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Review

Review

States creation since 1967: An imperative of the military contribution to nation-building in Nigeria

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The structural defects in the creation of the Nigerian state by the colonialists which suited their interest of continued subjugation and exploitation of Nigeria were inherited by the civilian leadership. This class that appropriated state power to further their economic interest played down the prospects of nation-building. It is against this background that this work assesses the role of the military in tackling the problem of nation-building in Nigeria through state creation as an imperative.

Key words: State creation, nation-building, colonial, Nigeria.

INTRODUCTION

To say Nigeria was, before 1960, a colonial property or principality of the British Empire is simply stating an obvious aspect of Nigerian history that is presumably well known by all Nigerians. However, by that year, from the 1st of October Nigeria gained her political independence from the erstwhile British colonial master. At independence, the geo-political entity (Nigeria) handed over to or inherited by the post-colonial leadership contained three regions with provinces and districts as respective sub units which were created and used by the former colonial masters for the administration of the former colonial state.

The history of the creation of those regions is dated back to the very decade of the proclamation of protection status or protectorate over the area that was later to be christened Nigeria by the British crown on the first of January, 1900. It should be noted that before this date,

most of this area had been, following the British bombardment and subjugation of Lagos in 1860, administered indirectly by the Royal Niger Company on behalf of the crown through a charter granted the company by the crown. This period is known in Nigerian colonial history as that of company rule. However, the Crown later decided to assume direct administration of the area after revoking, on the 31st of December, 1899, the charter earlier granted the Company to govern the area on its behalf. Hence, on the 1st of January, 1900 the British Crown had assumed the direct mantle of leadership of the colonial state of Nigeria. Therefore, throughout this period, 1st January, 1900-30th September, 1960, British colonial administrators took charge of administration in Nigeria under the charge of a Governor General who was answerable, not to Nigerians in Nigeria but to the Colonial Office headed by the Colonial Secretary in London. It is the intention of this work to

show that British colonialism did not set out to ensure Nigerian integration and unity in spite of the noise made about the so-called amalgamation of 1914. Also to be seen is the lack of interest on the part of post-colonial Nigerian leadership to reverse the trend and the military's attempt at reversing it through the process of state creations.

NIGERIA UNDER COLONIAL ADMINISTRATION

Consequent upon the 1900 proclamation Nigeria was divided into three territories, these were known as the Colony of Lagos, the Southern Protectorate and the Northern Protectorate. Each of these territories was administered by an administrator that was answerable to the colonial authority. In 1904, the administrations of the Colony of Lagos and the Southern Protectorate were brought together under one governor. By 1906 the Colony and Protectorate of Southern Nigeria came into existence under a united colonial bureaucracy. During the next six years Northern and Southern Nigeria were administered as separate territories with frontier control. In 1914, the colony and the two protectorates were amalgamated into a single political unit known as the Colony and Protectorate of Nigeria with its headquarters in Lagos and with Sir, Fredrick Lugard as the new Governor General.

In spite of the 1914 amalgamation, the former separate territories still maintained their administrative individuality. The Colony of Lagos preserved its legal status as Lagos and its environs had been annexed and made a colony, so the people became British subjects and British law was imposed on African law. The colony's separate status continued until the inauguration of the 1951 constitution. The amalgamated protectorate of 1914 was divided into two groups of provinces, each administered by a separate Lieutenant Governor reporting directly to the Governor. Although the broad principles of the Native Administration were slowly extended from the north to the south, the different policies and conceptions of colonial administration which have evolved in each of the two protectorates during the fourteen years of their separate existence continued to dominate official thought and action.

Due to this, we can observe that it was not even all the British colonial administrators that supported the amalgamation project. Some of the British colonial administrators that had served in the northern region for instance, strongly objected the amalgamation of the regions of Nigeria. Among such people, Sir Herbert Richmond Palmer and C.L. Temple were, indeed, very powerful colonial administrators. On account of their disagreement with amalgamation project they went ahead and continue to frustrate the amalgamation even long after 1914.

Consequently, though officially and theoretically, by 1914 Nigeria was amalgamated but in reality it was not. Decrying the frustration of the amalgamation arising from the attitude of the non-conforming British colonial administrators in the northern region, J.E.W. Flood, head of the Nigeria department in the Colonial Office complained in 1928 that:

Ever since amalgamation there had been a school of thought in the Northern Provinces which worked to preserve as absolute a separation of the two halves of Nigeria as possible and to resist what they regarded as "government from Lagos". The head of that school, he declared, was unfortunately Palmer, who, he pointedly observed, was "getting very difficult" (Okonjo, 1974:145).

The outbreak of World War II saw Nigeria being divided into four artificial administrative units namely, the Colony, the Western Provinces, the Northern Provinces and the Eastern Provinces. The acute shortage of administrative personnel occasioned by the war and the growing congestion of Lagos necessitated substantial delegation of some powers and functions from Lagos to the headquarters of the other three provinces. By the end of the war therefore, the three main areas were operated with some kind of individuality. This was strengthened by the Richard's constitution of 1946 which gave each unit some additional powers. Moreover, the 1951 constitution changed their designation from provinces to regions and they formally became constituent units in the federal system. The colony was equally obliterated by its amalgamation with western region. In 1954 the revised constitution gave the regions ever greater autonomy in the federation of Nigeria and made Lagos the federal capital.

The above should not suggest that such disunity in British colonial administrative official policy, among other things, existed only between or among regions. Even within regions such disharmony existed. In the southern region, for instance, this has been aptly captured thus:

When the Southern Protectorate was created in 1900, it was administratively organized into three groups of provinces, each headed by a Resident who reported to the Lieutenant Governor. These were subsequently amalgamated into one united administration with a free-circulating bureaucracy and with headquarters first in Lagos and subsequently in Enugu. Throughout this period of southern unity, administrative policies were essentially uniform, with adaptations for obvious sectional or ethnic peculiarities. In 1939 the awkwardness of Enugu as a headquarters, together with other factors, brought a division of the south into two group of provinces (western and eastern), with the Niger River

as the boundary (Coleman, 1986:.47).

Careful observation of the above would reveal that the so much talked about amalgamation of Nigeria was after all not real or genuine amalgamation that is often currently thought and talked about. It was indeed a deceitful ploy to permanently ensure or guarantee apathy among the people of Nigeria with a view to ensuring or maintaining continued colonization and exploitation. It should be noted that the objective of British colonialism in Africa was never to foster genuine unity or create the spirit of oneness and integration of African peoples in their respective colonies. Moreover, it was antithetical to the divisive philosophy inherent in colonialism as this would logically unite colonized against colonizers with the obvious consequences never wished or intended by any colonizing power. This explains why the British made sure that anywhere they embarked on colonization such African people in the respective colonies were deliberately played off among or between themselves. The cases of the Buganda/Bunyoro people of present day Uganda in East Africa and the Ashante/Fante people of modern Ghana in West Africa are but few examples that can be multiplied. Therefore, the case in Nigeria was not any different or to be expected differently. Thus, the sham called amalgamation was a mere amalgamation of government departments within the colonial entity and administration to minimize expenditure and to further enhance effective administration but certainly not the peoples of Nigeria.

As for the people of Nigeria, the superficial amalgamation *abinitio* never intended to integrate them. That was why the colonial minimal provision of infrastructure such as roads, railways were constructed to aid colonial exploitation but not to enhance social interaction among Nigerian people. This is because such roads or ways merely provided channels to, or linked areas of raw materials that were in dire need in Europe, to the port for onward movement to Europe. Hence, while claiming to amalgamate Nigeria the colonial administration worked assiduously to maintain permanent division among the people of Nigeria. Therefore, the colonial administrative policies and internal geo-political structures upon which the administration was based inherently contained this British colonial ploy. The regionalization of the colonial estate along major ethnic groups' line and subjecting the minority ethnic groups found in their respective regions to the hegemony of such majority groups in the respective regions was in bad spirit. It created and nurtured the minority/majority hatred and tension culminating in the 'vexed problematic' generally known in Nigerian history as Minority Question'. Moreover, it created generally the phenomenon of ethnicity that has so much bedeviled the Nigerian socio-political culture thereby creating a huge stumbling block on Nigeria's tortuous way towards nation-

building and attainment of 'nationhood'. This is so because, even among the majority ethnic group as the struggle for who assumed control or power and control at the federal level and the introduction of party politics with a view to heralding a Nigerian leadership, especially at the closing years of colonial administration further created the condition for strong ethnic and regional antipathy. It is in the light of this that Okonjo's submission makes meaning:

The manner of settling the nature of Nigeria's amalgamation constitution and machinery of administration thus set the stage for a continuing power struggle between Northern and Southern Nigeria-a struggle which still rumbles on even now. A spirit of inordinate and sometimes irreconcilable regional rivalries was therefore part of Nigeria's heritage under the scheme of amalgamation adopted in 1914. It will be noted that throughout our period and for many years thereafter, the major political question became how to reconcile the conflicting political aspirations of each half of the country; the north sought to preserve the important political and institutional gains which it made in 1914 when its system of government was selected as better for the country as a whole while the south struggled to free itself from the choking hold which the 1914 arrangements exercised over its path to political progress (Okonjo, 1974:108-109).

Similarly, Coleman wrote:

Thus, accidents of historical acquisition together with the changing imperatives of administrative convenience were among the determinants of the present division of Nigeria into three regions….They were also factors in the "regionalization" of nationalism… (Coleman, 1986: 48).

It was under this federal system or framework that colonial Nigeria matched towards independence. And due to the ethno-regionalization of colonial policies and activities, the socio-political activities and the process of negotiation of constitutional independence between the so-called nationalist leaders and the colonial administration also took this pattern. In order words, just as the regionalist policies and ethnic proclivities created by the colonial administration affected national unity and integration, so did it also affect negatively party politics and the process wrestling power from the colonial administration generally.

Here too, three major political parties competing for power emerged in the three different regions of colonial Nigeria also representing the respective majority ethnic groups in the regions, coinciding perfectly identically with the colonial divisive desire or creation. Therefore, the so-

called nationalist activities heralding the transfer of power to independent Nigerian leadership was dominated by the majority ethnic groups. This party was the National Conference for Nigeria and Cameroons later known as National Conference for Nigerian Citizens (N.C.N.C.). It was led by Dr. Nnamdi Azikiwe, an Igbo. This party became an Igbo dominated party. Consequently, the party emerged strongest in the Igbo dominated region of eastern Nigeria. Conversely, the National Conference for Nigeria and Cameroons later known as National Conference for Nigerian Citizens (N.C.N.C.) became very unpopular in the other two regions. Also, there was the Action Group (A.G.) party which was not only led by a foremost son of the major ethnic dominant group of the western region, the Yoruba, Chief Obafemi Awolowo, but similarly dominated by the same group. This party too became unpopular in the other two regions of the federation. Then too, there was the Northern People's Congress (N.P.C.) party led by the Sardauna of Sokoto, Alhaji Ahmadu Bello. In the case of this party, the nomenclature alone offered a perfect explanation of what has been stated here. Without pretence, it was a party for the Hausa/Fulani muslim north. Against this background the minority ethnic groups were to be relegated to the background under colonial Nigeria or at best try to key into the agenda or framework of the majority ethnic groups in their respective regions as they had already been fragmented among the regions or along such lines.

Obviously, this situation created tension and disunity among the three colonial Nigeria's majority ethnic groups as the competition for which of the parties would seize power at the centre at independence heightened. Moreover, this situation created a lot of the persistent agitations for the creation of states for the minorities in those regions by the minority groups, as they (minority groups) had insisted that, "they were not prepared to exchange one master for the other". In spite of the fact that the call for the creation of states just and at that time very popular, the majority ethnic groups, for their personal interest would not allow this to take place as they (majority ethnic groups) had preferred the subjection of the minority ethnic groups to their hegemony. The colonial administration that had created this condition, expectedly sided with the majority ethnic groups as it had always been the order. Therefore, at the Nigerian constitutional conference in London in 1957, in spite of the fact that it was generally acknowledged that:

The breaking up of the three Regions of Nigeria and the creation of more States has become the most popular slogan of the day (Daily Times, 1957: 9).

Notwithstanding, the Conference which was not committed to this cause decided to refer the matter to a commission. Hence, a Commission was instituted, known

after the name of its Chairman, Henry Willink as 'Willink Commission', to 'enquire into the fears of Minorities and the means of allaying them'. The other members were, Gordon Hadow, Philip Mason and J.B. Shearer. The terms of reference and name of the commission shows clearly that it was not even mandated to look into or consider the case made by the minorities for the creation of states. For instance, the issue of creation of states was a fore-closed matter-the administration was not prepared to create states as reflected in the name of the Commission. This is further buttressed by the terms of reference which states that:

1. To ascertain the facts about the fears of minorities in any part of Nigeria and to propose means of allaying those fears whether well or ill founded.
2. To advise what safeguards should be included for this purpose in the Constitution of Nigeria.
3. If, but only if, no other solution seems to the Commission to meet the case, then as a last to make detailed recommendations for the creation of one or more new states, and in that case:-

(a) to specify the precise area to be included in such State or States;
(b) to recommend the Government and administrative structure most appropriate for it;
(c) to assess whether any State recommended would be viable from an economic and administrative point of view and what the effect of its creation would be on the Region or Regions from which it would be created and on the Federation.

4. To report its findings and recommendations to the Secretary of State for the Colonies. (Report of the Commission appointed to enquire into the fears of Minorities and the means of allaying them, p.iii).

As can be seen, this was indeed a confusion and unnecessary digression aimed at frustrating this genuine call for the creation of more states by the minorities. The minorities were not simply expressing fears of domination in their respective regions but wanted their self deter-mination in their own geo-political state which was more in line with the spirit of genuine federation against the fraudulent one that was being imposed. Even in 1957 our thinking was succinctly captured when a commentator on the issue wrote:

The most important issue before the Conference was not the question of national independence but the question of more states. It is sad to think that this vital problem of more states was badly handled by the Conference. The contention that the creation of more states "is based on the fears of the minority" is false. The sober truth is that

on the question of more states hang the important issues of Nigerian national unity and national leadership hangs the political stability of the Federal Government. The Conference, having built its case for more states on wrong premises, naturally came to a wrong conclusion (Daily Times, 1957: 5).

Expectedly, the ethnic minorities were therefore, not ready to allow this, preferring to ruthlessly confront this unacceptable position throughout the period of colonial administration and even beyond as would be seen below. This has been captured with respect to Tiv-land thus, "The last months of dependency were marred by riots and burning in Tiv country…(Clark, 1991:446). This situation was so tense as to prevent Her Royal Highness from visiting Makurdi during her visit to Nigeria and tour of Northern Region. Hence:

Riots in Tiv country prevented H.R.H. from visiting Makurdi during her less than comfortable subsidiary tour of the north (Clark, 1991: 355).

POST-COLONIAL NIGERIA UP TO THE FIRST MILITARY INTERVENTION 1960-1966

At independence, just as it has been correctly observed, independence cannot be used as a historical dividing line as this colonial situation continued. The immediate post-independence Nigerian leadership that emerged at independence came from the two major ethnic groups of Igbo from the eastern region and the Hausa/Fulani from the northern region. This had to be so because the 1959 federal election made it possible for the groups to form political alliance and form government at the centre, having obtained an electoral victory permitting such, by their political parties. This leadership was not interested in altering the status quo. Rather, to worsen the situation, in the course of struggling to take over leadership from the former colonial administration at the federal level the A.G. had aligned with the minority ethnic groups in the northern region so as to make inroad into the region with a view to winning the 1959 federal election and form government. During this period the A.G. had worked closely with the United Middle Belt Congress (U.M.B.C.), a minority ethnic group political party, led by the Tiv group, which had remained persistent and unrepentant in its agitation for the creation of a Middle Belt State for the minority groups of central Nigeria of the northern region. At this point too, the A.G. had supported the cause of the U.M.B.C. and for this won the wrath of the Hausa/Fulani leadership of the north for supporting what it termed, "…dismemberment of the North…" (Aliyu, 2004:404) which this leadership and its party, N.P.C. had vowed not to allow. For the N.P.C. philosophy of "One North, One

People, irrespective of religion, tribe or rank, (Paden: 1986), one would understand the "sin" of the A.G. party. Therefore, when this northern Hausa/Fulani cum Igbo post-independence leadership assumed the mantle of leadership decided to spite the A.G. and its leadership. Consequently, the post-colonial Nigerian leadership went ahead and created a Mid-West region out of the former Western Region leaving the Eastern and Northern Regions, places where the leadership came from, intact, despite continued violent uprisings in Tiv-land over the refusal of the creation of a Middle Belt State. But rather than responding positively to the genuine call for the creation of states by the ethnic minority groups, the Prime Minister, Alhaji Tafawa Balewa felt that the answer lies in being ruthless as he had said in response, "We must be firm and ruthless" (Clark, 1991:447). But this strategy could not deter the ethnic minority groups' agitation for the creation of more states. Rather, this strategy culminated in much more resentment and hatred that had existed between minority majority relations, thereby accounting for more disunity and frustration of the goal of nation-building in the country. This situation as reflected in Tiv-land was strongly captured by Ademoyega thus:

The political situation in the North was becoming worse for the Sardauna Government. Soon after independence, the Tiv of Benue Province who were the backbone of the U.M.B.C., became more articulate in demanding for their political rights, which were denied them by the Sardauna Government. Agitation and rioting became the order of the day. Rather than make concessions to them, the Sardauna simply used force to suppress them the more. Early in 1963, when moves were made to create the Mid-West Region, the Tiv accordingly intensified their political war against the Northern Region. But the same N.P.C. government which gladly excised the Mid-West out of the West did not deem it fit to attend to the agitation of the Tiv for their own region. Instead, having failed to subjugate them by the use of anti-riot police, the Sardauna started sending troops of the Nigerian Army to quell the agitation in February 1964. This double standard showed clearly to independent observers, such as the soldiers of the Nigerian Army, that the Governments of the Sardauna and Balewa of the N.P.C. did not intend to govern Nigeria peacefully and progressively, but sought to cut down their political opponents (Ademoyega, 1981:16-17).

Elsewhere, it was reported that:

The year 1965 witnessed the worsening of the political situation in Nigeria. The Tiv war against the oppressive Sardauna government warmed up and showed no sign of abating. It careered on, until the coup of January 15, 1966 (Adenoyega, 1981:20).

Beyond the continuation of this volatile situation as the government remained intransigent in maintaining the unpopular status quo, the situation partly accounting for the first military intervention in January, 1966. For, this has been articulated in the intention and reasons accounting for the intervention:

Politically, we believed that our immediate step would be to correct the worst anomaly of the 1957 constitution, by breaking down the country into smaller units or states. In order words, the four Regions which existed till January 15, 1966, were to die instantly and on their dead bodies were to emerge fourteen states… (Ademoyega, 1981:33).

Moreover,

…the Sardauna's secretary Ali Akilu, (was) blamed by Nzeogwu for encouraging unnecessary killings of Tiv in the Benue troubles (Clark, 1991:785).

Eskor Toyo has well captured the ill in the regional arrangement or framework created by the erstwhile colonial administration in Nigeria in favour of ethnic majority groups against the minority ethnic groups, which tended to create disunity with justification of ethnic minority reaction against the status quo thus:

As for justice, what was the justice in non-patriots continuing so-called one Nigeria not as a unitary state but as three empires, one for Yoruba chauvinists, one for Ibo chauvinists, and one for Hausa-Fulani chauvinists? Those big-tribe cake-sharing chauvinists who think that the Balewa system was very 'stable' simply ignore the minority movements, the actual multi-ethnic character of each of Arthur Richards' regions, and the significance of the Tiv and Rivers revolts under Joseph Tarka and Isaac Boro respectively. After the creation of the Mid-West State in 1963 to spite the Action Group, what was the justice in the Ibo and the Hausa-Fulani chauvinists stoutly refusing to have states created in Arthur Richards' Eastern and Northern Regions (Toyo, 2001:6-7)?

Therefore, as bad as the situation was under the unpopular colonial regional framework that tended to create ethnic tension and disunity among Nigerian groups the situation had to endure through the early post-colonial period culminating, in part, in the first military intervention in the country in 1966. But it is important to note that before the coup, evidence of deteriorating political situation had led to the arrest, trial and conviction of the former Premier of Western Region, Chief Obafemi Awolowo and some of his allies on charges of treason-able felony. Therefore, on January 15, 1966 some

military officers under the leadership of Major Chukwuma Kaduna Nzeogwu staged the first military coup in the country, killing the Prime Minister, Alhaji Tafawa Balewa and the Premier of Northern Region, Alhaji Ahmadu Bello. Both men were from the Hausa/Fulani group of the Northern Region. Apart from these, other prominent sons of this region both in the military and civil structure were eliminated. The selective elimination of the January 15 coup d'etat attracted serious outcry from the northern region. And considering the composition of the coup plotters, who were mainly from the Igbo group of the Easter Region with a few from the Western Region, the outcry seemed justified rather than coincidental. But be it as it may, the coup did not prove successful. The mantle of leadership then fell on the most senior military officer to take charge of the leadership of the country. The man was Major General, Johnson T.U. Aguyi Ironsi. He too was an Igbo, and his lack of exhibition of sincerity led to the staging of a counter coup by northern military officers in July 1967 to avenge the brutal killings of their brothers.

The Military and State Creations in Nigeria 1967-1990

Many people have put their thoughts on paper regarding the issue of military intervention in this country. Therefore, the intention here is not to provoke a further debate on the subject. The objective is to show that in the course of military leadership in this country, states that were in dire need by some Nigerians with a view to enhancing their self determination permissible within such federal framework or system was continued to be denied by civil administration since colonial Nigeria had been created by the military administration. Furthermore, that with this followed the strengthening of the Nigerian federation and the reduction of ethnic cleavages paving the way for national unity much needed ingredient or element for the desired nation-building project. To that extent it can be submitted that the military in Nigeria has contributed so much to nation-building in Nigeria through the creation of states in the country.

The persistent refusal of state creation by the dominant ethnic majority in post-colonial Nigeria against the minorities' insistence on the issue; the arraignment of some of the leaders of the minorities, like J.S. Tarka alongside Chief Obafemi Awolowo for treasonable felony and the subsequent convicting and jailing of Awolowo with some of the people so accused for the charges proved dangerous indicators that the country was in a terrible state of disunity and on the verge of collapse. This was the state of the country when the military intervened on January 15, 1966. This too had ethnic/regional connotation. For instance, the leader of the coup, Nzeogwu said that they were unhappy with the northernization policy of the late Premier of Northern

Region. Also, Nzeogwu lamented that the continued killing of the Tiv people was unjust and therefore a source of worry. Though the coup was not successful however, the most senior military officer, Major J.T.U. Aguiyi Ironsi who assumed the mantle of leadership after the killing of the Prime Minister, Balewa was himself an Igbo. And from all indications he pursued policies to favour his Igbo group. For instance, his introduction of a unitary system of government; handling coup plotters like Nzeogwu & co who were mainly from the Igbo group with kid gloves can attest to this claim. This is more appreciated when one views the gravity of coup plotting in military law or practice. It has even been alleged that he (Ironsi) was part and parcel of the failed coup as everything had been done with his consent and approval (Paden, 1986).

The later counter coup of July 1967 staged by the Northern military officers was also a product of the same ethno-regionalism. However, states were created by the Col. Yakubu Gowon led military administration in 1967 which was good for the federation and promoted national integration and unity necessary for nation-building. The states so created were twelve and may not be perfect but they represented more what was needed and demanded by the Nigerian people than the previous four regions that were being forcefully imposed and sustained. In 1975, Brigadier Murtala Muhammed who became the country's new military Head of State after successfully ousting the Gowon's administration added six more new states to the previous ones created by the defunct Gowon's administration bringing the total to nineteen states. States were further created by the military in 1991 by the self styled military President, Ibrahim Babangida. However, after that, further pressure of agitation for more states forced him to create more states. Hence, he, in 1993 added nine more bringing the total number of states during his government to thirty and a Federal Capital Territory. Gen. Sani Abacha who also emerged as a Nigerian military Head of State in 1996 also added six states to the wave of state creations by the military in Nigeria. Altogether, this has accounted for the present thirty six states that Nigeria has at the present.

Therefore, as noted earlier although these creations may not be perfect they helped to strengthen the Nigerian federation and helped greatly in ensuring Nigerian unity and it is helping in the area of building the nation rather than the ethnic acrimony, regional disaffection and disunity which were engendered by the previous regional arrangement. The cynics that think otherwise are free to do so but others may find Toyo's submission quite appropriate here:

It is not true that the creation of more states by either General Gowon in 1967 or by subsequent military regimes was simply the arbitrary or self-serving act of soldiers from 'Northern Nigeria'. What is true is that there was an over-whelming and persistent demand for the creation of states for them in the areas inhabited by ethnic minorities. This demand was ignored by the chauvinistic 'leaders of the big ethnic groups. Some people do not know, but it is a fact, that the creation of more states by Gowon was not just a matter of justice. Without it Nigeria sooner or later would have disintegrated amid flames of ethnic wars. Later events have shown how easily this could have happened. It was not possible to 'go on with one Nigeria' either with three or four regions or with a unitary state that after 1960 could only have been imposed by a military dictatorship....

After Gowon's creation of twelve states, the subsequent creations of states were also in response to the 'national question' as raised by various ethnic groups. There is no state created by any military regime that was not a response to demands by agitators who were usually former or would-be civilian politicians. The agitators were realistic in taking advantage of military rule to demand for states and local governments. Experience under civilian rule had shown that the bourgeois-minded civilian politicians from larger groups were not ready to entertain any self-determination for smaller groups. Nigerian civilian politicians are by and large a very mediocre and selfish crowd. This is much more so after 1960 when politicians had no more national independence struggle to wage but had only a national or geographical cake to grab (Toyo, 2001:6-7).

Conclusion

As can be seen above the problem of lack of genuine interest in Nigerian unity and nation-building was bequeathed by the colonial administration which was subsequently overlooked by the early independent Nigerian political leadership. The problem culminated in the Nigerian civil war that was fought from 1967-1970 which almost tore Nigeria apart. However, it was the military that has attempted to address the issue of nation-building through its integrationist measures like the creation of states by successive military regimes started in 1967 by Generals, Yakubu Gowon, through Murtala Muhammed and Ibrahim Babangida to Sani Abacha.

Conflict of Interests

The author has not declared any conflict of interests.

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Review

The postponed discourse in Habasha identity: Real or performance?

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Founded on different written sources and personal accounts, this article aims to caution the taken for granted suppositions behind Habasha identity. The term Habasha is challenged that it does not really denote a unitary identity, culturally or historically. The history of Habasha, its origin and representation somehow has been written and rewritten on ideological positions that are often incompatible. Three interacted positions come to work that make Habasha discourse extraordinarily problematic as a) the ethnocentric assumption of Habasha uniqueness ,centrality in Africa civilization and their juxtaposition to western culture herald of western scholars or the Habasha elites claim that Ethiopia has been the defender of African freedom in public b) in this manner the adoption of the claim by the subjects either the replacement of multi-nations with a single Habasha identity to support a unitary system or in daily discourse Habasha reinforces the outsider-status of non-Habashas and serves as a reminder of their exclusion from state power and social fabric of ´´Proper Ethiopia' and c) The affirmation Habasha as a categorical identity by its counter- supporters despite lack of unanimity on this term and its origin. This real problematic disposition about Habasha and the task of tracking all nations into ``Imaginary Habasha Identity' would be fairly reinvestigated. If not , one could foretell its underlying and deleterious side effects on the relations between the patrons of Habasha and their foes by extension on existence of the would be´´ Ethiopia´´.

Key words: Habasha, discourse, identity, real, performance, self representations, misrepresentations and ethnic exceptionalism.

INTRODUCTION

What do the word Habasha represents? Where does this word come from?   A seminal work by a historian Eduard (1895) claimed that the etymology of Habasha must have derived from the Mahri language which means "gatherers". Its numerous variants (Habashat, Habasa, Habesh, Habeshi, Abesha), hereafter referred to as Habasha, have been used to name geographical pockets of territory and people extending from the Arabian Peninsula to the furthest limits of the Horn of Africa region. In the Horn of Africa region, Habasha, which

means mixed[1], was peoples of highlands (North part of Ethiopia) named by Arabs (Yates, 2009:102). These ambivalent views embrace that Habasha is both from Arab and African descent, hitherto in legend descended from King Solomon of Israel (Wendy, 2008).

The ambivalence of Habasha descent history has staggered the origin of Habasha in doubt. More doubtful is an account by Sorenson (1993) which framed them as rightful sovereign inhabitants of Greater Ethiopia even if he himself stretch their origin and ancestral ties to King Solomon and defined them ´´people as not-Black``. According to Shelly Habecker, immigrants in America from Amhara and Tigrinya[2] ethnic backgrounds *when approaching white[3]* "viewed their Habasha identity as a separate ethnic and racial category that is not black" (Habecker, 2011, p.1215; Mohammed, 2006). An account by Donham (2002) supports this view that the term Habasha was historically used by Tigrayan and Amhara (highlanders) as well as others[4].

Recognized in Eduard (1895) Habashas were originally from southeastern Yemen, modern district of Mahra and the word Habasha in the Horn of Africa was only in the 4th century by the Aksumite king Ezana. Donald Levine in defining Abyssinian culture, Wax and Gold, substantiated the idea that Habasha is from the South Arabian tribe Habashat, who migrated to the highlands centuries before the birth of Christ (citedin Yates, 2009). As Per advice from Count Pietro Antonelli, an Italian with geographic Society mission in Abyssinia, the state of Abyssinia combined with the newly added states of the South and the West, were later referred to as "Ethiopia". It was only when the Abyssinia state exhausted its scarce resources that its leaders expanded its frontiers South and Westward in order to amass the resources needed to feed their subject.

Having expanded its frontiers, the state of Abyssinia did not only end with amassing resources but more has evolved with related discourses. Primarily that Western scholars specifically Ludendorff's (1968) assumption about´´ Abyssinia proper´´, the Carriers of Historical Civilization, not only championed for Habasha uniqueness, but also consigned the other Nations' way of life (Cited in Donald Levine, 2000). Secondly, the

above assumption about the uniqueness of Habasha has routinely been instituted in culture of ´´Abyssinia Proper`` and supported them to represent this claim as well that other wordlessly either accept Habasha Identity or are misrepresented by it. To this effect, the article is trying to critically examine the discourses, as they affects people's minds and how they perceive themselves and others. Let us little explore, discuss and challenge this in smart way.

Self -Representation and Misrepresentation of Habasha

In fact, space does not allow a full exploration of Habasha discourse. But for scholars with little knowledge of Ethiopian, Habasha appears strangely familiar. By selecting the Habasha, the author does not mean to target them and valorize ethnic interventionism, that the Habasha have surely been engaged in such (Wendy, 2008: 70). Rather, his interest is to shade light on how the Habashas are making investments in broadcasting their own achievements and singularity (in fact with the support of western scholars) and challenge why the others have taken for granted this identity as if repre-senting themselves and others. Wendy goes on to say that ´´these announcements—some inscribed on stone monuments, others available today only in the second-hand but widely read contemporary texts of European outsiders´´(Ibid : 69) too routinely used in social medias and daily discourses.

Locating the word Habasha in social Medias like world webpage, one would come up with different interpret-tations and nuisances of Habasha. In daily discourse, more in phenomenal and sweeping encounter, the author would take you through the experience he had in Europe. As he was seeing some Ethiopian and approaching them on random basis, whatever the case, the first surprise and saying is "Habashaneh?" Are you Habasha[5]? At that exact moment, I waited. I wanted to answer in more assenting, but not in pretending way. I preferred the ´´country´´ where am I from to Habasha. Being Habasha.´´Habashannet´´ is a collective identity these days—almost for everyone who uses and accepts it right. However, reflexively, others resist that word and want to say "No I am not Habasha, I am Oromo, Sidama , Somali etc …".

The author has never argued against Being Habasha. Everyone who confidently likes and accepts it should be respected. But in his own way, he is discouraged from using that word and let others know what Habasha

[1]It was documented that around first century A.D., Sabaean traders from South Arabian came into contact with native people and intermarried. Their off-springs were referred to as "Habasha", which means "people of mixed blood". Their land was later termed Abyssinia.

[2] As commented by AsafaJalata(1993)Amhara and Tigrayan are, in fact, descended from a single ethnic group, thought to have originated from intermixing with Arab migrants, perhaps in the first millennium BC.

[3]Intalic my emphasis; Habashause this identity as *litmus paper*. Theyuse the Semitic (Habasha) discourse and the discourse of Christianity to mobilize assistance from America, and similar others . Skillfully, they use their blackness to mobilize other Africans (Scott, 1993; Harris, 1986).

[4]Semitic-speaking Gurage groups (in the southwest) and the Harari (in the east/southeast)

[5]AzebMadebo study on Seattle´s Habasha community looks this in detail as ``The question, "Are you Habasha?" is usually followed by more questions regarding what Ethiopian language you speak, and on occasion what ethnic region or ethnicity you associate with - if any at all.``

represents and does not represent. The answer is the word Habasha welcomes some but retreats others. Some Ethiopians celebrate the term Habasha as representing a rich and historically vital civilization. In that spirit, having a currency similar to "whiteness" or "Western" in the United States (Wendy, 2008:77; Sorenson, 1993). Other´ ´Ethiopians´´, however, especially those who do not identify themselves to Habasha, reject it as promoting the legacy of a racist and arrogant culture that oppressed other African peoples. In her study with Seattle's Habasha Community, Azeb (2014) found that not all people readily claim Habesha identity, and some, like those who identify with Eritrea or Oromia nationalist efforts find it to be an offensive and oppressive identifier.

Habasha´s performance of ``whiteness`` and difference from the rest of Africans is unsettled. It is unsettled because of the duality of Habasha identity. Successive Ethiopian state elites use the Semitic (Habasha) and African discourses both globally and regionally. Globally, they use the Semitic (Habasha) discourse and the discourse of Christianity to mobilize assistance from Europe, North America, and the Middle East. Skillfully, they use their blackness to mobilize other Africans, the African diaspora (Scott, 1993; Harris, 1986). Once more, despite the fact that Habasha elites claim that Ethiopia has been the defender of African freedom in public, they never falter to express their disdain Africans. Sbacchi (1997: 22) notes that the Habashas "have traditionally looked upon the dark skinned people as inferior´´. Scott (1993: xv), an African American, who participated in a student work-camp in Ethiopia in 1963, expresses his painful encounter with Habasha racism as the following: "I was called barya (slave) by young, bigoted Ethiopian aristocrats, who associated African-Americans with slavery and identified them black´´.

After Semitic discourse, Habashas construction as categorical and analytical identity to exclude them from the rest of Africa becomes a pretty norm. Case in point, Oromo popular scholar Asafa Jalata regularly uses the term '*Habasha*' in contemporary writing interchangeably with the terms Abyssinian and Ethiopian and he con-trasted between Oromo and Habasha (David, 2009:9). Here I am neither criticizing his path breaking writing nor just saying that there is no difference between two or more things (for instance between Germany and Italy or between Oromo and Sidama). I would rather argue that such notion has lightly augmented the approval of a unique Habasha identity and abetting the Invention of History, despite lack of unanimity on what does Habasha mean.

Then what does the word Habasha mean? Needless to say, there´are people who did not have a clue about it and have naively accepted being called Habasha can mean Ethiopian. In this case, these people have unconsciously trying to substitute Ethiopia with Habasha.

I find it to be a word that is meant to blur the meaning of being ´´Ethiopian``[6]albeit there is no consensus on what Ethiopia it represents. Discerningly, Habasha is a marker of unity. However, how do people want to forgo their heritage for the sake of uniformity?  Why cannot people be called ``Ethiopians´´ or/ and Amhara, Tigrean, Oromo, Somali, Sidama and etc and be proud of their respective being, without having to use another word to unite them. Why cannot we be united while we recognize our differences instead of using Habasha to blur the differences? Then it is not awkward to reject Habasha identity.

An underlying sincerity of rejecting the word Habasha is not because of what it is but for what it actually represents. That it is an autograph given by outsiders, a derogatory word given by Arabs much the same way that white folks use a special N word to label black folks. Nonetheless, as stated above some people from Ethiopia sing a song and others dance with it even knowing that the word Habasha has had a negative connotation. The people favored to be as Habasha today; discussed elsewhere in this article, include the Amhara, Tigray-Tigrinya. In the broadest sense, the word "Habasha" may refer to anyone from Ethiopia, while others would exclude themselves from this association.

At the expense of its negative connotation, however, the scholarly search for the origins of the Habasha in southern Arabia was driven in part by the self-representations of the Habasha. The Habasha have long claimed the Middle East and Africa as an origin, valorizing their difference from both Africans and Arabians. An elaboration in the Habasha originary myth *Kəbrä Nägäśt* (Glory of the Kings), claims as progenitors a Habasha Queen of Sheba and a Middle Eastern King Solomon.[7]. Baxter (1994, p.172) explains that they "used to stress their Middle Eastern rather than African cultural roots, as is so obvious in the reiteration of the Solomonic legend´´.

Let us challenge and question it. Who is "Habasha," really? These racist discourses go unchallenged in academic and popular discourse because they help reproduce Ethiopian ethnocratic and colonial state power. U.S. foreign policy elites, diplomats, and other officials recognize and defend such "racial pretension of Ethiopia's ruling class" (Robinson, 1985, p.53). Despite in what manner liberal and neutral one thinks, the only and

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[6]Many other scholars and David Fisher Gilbert (2009:20) argue that the term 'Ethiopia' itself does not denote a unitary identity, culturally or historically.

[7]E. A. Wallis Budge, The Queen of Sheba and Her Only Son Menyelek: Being the History of the Departure of God and His Ark of the Covenant from Jerusalem to Ethiopia, and the Establishment of the Religion of the Hebrews and the Solomonic Line of Kings in That Country (London: Medici Society, 1922). Paolo Marrassini prefers to translate this as "Nobility of the Kings," and Getatchew Haile as "The Honor of the Kings"; PaoloMarrassini, "KəbräNägäśt," in EncyclopaediaAethiopica, vol. 3, He–N, ed. SiegbertUhlig (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 2007), 364–368.

only, commonly known definition of Habasha is: that girl or fellow with a middle-eastern look, pointed nose, long black hair, brown eyes, and fair skin; [8]speaks Amharic or Tigrigna or has a mixed background[9]. Those have been the qualities that have defined "true Habasha"; and they still remain authentic requirements. Others who lacked those qualities were rarely considered Habasha. They either had to conceal their background to be accepted or had to completely reject that identity. In fact and rhetorically, beyond the above social markers, in political discourse ´´Habasha is used in some anti-colonialist histories as it reinforces the outsider-status of non-Habashas and serves as a reminder of their exclusion from state power`` (David, 2009:22).

Many scholars have, therefore, described the inter-ethnic power relation between the Habasha (Amhara and the Tigrean) elites merely as a 'sibling rivalry' (Levine, 1968; Teshale, 1995). It is this essential similarity in political history and political identity that ethno liberation movements such as the OLF and the ONLF refer to while describing the new political system as ethnocracy, a mere change of masters from Amharas to Tigreans who they collectively describe as Habesha. As Bahru noted, the making of the modern Ethiopian state was 'initiated by Tewodros, consolidated by Yohannes and consummated by Menilik', all of who are Habasha (Cited in Dereje, 2011) and now run by mouthpiece of TPLF under the banner of EPDRF. While, Merera (2006) problematizes stress marginalization and separation.

It is one thing to declare one's Habashan net; to mark oneself with the most qualities possible; and to rejoice it. Anytime someone points my paradox out, furthermore, it is a personal preference that someone call oneself of Habasha instead of Ethiopia Citizens or/and other nations. But "Habeshizing" everyone who comes from Ethiopia is neither acceptable nor promote functional integration. Because that is a cultural homogenization, a practice which made some Ethiopians feel "culturally superior" than their fellow Ethiopians. Habashas have effectively used the discourse of cultural racism in destroying or suppressing other peoples. Cultural racism can be defined as the conscious or subconscious conviction of the politically dominant population group that imposes its cultural patterns and practices through its social institutions in an attempt to destroy or suppress the

cultural patterns and practices of the colonized and dominated population (Bowser and Hunt, 1996).I believe that the advocates of "Habashannet," regardless of how apolitical or genuine they may sound, are naively advocating cultural homogenization and entrenching counter resistances.

HABASHA DISCOURSE IN LITERATURE

Given cultural homogenization is by itself appalling, it is also equally unacceptable both broadcasting and making vivid claims for Habasha´s own exceptionality and originality based on a hybrid ethnic origin, an exemplary religion, and an ancient written culture. Western scholarship centered the Amhara people (Habasha group) of Ethiopia as the "unifying genius of Ethiopia, bringing together disparate ethnic groups within a common identity" (Sorenson, 1993). Such framing aligned with and reinforced Amhara claims to governmental power and ethnic exceptionalism. This is partly because most Habasha (Ethiopian highlands) have a highly elaborated discourse about their centrality to global history. Such claims are rooted in their holy text of the KibraNagast as already indicated in the introduction part. The text glorifies the Habasha monarchy as greater than any other earthly power and emphasizes that the ´´Habasha are the guardians of true Christianity´´ (Wendy, 2008:89), as all others shall fall away from the path of righteousness[10]. She further stated that some Habasha articulate this centrality in sacred terms: insisting that their homeland is the location of the garden of Eden or that the last Habasha emperor was descended from King Solomon of the Bible (Ibid: 82). An excerpt from AzebMadebo (2014: 8) elaborates that,

Like Whiteness, Habasha ethnic identity in the Horn of Africa has been constructed through oppressive, racist, and essentialist means that privileged the Amhara, Tigre, and Tigrinya peoples of Ethiopia who are predominantly Orthodox Christian. Those who have maintained powerful positions and lighter skin/European features have also maintained Habasha exceptionalism through the construction of mythical Christian origins centered on Queen Sheba and King Solomon. Discursive representations of Habasha identity rely on mythos of exceptionalism and difference.

The Habasha are reasonable to insist on their exceptionality and centrality, however. Not only have they been central to world history, as they declare, but also for

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[8] See the comments being provided in social Medias specifically under Facebook account holders, you can see that a girl with such attributes could be a significant ´´ Beautiful Habasha. In that sense all people without such attributes are not Habasha.

[9]Yates, Brian James (2009) in foot note remarked that `´while this claims may not have substantialevidence; many Ethiopians believe it is due to the fact that both Christianity and Islam rooted in the middle East and I have heard it in both formal and informal environments. Most Semitic scholars share a similar view of this term. However other scholars not that it is simple the name of a single Ethnic group which was present in the Northern Highlands since pre Christian times.´´

[10]For instance, the text claims that the Roman emperors were descended from a younger son of Solomon, Adrami, thus the Romans do not have precedence over the Habasha, who are descended from his first born son, Ebna-Lakhim (Budge1922), 123-124.

a long time Europeans were among the first to say so (Ullendorff, 1968 cited in Levine, 2000). It is partly because the Habasha have been quite successful in projecting a coherent self-identity of difference, since Europeans have historically treated the Habasha as an "Oriental" not African people. They are part of this dissemination, providing evidence for the Habasha's claim to be the first people, to have some of the oldest texts, and to have preserved important aspects of the early church.[11]. Among those engaged by this discourse was Samuel Johnson. Possibly some of these claims are true or not—but all circulate in part because of the mesmerizing nature of Habasha discourse.

In the Habasha discourse, inevitably, Habasha scholars wrote as if they are the only architect, owner and guardian of Ethiopia. Equivocally as if being an Ethiopian means being Habasha. Supposing that Habasha is Ethiopia and vice versa, and let it be all nations believe themselves as Ethiopian , no Ethiopian is more Ethiopian than the other. One is only an Ethiopian, no more, no less. Some Habashas, however, seem to see themselves as more Ethiopians than the others. What they do not seem to understand is that one cannot quantify one's citizenship. One can only be Ethiopian. Not more Ethiopian. Let it be Present-day Ethiopia is under democratization.

In our day, any person who advocates democratic governance and ´´unity´[12]´ in Ethiopia must first deal with any form of outrageous cataloging of all cultures into a single schema and must accept the uniqueness and importance of each culture. Let us not justify that such cataloging means no harm. In the United States, for example, there is change: no one imposes a Latino identity on African Americans, or vice versa; no one addresses Koreans as Japanese Americans unless by mistake. Why cannot it be the same in Ethiopia? Why cannot an Oromo, a Sidama, a Somali and an Afar, for example, be just his or her respective beings without accepting or/and labeling himself or herself as Habasha?

It is not problematic to identify one's self as Habasha. But imposing it on others and self-prescribing Habasha uniqueness is ethnocentrism. That the existence of cultural homogenization could radicalize many young

people forcing them to accept ´Ethiopia identity'. Despite the fact that accepting Ethiopian as a single nation by itself is controversial[13]. Therefore, we must oppose ethnocentrism and homogenization, including economic and political dominance of one group, unequivocally if we want to build a strong nation that is socio-culturally, politically and economically fair to all. If it is fair to all, there could be preference to be called "Ethiopian" to ´´Habasha´´. Not because it represents all but includes all who live in Ethiopia.

On the other continuum, others are still relentlessly campaigning towards substituting Ethiopia with Habasha. They are not only using as a social identity markers as discussed above but also as Private Limited Company (PLC) for example, Habasha Garment, Habasha Brewery, Habasha Cement just to mention a few for advertising themselves on both domestic and global market also have neither problem with someone saying, a Habasha, an Oromo, a Sidama, a Nuer, a Keffa, etc nor oppose them using Habasha as PLC. My disagreement, however, as I indicated above, is with collectively calling all "Habasha" when some are openly rejecting that label and implicitly imposing this identity by way of commoditization.In sum, Habasha is a performed socio-cultural, political and economic assemblages of hegemonic identity.

Conclusion

In modern times, Habasha has become a complex phrase that has specific social, geographical and sometimes political connotations. Consequently, there is no consensus on what it actually means, which people and territory it represents. Its lack of a consensus definition leaves it quite vulnerable to constant modifications and interpretations. More concerning of late is the politicization of the word by Ethiopianist who has been repackaging the term to mean anyone from Ethiopia and Eritrea despite the fact that majority people in both countries do not regard themselves with the term. So what does Habasha mean? Habasha is not an ethnicity; it is not a country; nor is there a common language or religion they collectively follow. They have no clear answer about their whereabouts: whether descended

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[11]Science is not immune to discursive claims. Archaeologists first went to Ethiopia because of Habasha inscriptions and claims about being the first people and early Christians. "Mystery has surrounded Ethiopia ever since the days of Herodotus; yet in almost every mysterious legend there is generally some foundation of truth"; James Theodore Bent, David Heinrich Müller, and John George Garson, The Sacred City of the Ethiopians: Being a Record of Travel and Research in Abyssinia in 1893 (London: Longmans, Green, 1898), 84.

[12]As advocated by (WalleligneMekonen, 1969) we must build a genuine national state in which all nationalities participate equally in state affairs, […] where every nationality is given equal opportunity to preserve and develop its language, its music, its history. [...] a state where no nation dominates another nation be it economically or culturally (Mekonen, 1969).

[13](Who is an Ethiopian?) was raised as a controversial issue during 1969 by leaders of student movement IbsaGutema and WalleligneMekonen. The later goes on to say that ``Ethiopia is not really one nation. It is made up of a dozen nationalities, with their own languages, ways of dressing, history, social organization and territorial entity. And what else is a nation? Is it not made of a people with a particular tongue, particular ways of dressing, particular history, and particular social and economic organizations? Then may I conclude that in Ethiopia there is the Oromo Nation, the Tigrai Nation, the Amhara Nation, the Gurage Nation, the Sidama Nation, the *Waliyta(my own use)*Nation, the Adere Nation, and however much you may not like it the Somali Nation´´ (WalleligneMekonen 1969:4 cited in Vaughan, 2003:136).

from Africa, or/and South Arabia or King Solomon of Israel. Consequently, the Habasha is an obsolete term that undermines the national identity of many others. Habasha in many ways is a state of mind - hard to describe. Perhaps the best way to define it is by not trying at all. Otherwise, the so called Habasha would be a suspended balloon in mid of air. Despite these facts, the imaginings of Habasha or Ethiopia surfaced through written sources, media and daily discourses. They are discursive constructions that relied, and still rely, on the expansive and political interplay of Christian mythology, westernized sentiments, and racism; discourses that invalidated competing narratives voiced by disparate nations in Ethiopia.

Conflict of Interests

The author has not declared any conflict of interests.

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Review

A social institution of slavery and slave trade in Ethiopia: Revisited

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Ethiopia was the last strong hold of slavery. Slavery and slave trade were abolished by the active intervention of the British in the middle of 18th century. However the institution of slavery and slave trade continued in the eastern part of Africa until the middle of 19th century. The objective of this paper is to show the institutional feature of slavery in Ethiopia in general and the historical kingdom of Jimma in particular. The paper as a historical study attempted to explain the legal position of slaves in the Ethiopian traditional code. It also described the system of slave acquisition with a particular emphasis on the Kingdom of Jimma and the work and trade of slaves not only in Jimma but also in the country. At the end, the paper provides the efforts of Ethiopian monarchs in abolishing slavery in Ethiopia.

Key words: Slavery, slave trade, Jimma, Ethiopia, Africa.

INTRODUCTION

Slavery in Ethiopia and its legal position

Slavery was well established in Ethiopia and the Horn of Africa until the first half of twentieth century. It was official and legally accredited by the *Fiteha Negest* which was the traditional legal code of Ethiopia translated from the 13th century 'Coptic' document based on the Biblical and Roman Law (Pankhurst, 1968). The words of the *Fiteha Negest* were largely accepted by many Ethiopian rulers including Emperor Menilek (1889-1913). Like his predecessors, Menilek also attempted to abolish slave trade but it was not successful. This was due to their claim that the country was surrounded by those who engaged in slave trading (Abir, 1965). Secondly, the southward state transformation of Ethiopia in nineteenth century also produced many thousands of slaves as war

captives from the newly integrated areas in the southern, southeastern and south-western parts of the country.

Like other parts of Africa, the demand for slaves led to the extensive slave raiding and warfare in the southern part of the country. It resulted in the breakdown of law and order by providing a considerable exodus of population in many areas as well as extensive hunting of humans for slavery (Abir, 1965). This is particularly the case in Southern Ethiopia.

For instance in the kingdom of Jimma and its neighbors more than 2000 men of war captives were sold as slaves from one area (Lewis, 1965; Pankhurst, 1968a; Woldemariyam, 1984). In other words, warfare resulted in the continuation of slavery in Ethiopia. At the beginning of the nineteenth century, many states and kingdoms were at war for slave raiding. It was due to the introduction of

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modern firearm in the heartlands of Southern Ethiopia. The war together with the slave raiding diminished the population in the raiding areas and also brought severe economic exploitation of many provinces in the southern and southwestern part of the country (Woldemariam, 1984).

According to the *Fiteha Negest* as well as the traditional customary laws, slaves were deprived of any forms of property ownership and legal affairs. Slaves were considered as the property of their owners; sometimes the owners of the slaves might give them a piece of land and some cattle but they remained under the property of their owners. On the other hand, slaves, as a kind of property, were subjected to sell or be given as a kind of presentation (Nasser, 1973). Thus, a slave could be owned by more than one master.

Likewise, slaves could hold no public office as judge or guardian. They were deprived of providing evidence in courts. However, the slave master became legally responsible for any action or crime including murder committed by his slaves. The owner could become free either by emancipating or by handling over the slave to the aggrieved party. Similarly, punishment of a slave became an official phenomenon in the country. It includes whipping, flogging and even death (Pankhurst, 1964).

The law strictly forbade stealing of a slave or initiating him to run away. According to the law, he was liable to restore him to his masters together with equal price. On the other hand, a person may be entitled to get reward as he brings back a runaway slave to its masters. The re-captured slave would face harsh punishment including whipping, smoking of *beriberi*, red tape, executing as well as being resold to other persons (Woldemariam,1984).

As the law indicated a slave master could utilize his slave on his will. A slave could not have the right to refuse or obey an order from his master. Even a pregnant slave was also obliged to participate in work until she resumed a few days after her delivery. As a calf belonged to the owner of a caw not the bull, the newborn infant of a slave also belonged to her master (Pankhurst, 1968b).

The law prohibited any kind of marriage between freemen and the slave. Even it ordered severe punish-ment in this case. If a master's wife fornicates with a slave, she may be beaten, her hair shaved, her nose broken and her infamy publicly proclaimed according to the *Fiteha Negest*. Nevertheless, the fate of the slave was obviously death. In actual fact in 1930s, there was no penalty in this case rather the concubines enjoyed special privilege as head of her master's salves (Pankhurst, 1964).

Moreover, the *Fiteha Negest* also provided a provision for the manu-mission of slaves. The law provided that a slave might be free as if he served his masters father, became a priest, or the slave saved his master from death as well as after the death of the master having no heir over the slave. However, there was no salve freed by the time due to the unwillingness of the owners as well as

the un-implementation of the law to liberate the slaves. In connection with this, the law also prohibited the sailing of a pregnant slave except with her unborn child. The separations of a young slave from its mother also banned and urged for the desirability of keeping the families united although it was not practically implemented (Pankhurst, 1968a).

Slavery in the Kingdom of Jimma

The historical Kingdom of Jimma had been found in the southwestern part of Ethiopia. The neighbors of Jimma as one runs clockwise from North to southwest he got Janjaro, and the four Oromo Gibe states across the Gibe River, Dawro Konta and Kaffa across Gojeb River. From these states and kingdoms, Jimma became the dominant power in the area. In the Kingdom of Jimma slave owning, buying and trading was widely known since early times. Slavery reached its zenith in the 1880s as emperor Menilek expanded his empire south of Addis Ababa, capital of the empire state. By the time, many areas were integrated into the Ethiopian Empire by wagging many wars. These campaigns produced many thousands of war captives who were sold as slave indifferent markets. Off all the major slave market in Southwest Ethiopia was Hirmata in Jimma (Pankhurst, 1968a).

As Tekalign noted in 1883, Jimma was visited by Julies Borille. Borille reported that Abba Jiffar II favored the continuation of slave trade in his kingdom because it was the basic source of Jimma's autonomy after its conquest in 1882 (Woldemariam, 1984). From its southern part, Jimma got a considerable amount of ivory and slaves sold in the kingdom. This ivory in turn was paid as annual tribute for Menilek. Thus prohibition of slave trade in Jimma ultimately led to the end of tribute paid in ivory and other luxurious items (Woldemariam, 1984). It is reported that Abba Jiffar II paid a huge amount of tribute to Menilek that includes 60 horses, 60 mules, 100 vases of honey, 30 elephant tusks, 60 slaves, 100 socks of coffee, 20 lion/tiger skins, 30 horns of civet masks and some amount of Thalers (Woldemariam, 1984).

As some sources indicated that the kings of Jimma, Abba Jiffar II, was one of the main participants of slave trade having more than ten thousands of slaves. In 1886, Borille claimed that the king offered "some five women and six eunuchs in exchange for a Winchester rifle" (Woldemariam,1984). Vanderheym remarked in 1894 that slaves were sold at night in the Abba Jiffar's quarter of Addis Ababa and qualified him as "the ruler of the kingdom of slave trade" (Woldemariam,1984). A decade later, another observer described the king as the "biggest slave trader in the world". He also stated that on Abba Jiffar's visit to Addis Ababa, he brought with him a large amount of slaves and sold them in a hard cash. He also exchanged them for his service offered. By the time, Abba Jiffar II exchanged "two slaves with two dogs and

paid five slaves to his dentist" (Woldemariam,1984).

SYSTEM OF SLAVE AQUSITION IN JIMMA

Like other parts of Ethiopia, slaves were acquired in different ways in the Kingdom of Jimma. Some of the methods were capturing be it in war or riding, condemnation of criminals to servitude, outright purchase, etc. Most of slaves in Jimma were not natives of the kingdom. In fact there were slaves who were reduced to slavery due to royal judicial pronouncement (Woldemariam, 1984).

The majority of slaves in Ethiopia were produced in raiding, kidnapping as well as capture of wars. Particularly, the states and kingdoms of the nearby Jimma were highly victimized by slave raiding and kidnapping. The main slave riding grounds were Yam, Limmu Enariya, Kaffa, Dawro, Konta and other Sidama Peoples where slaves were kidnapped and sold in the nearby slave markets in Jimma (Mohammed). As Pankhurst noted "more than 3000 slaves were sized in a year in these areas either on their way to their villages or from their home at night (Pankhurst, 1968a).

At night, the kidnappers had broken the house for capturing the members of the houses. They also set fired the house in order to capture their trophy easily (Pankhurst,1968). Slave raiding was also supplemented by surprise kidnapping. It is reported that in Enariya, the robbers took many youngsters. Most of them were sized as they attend their flocks, gathering firewood, drawing water, as well as playing in their villages. The robbers in turn sold them to the local merchants who would dispose them to traveling slave caravans (Pankhurst, 1968b).

War was one of the most successful slave riding and means of slave acquisition in Ethiopia like other parts of the world. The captives of the war were put into enslavement. It was permissible in the *Fitha Negest* to size the 'non-believers' and they became slaves and offered seven years of free service for their masters. As hostile neighbors surrounded Jimma, it fought many wars against them. The 1882 Jimma's war against Yam concluded by Jimma's victory and producing many thousands of slaves that were sold in Hirmata and other slave markets in Jimma (Pankhurst, 1965).

In the meantime the 1880s Menilek's expansion to the southern territories also produced a large amount of slaves as war captives. Particularly emperor Menilek's war with Wolaita (1894) and Kaffa (1897) where he faced stiff resistance by the local people Menilek ordered his men to enslave almost all residents of the area. By the time, many thousands of the local population were deported and sold them down in different parts of the country as a slave. Thus, Menilek's policy of the abolition of slavery in the country failed as he allowed his solders to enslave their trophy (Pankhurst, 1968a).

Slaves were also produced because of judicial pro-

nouncement of the court in Jimma. According to Franzoj death penalty was rarely applied in Jimma against a murder and other crimes. A certain guilty of murder was punished by enslavement in Jimma. One day when he was there, Franzoj reported that two men arrived at the palace of Abba Jiffar together with a caw to which one of them was chained. One accused the other for stealing the caw. After hearing the case, the king pronounced the accused one as "*gorgori"* which mean, "sell him". At the end, the culprit became the slave of his victim. This shows easy crimes like theft, banditry, robbery etc also brought enslavement in Jimma(Pankhurst,1968).

Locals from Jimma were also victims of slavery as they failed to participate in the community work in the kingdom. Participation in building the boundary of Jimma was the major one. As the boundary of Jimma was demarcated by digging trench around the kingdom, it was called *Berro.* For digging the *Berro* all-able bodied Jimmans obliged to do. Failure to do so brought enslavement together with his family. The boundary also hand many gates or checkpoints, *Kellas*, guarded by his guards appointed by the king. The guard patrolled the enemy position. When an enemy approached the kingdom, the guards beat the alarm, *gennoalarm*, which awakened all Jimmans for the crisis. By the time all-able bodied men run away around the palace against their enemy. Those who did not appear in the palace by the time were put into the slave of the king by royal judicial announcement (lewis). In connection to this, the dwellers of the town had to take care of the roads and streets; failure to do that ultimately led to slavery in Jimma (Woldemariam, 1984).

Once a certain convicted person, condemned to slavery, he was automatically enslaved by losing his liberty. Sometimes status might consider and the culprit was forced to leave the kingdom. However, for an ordinary person the trials were carried out in the palace in the absence of the accused, even without his knowledge. The *AbbaQorro*, village head, carried out the law enforcement in Jimma. To enslave the culprit a cord, or cords known as *Fnu Moti*, which were used to tie up the culprit and those whose fate was enslavement, were thrown in the house of the convicted person. Immediately the *AbbaQorro* together with the guards would go to the house and the condemned man together with his family were taken to the palace as a slave of the king (Pankhurst, 1968a).

The other means of slave acquisition in Jimma was through outright purchase. During the reign of Abba Jiffar II, Jimma became one of the largest centers of slave trade in Ethiopia. It was due to its geographical location as a crossroad for the caravans coming from north and southwestern part of the country (Woldemariam,1984). Besides this, Abba Jiffar also encouraged the slave trade by lowering its tax as well as by providing for merchants in his kingdom. As a result, many caravans arrived at Jimma to sell or exchange their commodities including

slaves and ivory. On the other hand, Abba Jiffar earned substantial amount of tax per slave that passed in his territory(Pankhurst,1968).[36] Moreover, at the beginning of his reign, Jimma exported more than 4000 slaves per year in the direction of Shoa. The trade continued till in the 1920s; when the trade was in its death bed, Jimma exported more thousands of slaves (Pankhurst, 1968a).

SLAVES AT MARKET

The Kingdom of Jimma had main markets where slaves were sold openly like other commodities. The largest of all markets was Hirmata. It was found in near the palace and held on every Thursday. It was always busy and visited by many merchants including foreigners (Woldemariam, 1984). According to Borelli "more than 15,000-20,000 people attended the market in 1880s" (Woldemariam, 1984). Although the open markets of slaves were disbanded in 1920s, the trade continued as an open secret and slaves were sold at night in Jimma (Mohammed, 1974).

There were also other markets in Jimma where slaves became dominant and the major item of the merchantdise. The first one was the market along the Omo River. In this market as Borelli indicated slaves were the major item of trade exchanged with a mere Maria Theresa Thaler in 1888. The other markets of Jimma was the market in Dedo along the Dawro and Konta Road. From this market, a large number of slaves were imported to Jimma from Dawro, Konta, Goffa and other areas (Woldemariam, 1984).

In the Thursday market of Hirmata also called Geba Kimssa, there were more than 10 –15 blocks of stones on which slaves were kept for sale on the open market. Many thousands of slaves were reported to have been sold in the market. On the market days, the slaves were fed well and took a butter ointment on their body. This was to make them look smart and strong as well as attractive enough to incur a high price (Pankhurst, 1968).

In order to sell, a slave buyer used several mechanisms to assure the capacity of the slaves. The buyer might stretch to and forward the arms and legs of the salves to see that they were not broken. They also examined the eyes and teethe of slave to check their sight and they could eat well with their teeth to get strength. For checking their hearing and speaking abilities of a slaves, the buyers talked to them like buying a talking caw. By understanding with the merchants, salve buyers slapped off the faces of a slave for testing the strength and emotions of slaves (Pankhurst, 1968a).

With regard to the price of slaves, it varied from market to market based on their place of origin, physical fitness, sex, age as well as color of the skins of a slave. In Jimma, slaves coming from Mallo and Doko, a place where beyond Omo River were considered as hardworking and obedient. These salves had high demand and became too expensive in Jimma (Mohammed, 2007). However, slaves coming from Dawro and Konta were considered as weak and quarrelsome so that they had less demand among slave buyers, although many slaves came from these area (Amnon, 1969). Worse slaves coming from Kaffa fetched far too little price. Particularly after Menilek of Kaffa in 1897, Menilek's solders took many thousands of slaves and sold them down cheaply in Jimma on their way back to Shoa (Pankhurst, 1964).

Physically, short black slaves with tough body incurred the highest price. On the other hand, thin and tall male slaves had far too little price. The reverse is true for female slaves. Tall and thin female slaves who easily reached the bottom of a jar had high price than the short ones. This was because the former could easily prepare *Ferso*/ local drink/ as her arm reached the bottom of the jar easily for the preparation (Mohammed).

Age and sex also determined the price of a slave in Jimma. The older slaves carry a lower price than the younger age. In Jimma slave traders used different names to differentiate the salves on age and sexes. Accordingly, *Gurbe*, a younger male slave having 10-15 years of age, became more expensive than *Illijs* whose age was more than 20 years old. The *Gurbes* were favored by slave dealers that they might train well as personal servants and provided a longer service (Woldemariam, 1984). Similarly, female slaves having more than 8-15 years of age called *Tombore* enjoyed the highest price and became too expensive than the *Gardana*. The later were considered as beyond the age of training for a good household servant. However, *Tombore* had the advantage of becoming concubines of their masters and wives for male slaves (Pankhurst, 1964).

Generally speaking, slaves were at the cheapest price in the southwestern part of the country where large exudes of slaves recruited from the area. The value of slaves increased along the main markets towards the north. In different areas, the slave caravans were subjected to tax along the checkpoints. In 1880s the price of 10-12 years old slave was 6 to 8 Maria Theresa Thalers, in her forty, was sold for a single Maria Theresa Thalers or 4 *amoles,* bars of salt, along Omo market. By that time, a young slave was sold for 5-15 Maria Theresa Thalers and a young woman slave for 20-25 Maria Theresa Thalers in Jimma (Pankhurst, 1968).

Through time the price of slaves also increased. In the early twentieth century, a child slave whose age was 3-10 was sold for 8-21 Maria Theresa Thalers and above him 85 Maria Theresa Thalers in Jimma. By that time, a certain Armenian bought a pretty girl for 60 Maria Theresa Thalers and other foreigners paid 30 for a boy. In short, virgin women, strong and intelligent men slave and even eunuchs had the highest demand and became too expensive (Pankhurst, 1968a).

Moreover, the price of slaves alarmingly increased from southwest to north and eastern part of the country. Particularly slaves cost more in the coastal areas. It is

reported that the price of a slave in Addis Ababa was three times as high as in Jimma in 1920s. A decade later when slavery was in its dead bed, a boy slave fetched 100 Maria Theresa Thalers while a virgin girl incurred twice of that in Ethiopia (Pankhurst, 1968a).

Slaves at work

According to the *Fitha Negest*, a slave owner could utilize his salve on his will. A sale had no right to refuse or obey the task given by his master. Mostly slaves provide labor for their masters. In Jimma slaves cleared the forest for farming and participated in their owner's agricultural activities. As the land became more fertile they produced large amount of grains, coffee and other crops. Particularly the king of Jimma, Abba Jiffar had many hectares of land, *Yebbu* in different parts of the kingdom run by slave labor (Leggese). It is reported that due to Abba Jiffar's wealth, he was ordered by Menilek to give large amount of grain for his army in the war against the kingdom of Kaffa in 1897 (Woldemariam, 1984).

It is obvious that every ordinary Jimman's had at least a couple of slaves in their home. The tasks of a male slave were farming, loading the draft animals and accompanying their masters on journey, etc. The female slaves also participated in the household and farming activities of their masters. In actual fact the duration of a slave in a certain house was determined by his behavior and abilities. If a slave was not in a good term, he might be resold or exchanged by other (Woldemariam, 1984).

The other economic contribution of slaves in the kingdom of Jimma was their role in the expansion of trade. Many merchants arrived in Jimma from different parts of the country. Thus Jimma became the major center of trade in the southwest part of the country. On the other hand slaves also promoted divisions of labor, which necessitated trade for exchange. Some of them engaged in such activities as blacksmithing, weaving, pottery making, behaving and beekeeping, etc. so that slaves provided different kinds of products for the market (Woldemariam, 1984).

Loyalty and having special skills of a certain salve helped a slave to hold a highest office in the palace of Abba Jiffar. The most prominent and the most feared Abba Gaddu Sadacha, a eunuch form Nada, was a slave and rose to a position of a chief of jail and criminal investigator in Abba Jiffar's palace. Abba Gorro Gumma chief of palace treasure, Abba Jarra Abba Mlare, governor of Hereto, Abba Bike Shono, governor and overseer of the kings coffee farm were some of the slaves and slave origins who rose to a highest position in the palace of Abba Jiffar II. In addition to this slaves also served as the chief of the market where they enforced law and order in every market day (Woldemariam, 1984).

Generally, slaves in Jimma were not harshly treated by their owners. They live in their master's house until their marriage when they depart from their masters' house and established their own under the auspices of their master.

By the time, the slave owner bought another slave for his household activities (Woldemariam, 1984). Russom concluded that slaves were not harshly treated in Ethiopia. "Abyssinians" he explained "generally are very kind to their servants treating them as members of their family especially in their marriage and death (Baravelli, 1935)."

ABOLITION OF SLAVERY IN ETHIOPIA AND ITS IMPACT ON JIMMA

Abolition of slavery in Ethiopia was attempted by many Ethiopian rulers although it bore no fruit until the coming of Italian in mid 1930s. The issue, however, got wider attention during the time of emperor Menilek. By the time Menilek issued two declarations for the abolition of slavery in Ethiopia. It was in February 1875 and 1889 he declared that Christians should no more buy or sell slaves. For these actions he testifies arrest. However, it failed to put into practice (Baravelli, 1935)."

Two main factors were accountable for Menilek's failure to abolish slavery in Ethiopia. The first and the most important one was his southward expansion of the Christian Highland Kingdom. Due to his successive wars and campaigns in the newly conquered areas, Menilek himself attended a massive enslavement of the captives of war. With the establishment of a new social-economic system in these areas, local people also enjoyed the pain of enslavement soon after their subjugation (Pankhurst, 1968a).

The other factor for Menilek's failure to abolish slavery in his kingdom was his highly reliance on individual foreign traders for his importation of firearms and ammunitions. These traders in turn operated on the goodwill of the coastal chiefs who collected heavy taxes and tribute on slaves. Menilek well aware of the situation and interferences with the slave trade would ultimately affect the imports of firearm to Ethiopia (Miers, 1984; Dennis, 1986).

As Suzana Miers indicated there had been little external pressure over Ethiopian rulers to stop slavery. Britain the champion of the Trans-Atlantic Slave trade had little or no effort to suppress slavery and slave trade in the eastern part of Africa. In fact, Britain and France had their own protectorate on the Gulf of Aden. However the trade continued until 1930s by using different means of shipment of slaves along the coast (Pankhurst, 1968).

Before 1900s slaves were sold openly in the markets in Ethiopia. After this time the open slave markets were closed and slave traders abandoned their conventional routes and traveled at night on different routes. This was also the case in Jimma where slaves were sold at night through the brokers (Baravelli, 1935).

On his death, Menilek was succeeded by his grandson *Lij* Iyassu. This new crown did nothing for the abolition of slavery in Ethiopia. He even participated in a slave

raiding. In 1912, the well-organized slave raiding of *Lij* Iyassu, captured and raided many southwestern provinces and captured many thousands of captives in the raiding. He distributed the captives for his favorite officials and clergymen. In other words during the reign of *Lij* Iyassu, there was no attempt for the abolition of slavery in Ethiopia (Pankhurst, 1968a).

A very remarkable step for the abolition of slavery was taking by Tafari, the Reagent, in 1923. By this year Ethiopia applied for the membership of the League of Nations. However, the League forced Ethiopia to stop the slave trade according to its international agreement, conventions and declarations. In the absence of any alternatives, Ethiopia proclaimed the trading of slaves as a crime punishable by death (Woldemariam, 1984). A year later, another slave abolition law was declared by Tafari. It provided 500 dollar and 10 years imprisonment for salve raiding and a second offence would bring life imprisonment. It was in this duration that slaves were entitled to be free and Ethiopia freed a large numbers of slaves for the first time in the country (Woldemariam, 1984).

As Tafari became Emperor Haile Sellasse, he established an office for the liberation of slaves in the country. In Jimma the office was established in the Abba Jiffar's palace. It was an independent body accountable for the emperor. It supervised the laws and issued a certificate for the freed slaves. Emperor Haile Sellasse also appointed two judges for Jimma including Abba Garro Abba Bishan and Abba Digga Sapera. This court freed many slaves in later years (Tekalign, in his "Slavery in the economy of Jimma" argued that it was not the case. He provided that the main economy of Jimma was not slavery but production of coffee. However it seems hard to accept because the ultimate integration of Jimma in to Ethiopian empire was the result of the end of slavery in the country but not its cash crop economy).

The implementation of successive laws against slavery and the immediate death of Abba Jiffar II ultimately threatened Jimma's autonomous status in the country. This was because his successor Abba Jobir was not in a position to pay his annual tribute for the government. As his wealth and prestige declined Abba Jobir immediately embarked on slave the 'illegal' slave trade. This action ultimately led him to jail and replaced by a Shaon ruler appointed by Emperor Haile SellasseI (Woldemariam, 1984).

However, the total abolition of slavery in Ethiopia goes to the Italian. During their occupation, the Italians issued a decree in April 1936 which librated more than 400000 slaves in the Galla- Sidama Province. The Italians created a job opportunity for some of the ex-slaves in the expanding infrastructural facilities of the country. In some place including in Jimma, they also set up a village of liberty for those freed slaves by providing plough and oxen to begin a new settled life (Woldemariam, 1984).

CONCLUSION

Slavery had a long tradition in Ethiopia; particularly in the Kingdom of Jimma slavery existed for a long time. This kingdom obtained many advantages from the trade. The abolition of slavery finally led to the Shoan dominance of Jimma's independent existence. This is because the slave trade became the basis of its economy unlike coffee which was a recent economic crop of Jimma as some writers argued.   At this point it is possible to conclude that the independent existence of Jimma after its conquest in 1882 was highly interrelated with the continuation of slavery and slave trade in the country. The abolition of the trade in Ethiopia ultimately led to the end of the autonomous status of Jimma in the 1930s.

Conflict of Interests

The author has not declared any conflict of interests.

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