe to Africa and how these ‘new’ structures have created plural societies, prebendalism and instabilities.

Objective of the Study

This paper argues that the causes of instabilities being experienced in Nigeria and other plural societies are located within the matrix of migrated social structures and prebendal behaviours among state actors arising from the fusion of hitherto autonomous groups to become one political entity through amalgamation.

Theoretical Framework

This paper is theoretically anchored on Richard Joseph’s theory of prebendalism (1987,1998). The theory argues that the constituent ethnicities in plural societies are the basis for the organization, legitimation, and mobilization of ethno-clienteles’ network of patronage, corruption, mis-governance and rent-seeking behaviour. It is a situation where office holders of any given state are regarded as prebends that use their offices to generate material benefits for themselves, their kin and members of their subgroups or nationalities to the exclusion of other groups. This situation creates conflict and mistrust among the various subgroups as is being experienced in Nigeria and eventually leads to instabilities in such plural societies. This theory argues that when people of different ethnic nationalities come together without proper integration, people from each group tend to see themselves as representing their ethnic (primordial) group. This encourages unhealthy rivalry, exclusionism and instabilities in such a society.

Migrated Social Structures

The migrated social structures that have been imposed on African societies came mainly due to the different brands of (English, French, Portuguese etc.) colonialism that had different forms of impact on Africa. This incursion into Africa that took place between the late nineteenth century and early twentieth century, according to Ekeh (1983), was basically to export surplus capital that existed in Europe. This was intended to create new economic structures and opportunities that would enhance the expansion of European capitalism.

Colonial capitalist development introduced the complex relationships between the elements of European culture and indigenous cultures. This cultural contact led to new social formations with enduring significance that have outlived the central process of the contact 'colonialism' and this link in the social construction of supra-individual entities and constructs that has engendered significant changes in the social structure of the indigenous peoples (Ekeh, 1983) Being a social movement, the effects of colonialism cannot be quickly eroded. The impact of these social formations could be seen as the causes of problems that have infected the social structures of post-independent African states.

Piaget (1968), argues that it was these social formations during colonialism that led to the emergent social structures in colonized societies. Levi-Strauss (1963), explains social structures as supra-individual models or ideal typification of social existence. Social formations usually emerge on their own as a result of social situations within a given entity irrespective of the wish of individual actors. Ekeh (1983), has argued that social formations are social structures that emerge through internal logic and forces of existence in a system and not the creation of individuals. Enduring social formations create social structures that displace existing ones and institute new and more permanent ones. Individuals have no room to make choices as these structures are supra-individuals. These structures determine the conduct, aspirations, and behaviour of individuals and help them find meaning in life.

Social formations, as results of cultural contact have resulted in structures that are regarded as migrated social structures. These new forms of social structures came with colonialism and became engrafted into the social processes of the indigenous people. Hence, the term migrated social structure is used here to mean or connote all rules, regulations, institutions, cultures and attendant aspirations introduced into the indigenous societies of Africa by Europeans, that have affected the ways in which these societies hitherto regulated the behaviour and aspirations of their members (Ekeh, 1975). Prominent among the migrated social structures include but not limited to: ethnicity, direct democracy, bureaucracy, the establishment of a nation-state, electable public offices, judiciary, policing system, hospitals, and market oriented economy, etc. The resultant effect of these migrated social structures is that they supplanted the indigenous social structures. The pre-colonial social structures were thus rendered moribund. They lost their relevance entirely or became insignificant. The surviving elements of indigenous social structures that seem to be central to the survival of the primordial (tribal) groups now became mere traditions in the post-colonial societies without exerting their usual influence on individuals. According to Adewale and Adeoye (2019), these elements became just symbolic, relative to the various groups. This created gaps in nation-building as each group emphasises her own 'national' symbols.

So, given the need to align with the new social order for social survival, the members of the indigenous social groups had to integrate the migrated social structures/ institutions into their existing social structures for their collective and individual survival. Hence, there seems to be a fusion between migrated social structures and indigenous social structures. This enculturation resulted from the contact with European cultures, which the purveyors claimed as being superior and the eventual amalgamation of previously independent autonomous societies created an atmosphere of acrimony, unhealthy contestations, mutual suspicion, distrust, and a scramble for scarce but essential resources. These gave birth to what Richard Joseph has referred to as prebendalism which has plagued post-colonial African societies and its attendant vampires that have hindered nation-building, development and enthroned instabilities. These migrated social structures created another realm of social existence in the indigenous societies which Ekeh (1975), has referred to as the civic public. The civic public lacks the morality of the indigenous or primordial

public and as such seems amoral as it does not look at issues from the indigenous moral prisms but wears the toga of rationality or legality. So the indigenous elites who participate in the realm of the civic public (migrated social structures) instead of disrobing themselves from any tribal sentiment to achieve public good, exploit such sentiments as basis for their political and social mobility. A Clear example of this is in political contestations where political actors use ethnic sentiments as a basis for negotiation and distribution of state generosity Osaghae (2006). This is the root of prebendalism.

Prebendalism and Migrated Social Structures

The migrated social structures that are prevalent in plural societies have created a system that they never meant to create. These social structures may have worked in societies where they migrated from, maybe due to a homogeneous nature of such societies or concerted efforts made to integrate them. However, in plural societies of Africa, there were no serious efforts to integrate the societies' growth but for administrative convenience (Lugard, 1919). This situation created ethnicity, which Onuoha (2022), avers to be among the emergent social structures. The emergent social structures gave birth to a problem of prebendalism.

Prebendalism results from people giving preference to their primordial public (ethnic relations) over and above their civic public (the society at large). Prebendalism is seen as one not seeing himself as working for the public good but for his own minority group. Ekeh (1975), has argued that these new social structures in Africa have created two distinct publics with the emergence of ethnicity and other structures. The two realms of public, according to Ekeh are the civic public and the primordial public. The civic public refers to the whole institutions established to serve for the general good of people (mostly migrated), while the primordial public has to do with people seeing themselves as members of their various ethnic nationalities and are assumed to represent such interest. This creates a situation in which a public officer thinks of his ethnic affiliation before the state. His allegiance is more toward his people (ethnic/ religious group) and public service is referred to as "government work". With this scenario, the individual worker tries to uphold his ethnic world views and morality over and above general good as espoused by the new social structures (the civic public).

In the public realm, the primordial group ties and sentiments influence and determine the individual's public behaviour, which ultimately affects public interest given that it is the same individual that functions in the realm of the civic public. The migrated social structures like the military, civil service, the police, governance, and other bureaucratic institutions have no moral link with private life. It is worthy to note that in African plural societies, the same actors act in both the primordial and civic publics. These fused functioning in the two publics simultaneously have created the canker of prebendalism that is plaguing most plural African societies including Nigeria. Under this circumstance (the primordial public), the individual sees his duties as moral obligations to benefit and sustain his primordial public (ethnic or religious) to which he belongs, and the basic duties and obligations usually vary from one society or group to another. This situation creates a condition in which every actor in the system seems more interested in obtaining for his people, 'their own;' share of the 'national cake'.

This prebenidal behaviour has created a plethora of problems including under development, mutual suspicion, mutual distrust, and attendant instabilities. Given that these new structures must recruit people to carry out functions, the various ethnic groups jostle in the process of filling the positions in the structures already created. Apart from the general aura of corruption, ethnic profiling characterizes the process. Those so recruited are obliged first and foremost to protect and promote the interest of their group far above every other thing. The process of political selection and recruitment to various agencies of state and distribution of welfare facilities is given ethnic and sub-national considerations instead of merit. This is what may have given birth to the federal character principle in Nigeria and a commission that is lying prostrate. Douglas (2005) has argued that it was the primordial sentiment that led to the program that saw the massacre of the Igbos in the northern part of Nigeria in 1966 that eventually snowballed to a full scale thirty months civil war between (1967-1970). These incidents in Nigeria have further deepened ethnicity, primordial sentiments, and prebendalism in public life as individual actors under the purview of migrated social

structure focus upon self-interest, groups, and ways of maximizing benefits from the general common wealth. This quest to participate in sharing the common wealth or positions occasioned by these migrated structures has manifested obviously in prebendal behaviours of members of African societies Mbalisi (2017).

Andreski (1968), has argued that African societies experiences behavioural and structural deficiencies. These deficiencies, to me, are located within the social structures that migrated to Africa. This has created a form of government that is rooted in prebendal behaviour and kleptocracy. According to Joseph (2006), Africans and indeed Nigerians have come to accept this systemic conversion of public offices to serve the interest of officeholders, their political clan, and ethnic communities which reflect the fundamental dynamic that characterizes plural African societies. This has made it impossible for the government of African societies to perform the functions of a normal state. A normal state refers to a state that has the capability to maintain order, without relying on use of excessive force or coercion, that guarantees citizens basic security in all spheres of life, increasing the availability of life necessities such as food supply, good health care system, qualitative education, adequate housing, and transportation systems that help in the emergence of a civic order that goes beyond parochial(ethnic) identities rooted within the framework of primordial arrangement and establish a system of rules and behaviours that are required for a normal and prosperous all-inclusive state to thrive. This will facilitate states the evolution of the states to nation-hood. Herbst (2000), avers that this may be attributed to the haphazard spatial design of colonial African territories that hindered the process of evolution of a normal and capable state in plural societies.

Borrowing from the argument of Herbst (2000), one could argue that any nation that experienced the haphazard spatial design and its subsequent migrated structures experiences obstacles to peace, happiness, freedom, and prosperity, which create instability and dis-integrations at the long run. The stability and continued cohesion of any modern society are dependent on its capacity to fulfill the material, physical, and psychological aspirations of the individuals and groups that constitute such a state. Once citizens perceive that the state they belong to is an obstacle to their well-being, such citizens become alienated and become sources of danger to the peaceful and harmonious existence of such a society. Awolowo (1977), had argued that for the continued existence of the State as a corporate entity, man is by instinct susceptible to economic motivations and inclusiveness. As man continues to feel inclusive in the scheme of things and make progress in the realization of his overall aspirations, the stronger he is motivated to ensure the success of his society. Fashola (2009), avers that any society that extols responsibility, credible, and transparent administration that is devoid of prebendalist tendencies, will naturally elicit a responsible and understanding followership that enables the society to achieve a good living.

Prebendalism, entails the disbursement of public offices and state rents to one's ethnic group or clients. It is according to Richard (1987), the extreme form of clientelism where cultural and ethnic identities are mobilized by political and state actors to appropriate public resources. This is a structure that is so manifests in plural societies where new structures have overtaken the traditional/indigenous structures. Kesseman (2010), argues that these prebendal behaviours exist in political and social structures where the clients of the officeholders include specific set of elites that one is linked to especially ethnic and religious cleavages. Prior to the emergence of these migrated social structures into Africa, the allocation of commonwealth on the basis of this prebendal euphoria was non-existent.

Today in Nigeria, all public positions are rationed at the whims and caprices of the person in power. The greatest consideration is given to ethnic and religious affiliations. At every turn, ethnic and religious profiling has become a standard measure for recruiting people into various public positions to the exclusion of people whose own kith and kin are not exercising or occupying positions of authority that are used in this process of allocation Mbalisi(2017). The people so recruited pays more allegiance to their ethnic groups for the favour done and go ahead to pilfer or out-rightly steal resources meant for public good. This prebendal behaviour creates poverty, unhealthy rivalry among groups for public offices and creates an atmosphere of insecurity and instability. Prebendalism in Nigeria must therefore, be seen as a consequence of the migration of social structures from other parts of the world to Nigeria during the colonial period.

This has introduced new social categories, desires, and aspirations that can only be met within the context of the new social structures. It has also bred instability and insecurity in its wake due to the obvious inequity that pervades the entire social and political landscape of Nigeria.

Distrust and Misrule as By-Products of Prebendalism

In plural societies there exists distrust and misrule by the people in the state institutions. Given that migrated social structures introduced institutions that were alien to indigenous societies and merged autonomous societies under the same system of rules and governance, thus mutual suspicion was created by this leading to distrust and misrule. The civic public which Ekeh (1975), described as the successor to the colonial government was regarded by members of the new states as essentially amoral, a sphere from which resources could be extracted to be invested in the communal or primordial public. This situation captures the fundamental and persistent dilemma of trust, misrule, distance, and identity in post-colonial African states, as a normal state can only function effectively when there is a trust network.

It is only within a trust network that societies can function effectively. Tilly (2005), has argued that trust networks exist in many forms: Economic, religious, political, etc. He argued that trust networks are necessary in the accomplishment of societal goals. Trust networks, according to Joseph (2006), is the willingness of members of a given society to place their lives, liberties, and properties at the risk of other members of the network. Political rules vary in societies to the extent in which they integrate and accommodate trust networks. Rulers in plural societies prefer using coercion in the exercise of their powers as opposed to building commitment and capital. Ekeh (1975), viewed the absence of trust in the civic public as the foundation for prebendalism and hence, the failure of African states to ensure strong public institutions because trust is withheld from the state and invested in the primordial public. This situation is replete in post-colonial African state and Nigeria in particular. For Tilly (2005), building states involves transformation in the relationship between trust networks and public politics. He further posits that the most frequent matrix for the formation of trust network is putting the state above everything. However, Ekeh (1983) expressed dismay with the civic public in post-colonial African societies for never acquiring the level of trust necessary for the shift from coercion to capital and commitment as necessary instruments of governance. In governance, all the people must agree for it to work or conflict and instability will take over. People must buy into the policies of the state and its institutions. It could be argued that ethnically diverse societies or communities are less likely to manifest trust towards other groups and state institutions, hence, the prebendal behaviours that are manifest in African societies.

Distrust in African societies has led, obviously, to prebendalism and misrule. This paper contend that, misrule also leads to mistrust among the various groups in post-colonial states. Joseph (2006), argues that distrust within the Nigerian political space and within the institutions of the state has deepened relentlessly each reinforcing the other in a vicious circle. Distrust he argued, has eaten so deep into the Nigerian polity and is so pervasive that almost every segment that makes up Nigeria is enmeshed in agitation and insecurity that have posed the greatest problem of survival for Nigeria as a political entity.

Migrated Social Structures, Prebendalism and Instabilities

The contact between African societies and Western Europe, as has been argued, introduced and super-imposed new social structures on the indigenous societies where functions hitherto performed by traditional structures were set aside preference of the new ones. The emergent ethnic groups (hitherto tribes merged by colonial officers) created new ideologies and entities perceived to be only achieved within the context of the new social structures. The migrated social structures such as the democratic system with its new process of selecting leaders, the bureaucracies, and other public institutions that need to be managed for the general benefit become contested among the elites from the various nationalities (ethnic groups).

These migrated social structures developed around the models of European institutions and were engrafted onto African societies without taking cognizance of the peculiar nature of various indigenous African societies. The organisational structures of such institutions that came with their promoters did not consider

the moral ethics of the societies, but went on to import such models without any attempt to engraft them onto the existing indigenous morals of the peoples. Most of these new social structures led to what may be termed cultural fixation. Ekeh (1980), argued that the structures so introduced have created what he termed organisational fixation.

The migrated social structures created positions and functions that were expected to enable the smooth functioning of the society. But given the structure of ethnicity that emerged, every ethnic group became suspicious of the other and no trust was built. It is the trust network that sustains society's growth and stability. This is obviously lacking in the new societies. As a result, virtually everyone participating within the new migrated structure saw it as an opportunity to help himself, his acolytes, and his ethnic and religious affiliates. This prebendal behaviour has created deep divisions in plural societies (Tilly, 2005).

In Nigeria, this is believed to have fuelled the Nigeria-Biafra civil war 1967-1970 Douglas (2005). Every patronage is devoted and dispensed to people who share the same prebendal affinity: ethnic or religious. This has led to among other things, politics by identity, mis-governance, mis-leadership, and instability in Nigeria as a plural society. The trust network is so weak outside one's ethnic and religious enclave. This has brought unhealthy competition, and manipulation at every instance to gain advantage to the chagrin of the excluded, marginalized and side-lined group. This is because most people who operate within the confines of the two publics consider their actions from the meso level to the macro level. This deals with how relationships and networks are arranged or organised within the social institution and institutionalised social relationships.

In most plural societies, the network of relationships is built around ethnic or prebendal frameworks and therefore affects the stability of such a society. In such a society, ethnic profiling is usually applied at every juncture as people occupying positions of public service would always, prefer favouring their ethnic primordial group and this leads to unstable situations in the polity and security of such societies as Nigeria. That is why there exist a great gulf between citizenship and indigeneship with the latter being the basis for recruitment and allocation of positions and resources. One would recall what happened in the Western Nigeria parliament when Dr Nnamdi Azikiwe, an Igbo man from Eastern Nigeria won an election and was to form a government as the Premier, chief Obafemi Awolowo, a Yoruba man from the West protested that an Igbo man cannot preside over parliament in the Yoruba Western Nigeria. That led to Azikiwe resigning and relocating to the East that was pre-dominantly Igbo (The son of the soil syndrome). This type of intrigue has plagued Nigeria since the advent of the new forms of social structure and social institution Douglas (2005). At every level of public life in Nigeria, ethnic considerations have taken precedence over morality and ethics. Almost all the instabilities in all facets of Nigeria's political, social, economic, and security experience are traceable to the prebendal behaviour of mis-integrated people who see themselves as serving the two publics, (primordial and civic) created by the migrated social structures.

Mbalisi (2017), argues that prebendalism has been on the increase in Nigeria, and is causing serious security threat and social instability that is being witnessed at this material time in history. Social stability and security are like Siamese twins. One can hardly exist without the other. Social stability connotes a situation where all segments of social life, culture, politics, and relationships are at the state of equilibrium. All things function in order to achieve social homeostasis. It is, according to Gubin (1993), the actual observance of governmentally- formalized, regulated, and enforced laws, rules, and norms for societal relations. It therefore suffices that a stable society is that in which the state as represented by government, makes and enforces laws and regulations to maintain order and growth.

In plural societies with migrated social structures like Nigeria, one wonders if this is in place as government makes laws and implements same only in the context of ethnic profiling occasioned by the interplay of primordial public and prebendalism in the dispensation of the laws that are so made. This has led variously to many subtle and adverse agitations that have bedevilled Nigeria. This has given rise to marginalisation and only token inclusion of the marginalised groups in the power structure. Cudd (2002), avers that individuals are oppressed by virtue of their relationship with a particular social group. In such

societies, people are treated as either members of the ‘‘in group’’ or ‘‘out group’’, and this leads to exclusionism hence agitations and instabilities in most plural societies.

Social instability refers to the inability to ensure conditions that are favourable for human co-existence. When a society cannot guarantee the safety of the people, rule of law, and peaceful co-existence, tension and violence-free environment, it is said to be unstable. Instability makes it impossible for long-term planning that enhances growth. One could then argue that migrated social structures that gave birth to ethnicity, two publics, and prebendalism are precursors of social instability in Nigeria.

Prebendalism in Nigerian public life is such that it has been at the base of most political and economic conflicts in Nigeria leading to insecurity and instability. This has played more vicious roles since the amalgamation of Nigeria. This prebendal behaviour according to Mbalisi (2017), has ceaselessly fermented problems which manifest itself in ethnic, religious, and political crises since independence. It is worthy of note that original relations among the groups were smooth and cohesive. But the relations got strained as the groups began to scramble and compete for scarce but essential resources (Sofola, 1970).

Instability in Nigeria has become so pronounced as a result of mis-governance by political elites driven by greed, who manipulate ethnic sentiments in the process of power acquisition, and therefore see their ethnic groups as their support base and developed despotic behaviour that is rooted within the prebendal framework. This leads to exclusion of people from other groups in the scheme of things thereby allowing mediocrity among state actors. This situation creates a crisis of trust, which manifests in each group within the state Ake (1981). Various groups come up with different demands that help in creating unstable conditions. In the Niger Delta region of Nigeria, it is the agitation for resource control and subsequent oil thievery as a protest against neglect by the state after contributing so much to the state. In the South Eastern region, it is the agitation for self-determination due to the humongous claim of marginalization and exclusionist policy of the Nigerian state. In the middle belt (North Central) it is the clash between the Fulani killer herdsmen and the farming communities of Benue and Niger states while, Plateau state experiences indigene- settler crises. The North West is dominated by terrorists whom the state brand as bandits and the North East is unsettled by the Boko Haram terrorists. All these point to one fact, a state that has refused to evolve from statehood to nationhood as a result of the continuation of prebendal sentiments and distrusts to the benefit of the few political elites from various groups that make up Nigeria. None of them seem to muster the courage to build a nation where peaceful cohesion and all-inclusiveness can be the norm rather than expectation. Those who gain power appoint people who superintend state institutions and this has resulted in the appointment of round pegs in ‘‘square holes’’ on the basis of ethnicity and personal interests. This has in turn led to the inefficient discharge of duties in the interest of public good. These appointees continue the prebendalist behaviour by focusing on a trust network- ethnic and religious groups in the dispensation of benefits of the state. Those occupying these positions of responsibility see and regard the opportunities as rights rather than a privilege and as such have a disconnect with the generality of the citizenry thereby causing envy and acrimony that fuel agitations and instabilities in the socio- economic and political space. Prior to the emergence of these new structures, the indigenous societies had a well-defined method of existence and dispensation of public good based on their moral viewpoints. The emergent migrated social structures are amoral and their managers use them to satisfy their primordial public to the detriment of the stability of the state.

Conclusions and Recommendations

It is instructive to note that the migration of new social structures into African societies has had a corrosive effect on the people for many decades in the post-colonial era. Tilly (2005) has argued and I agree with him that there is need to rebuild the states to achieve public good and ensure stability. He posits that building of states must involve transformations in the relationship between various trust networks (ethnic and religious) and public politics as he argued that it is the political predators that manipulate state institutions that provoke instability, resistance, evasion, and dissimulation from the trust networks.

The state must be seen as the outcome of transformative processes in society while also being generative of further advances. This is because it is the state that makes it possible for societies to advance. The centrality of the state and law cannot be ignored in the socio-economic stability and growth of any society. The Nigerian state has become weaker, softer, more divided and contested and generally unable to perform the functions of a normal state. This, attributes to the prebendal behaviours engendered by migrated social structures that are super-imposed on African societies that are amoral, and which have created schisms among various groups populating the Nigerian state with great suspicion and distrust among them. In a normal functioning state, it is only the state that claims the monopoly of the legitimate use of coercion for public good. The instabilities in the Nigerian state have shown that it is not only the state that possesses the power of coercion as is manifest in all regions where non-state actors use coercion to undermine the power of the state. This was not the case in indigenous societies.

The cause of state incapacity in Nigeria is the failure to build and sustain public institutions that serve and are accountable to the citizens, not to a small tribal group. Institutions must be both supra-individual and ethnic cleavages if any stability is to be achieved. To achieve stability devoid of prebendalism or primordial public, state actors must be responsible and credible while building a transparent administration that will naturally elicit a responsible and understanding citizenry. It must eschew sectionalism and exclusionism in all spheres of public life and conduct. When this is done, the code of misgovernance due to prebendalism and elevation of one's primordial public will be a thing of the past. The electoral system must also strive to be fair, just, transparent, and credible to produce leaders that are not ethnic or religious bigots. The mechanism must ensure that leaders are peoples' representatives instead of being imposed by corrupt judicial officers in alliance with political, religious and ethnic predators

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