



The State in the Modern Era: A paradox for Developed and Developing Countries

By

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OUTLINE

- Introduction
- Conceptual and theoretical basis of the state
- Normative exploration deploying western states and Asian Tigers as ideal types
- Existential reality in developing formations.
- Conclusion
- Recommendations

Introduction

States are the overarching political institutions in the modern era.

Following the treaty of Westphalia (1648), the state became the body needed to pull communities towards development (Boix, 2010).

These states, through history have existed in different forms- Tudor kings in England, Hapsburg dynasty in Spain and the Bourbons in France (Mclean, 1996).

The objective of this presentation is to compare the state in the industrialized northern hemisphere with the state in the less developed southern hemisphere, especially Nigeria and Africa. Searching for a convergence between states in both formations, it interrogates the developmental capacity of states in both spheres.

The state falls into the category of what can be referred to as 'essentially contested concepts'.

Weber (1924) provides a popular definition- 'that human community which lay claim to the monopoly of legitimate physical violence within a certain territory'.

Theoretical Framework

- **Pluralist framework:**Contending forces within society struggle for the resources therein- Nelson Polsby and Robert Dahl are the major exponents.
- Marxian perspective :Essentially see state affairs as involving class struggle- ‘the modern executive is a committee for managing the common affairs of the bourgeoisie
- Statist tradition: Drawing from Antonio Gramsci, this view sees the character of the state as a reflection of civil society. A Perverse civil society leads inevitably to underdevelopment (Ikelegbe, 2001).

States as Platforms for development and good governance: A normative paradigm

Since the age of enlightenment the state in the west has been deployed as a developmental tool- either through Keynesian state intervention or via free markets in the spirits of Smith and Ricardo

Elsewhere the ‘Asian Tigers’ have used the state to transform their economies- the developmental states. [Woo- Cummings, 2001; Stiglitz, 2011; Chang, 2004;]

State pervasion in developing countries & underdevelopment: Existential reality

State institutions lack autonomy

A perverted civil society in the Gramscian sense

Prebendalism and politics of moral affection

States as alien institutions

Leading to negative epithets like weak, soft and failed states

Some African countries have deployed the concept of the ‘developmental state’ to move up the economic ladder- Botswana, Mauritius, and Cape Verde (MIIAG, 2016). These few are exceptional cases.

Conclusion

The inevitable verdict- the less developed states have not been able to strategically deploy the state as a tool for development.

Recommendation

How can poor countries properly use the state as platforms for development?

State and its institutions should be a neutral arena

Institutions must be autonomous-strong applicable laws

The state must evolve- market mechanism and constructive intervention

Thank you.

