

## ***Critique of Francis Fukuyama's Views on State Formation in Africa***

Ibrahim Lawal Ahmed, Peking University, China

The IAFOR International Conference on Arts & Humanities in Hawaii 2024  
Official Conference Proceedings

### **Abstract**

This paper is a critique of Francis Fukuyama's views on, essentially, the crisis of development in Africa which he associates with the weakness of state institutions in African countries. In analysing the underlying causes of weak state institutions in Africa, Fukuyama examines institutional development in the pre-colonial, colonial and post-colonial Africa. But his approach is highly Eurocentric and the facts he presented to back his arguments are selective. Therefore, using historical facts, I criticize Fukuyama's views on the crisis of development in Africa while proposing a framework of 'modernizing without westernizing' as requisite for strengthening state and nation-building as well as economic development in Africa.

Keywords: State, Society, Africa, Institution, Development and Colonialism

**iafor**

The International Academic Forum  
[www.iafor.org](http://www.iafor.org)

## 1. Introduction

This paper aims to criticize the arguments of Francis Fukuyama, in his book titled *Political Order and Political Decay*, on why African countries are less developed. The paper is divided into four sections: First the introduction, then the highlights of the arguments of Fukuyama followed by critique of the arguments and then the conclusion.

The main argument of Fukuyama is simple, the failure of sustainable development among African countries is because Africans have weak institutions. In other words, for African countries to achieve development relative to the European countries, they have to build strong institutions or rather, State. The questions he sought to address in the book are, why do States seem so ineffective in Africa? Why are they unable to do what States are supposed to do? Why corruption seem so rampant in African countries?

It is important to note the dialectics between State, Society and Economy. Man is a social animal; he seeks in others what he lacks for himself (Durkheim). Economic relations are therefore inevitable thereby resulting in the formation of society; which is an embodiment of relations among men. The need for order in a society gave birth to State. This means ideally State is a (or supposed to be) product of society.

To answer these ‘why’ questions and drive his argument that what Africa need in order to develop is strong institutions, Fukuyama looked at Africa in a triadic space-time namely: precolonial, colonial and post-colonial Africa. This is where he made numerous flaws in his analysis to the extent that there is hardly a page that he will not write a point that is not correct.

## 2. Arguments of Fukuyama

In Fukuyama’s view, there was more or less no State institutions in precolonial Africa because of the abundance of land but scarcity of labour.<sup>1</sup> Half of the continent was populated by acephalous tribal societies based on kin ties. Because of the abundance of land, tribal units coming under pressure from centralized authority had the option of simply moving away. This, therefore, prevented circumscription which is important condition for the transition from tribal – to state-level societies.<sup>2</sup>

Moreover, African was strikingly technologically backwards at precolonial time. He argued that the plow had not been adopted in agriculture and there is no irrigation system of farming. In addition, there were no signs of State formation in the tropical rainforest unless one went all the way down to South Africa where larger political units like the Zulu Kingdom existed in precolonial times.<sup>3</sup>

Talking about colonialism, Fukuyama argued that there were two waves of colonialism in Africa. The first was driven by extraction of resources from Africa, a kind of duplication of Spanish achievements in Mexico and Peru, which produced economic surpluses for the

---

<sup>1</sup> Intensive Slave trade between 15<sup>th</sup> to 19<sup>th</sup> century have contributed to de-populating Africa, especially West Africa. Recently, it has been conservatively estimated that more than 12 million Africans were transported by the Europeans to America. See <https://www.theguardian.com/news/2021/oct12/africa-slaves-erased-from-history-modern-world>

<sup>2</sup> Fukuyama (2015:596-597) op cited

<sup>3</sup> Ibid pg. 598-599

metropolitan powers in the form of gold, silver, sugar and cotton and other commodities. For example, Congo was colonized as a personal possession of King Leopold II of Belgium who succeeded in personally enriching himself. The second wave of colonialism was driven by rivalry among the European powers and legitimated by novel theories of racism<sup>4</sup>. The second wave of colonialism is more intensified than the first wave. Fukuyama argued that it late start and short duration succeeded in undermining traditional sources of authority while failing to implant anything like modern state.<sup>5</sup>

African politics, according to Fukuyama, is characterized by neopatrimonialism. He defines it in Weberian sense as “government staffed by family and friends of the ruler and run for their benefit.”<sup>6</sup> He identified two major characteristics of neopatrimonialism as follows: personalism – which is concentrating loyalty and attention to the leader – and massive use of state resources to cultivate political support, which resulted in pervasive clientelism.<sup>7</sup> Fukuyama argued that even though “a neopatrimonial government has outward form of a modern state, with a constitution, Presidents and Prime Ministers, a legal system and pretensions of impersonality, but the actual operation of the government remains at core a matter of sharing state resources with friends and family.”<sup>8</sup> And this hinders good governance which is necessary in State-building.

Additionally, Fukuyama argued that “Africa had no long-standing tradition of bureaucratic government, and no trained cadre of state officials who were capable of taking over the administrative systems left behind by the departing colonial government.”<sup>9</sup> He pointed out that Congo had fewer than a dozen University-educated administrators at the time of independence. This is institutional weakness that affected the development of strong State institution in Africa.

But why was it that there were no institutions in precolonial Africa? Why is it that rule of law, and by extension democracy, ended up being so extraordinarily weak? And if strong political institutions are critical for economic development, where do they come from? The answer, according to Fukuyama, lies in the physical conditions of climate and geography of Africa. He went on to cite Montesquieu’s theories that climate condition affects character of the people making the people of warm countries lazy and the people of cold countries innovative.<sup>10</sup>

In summary, Fukuyama’s arguments on the failure of State in Africa are as follows:

- There were more or less no institutions in precolonial Africa because of the abundance of land but scarce labour.
- Africa was strikingly technologically backward: the plow had not been adopted in agriculture; everywhere remained rain fed rather than irrigation based, and sophisticated metalworking was not developed.
- There are no signs of state formation in Tropical forests in south of Savannah belt.
- There were two waves of colonialism in Africa. One is driven by extraction and another by racism.

---

<sup>4</sup> Ibid ph. 593-595

<sup>5</sup> Ibid pg. 591-592

<sup>6</sup> Ibid pg. 583

<sup>7</sup> Ibid pg. 583-585

<sup>8</sup> Ibid pg. 583

<sup>9</sup> Ibid pg. 589

<sup>10</sup> Ibid Chapter 15

- Neopatrimonial system of governance in post-colonial African States.
- Late start of colonialism and its short duration undermines traditional sources of authority while failing to implant anything like modern state.
- Africa has no qualified bureaucratic cadre for public administration.

### 3. Critique of Fukuyama's Arguments

#### 3.1. Critique of Fukuyama's Views on Precolonial Africa

First, to state that there were no well-structured governance institutions in precolonial Africa is to deny the existence of Empires in the continent. Because how can there be Empires such as the Songhai Empire that stretched from the Atlantic Ocean in Senegal up to Nigeria; the Dahomey Empire, that was the present-day Benin Republic, and the Sokoto Caliphate that stretched from Niger Republic in West Africa to Cameroon in Central Africa, and each of these Empires lasting for centuries without social, political and economic Institutions? The Abyssinian Empire lasted for millenniums. How could it have lasted this long without an institution?

Contrary to Fukuyama's thesis, there were well structured institutions, especially political institutions in precolonial Africa. It ranges from a centralized system like that of Songhai where the Emperor decides so many things, to a decentralized setting like Sokoto Caliphate where the Emir was fully in-charge in his Emirate and did not need to report or consult with the Caliph over his decisions.

The precolonial African political system was built strongly on justice. This was something Mungo Park, a Scottish explorer, and Ibn Battuta<sup>11</sup> all noted. They stated that Africans hate injustice and a King would go to great length to ensure that someone that was victimized got justice. Ibn Battuta observed that:

*Among the admirable qualities of these people (Negro), the following are to be noted: (But) for the small number of acts of injustice that one finds here; for the Negroes are of all people those who most abhors injustice. The Sultan (King) pardons no one who is guilty of it.... Blacks do not confiscate the goods of the white man (that is North Africans) who die in their country, not even when these consist of big treasures. They deposit them, on the contrary, with a man of confidence among the whites until those who have the right to the goods present themselves and take possession. (cited in Diop, 1974:162)*

According to Diop (1974:111), it is the abundance of vital resources, the sedentary and agricultural character that engender in the Negro (African) a gentle, idealistic, peaceful nature, endowed with a spirit of justice and gaiety. Justice, in African sense is, giving each what he or she deserved. It included protection of life and property, and inclusiveness in governance. This is why rebellion, like such of the French, was very rare in Africa. There were internal fighting among the ruling classes but hardly a rebellion by the masses.

---

<sup>11</sup> His full name is Abu Abdullah Muhammad ibn Battuta. He was from present day Morocco who has travelled extensively in Afro-Eurasia covering an estimated distance of 117,000km. He studied the behaviour of the peoples he had met and later wrote a book about his journeys titled *A Masterpiece to Those Who Contemplate the Wonders of Cities and the Marvels of Travelling*.

But why has Fukuyama not seen any institution in Africa? It is because he is looking for European kind-of Institutions; a Weberian-bureaucratic administrative system or a feudalistic economic system and a penal code judiciary. It seems in his view that such kind of institution and transition are the standard of progress.

Second, Fukuyama stated that “Africa was strikingly technologically backward: the plow had not been adopted in agriculture; everywhere remained rain fed rather than irrigation based and sophisticated metalworking was not developed.” This is as good as saying Africans do not eat food because how can there be agriculture without the land being ploughed? To say that there was no irrigation is to say that there were no rivers in Africa until the explorers discovered them. To say that there was no metalworking in Africa, is to say that the Africans fought the colonials with bones and stones.

There were different instruments of ploughing across Africa that are still being used. It includes hoes of different designs and strength to suit the different types of soil. It also involved use of cow and camel in tilling the soil. They were like the tractors. Moreover, there was irrigation farming even in the desert areas of Africa talk less in the riverine areas.

Chika Ezeanya-Esiobu in her TEDTalk titled *How Africa can use its Traditional Knowledge to Make Progress* cited irrigation research done in the arid region of Niger Republic where the traditional (precolonial) irrigation method proved to be more effective than a modern method. This is a prove to existence of irrigation farming among the desert people.<sup>12</sup>

In addition, all the cities, even villages, in Africa had blacksmiths (see Park, 1857). They were categorized into two: those that specialized in black iron to make farm implements and those that specialized in steel to make utensils, swords, knight among others. It is a testament to the advancement of Africans in the steel industry that the Songhai Empire (in the 15<sup>th</sup> and 16<sup>th</sup> century) had a division of Knights in its military (see Diop, 1987:116-117).

Furthermore, there were glass and beads industries (for example in Bida, Nigeria), tailoring guild (Timbuktu, Mali) leather, hyde and skin (for example in Kano, Nigeria), goldsmith, bronze smith (for example in Benin, Nigeria), among others (see Rodney, 1973:52-53; and Fika, 1978:254-255). If Fukuyama had bothered to check the museums in British, Belgium, France and Germany, he would have seen all the bronze, silver and gold artefacts that was stolen from Africa by the colonials because they did not believe that Africans could make such things. In fact, some of the colonials claimed that aliens or some sort of white people must have stayed in Africa. What a denial?!

This kind of denial of African advancement is well exemplified when the Europeans met the Dogon people in present day Mali and found out that they had more knowledge of astrology, in particular, the star Sirius than them, they were aghast and started making some nonsensical theories that aliens may have visited the Dogons at ancient time or that some European might had stayed with them to have done all those thoughts. They just could not believe that Africa could think and have immense knowledge of astrology (see Radalph, 1978).

Third, regarding the argument that there were less Empires and advancement in the tropical rainforest of Africa than in the Savannah and Sahel regions, in 1691 the Portuguese ship

---

<sup>12</sup> See <https://youtu.be/28sa2zGgmwE>

Captain, Lourenco Pinto wrote this after visiting Benin City (a Kingdom in Tropical forest of Nigeria):

*Great Benin, where the King resides, is larger than Lisbon; all the streets run straight and as far as the eye can see. The houses are large, especially that of the King, which is richly decorated and has fine columns. The city is wealthy and industrious. It is so well governed that theft is unknown and the people live in such security that they have no doors to their houses.<sup>13</sup>*

Similarly, when the Dutch visited the city of Benin they described it thus:

*The town seems to be very great. When you enter into it, you go into a great broad street, not paved, which seems to be seven or eight times broader than the Warmoes street in Amsterdam...*

*The King's palace is a collection of buildings which occupy as much space as the town of Harlem, and which is enclosed with walls. There are numerous apartments for the Prince's ministers and fine galleries, most of which are as big as those on the Exchange at Amsterdam. They are supported by wooden pillars encased with copper, where their victories are depicted, and which are carefully kept very clean.*

*The town is composed of thirty main streets, very straight and 120 feet wide, apart from an infinity of small intersecting streets. The houses are close to one another, arranged in good order. These people are in no way inferior to the Dutch as regards cleanliness; they wash and scrub their houses so well that they are polished and shining like a looking glass. (Rodney, 1973:86-87)*

This is just one Kingdom not an Empire. This statement alone almost completely rubbish all what Fukuyama has written about precolonial Africa.

### 3.2 Critique of Fukuyama's Views on Colonialism

In discussing colonialism in Africa, Fukuyama wrote that there were two waves of colonialism: one was driven by extraction and another was driven by racism. He got it wrong there also. Assuming that from the first contact of the Europeans to African people at the hinterland to the independence of African people in the 1960s were all colonialism, then each of wave of colonialism was driven purely by extraction. The first wave was driven by extraction of human resources out of Africa – slave trade, and the second wave was driven by extraction of natural resources out of Africa. What racist ideas did was to give justification for such inhumanity and exploitation.

This is well reflected by one of the arch- British-imperialist philosopher and the architect of 'divide and rule,' Lord Lugard, in his book titled *The Dual Mandate* in which he justified the British colonialism of Africa as responsibility that it had pleased God and history to bequeath the Great Britain to make available to Europeans and the rests of humanity the riches and resources of Africa which:

---

<sup>13</sup> <http://revealinghistories.org.uk/colonialism-and-the-expansion-of-empires/articles/the-empire-of-benin-and-its-cultural-heritage.html>

*...lay wasted and ungarnered...because the natives did not know their use and value. Millions of tons of oil-nuts, for instance, grew wild without labour of man, and lay rotting in the forests. Who can deny the right of the hungry people of Europe to utilize the wasted bounties of nature, or that the task of developing these resources was, as Mr. Chamberlain expressed it, a 'trust for civilisation' and for the benefit of mankind?*

...  
*As Roman Imperialism laid foundation of modern civilization, and led the wild barbarians of these islands (Britain) along the path of progress, so in Africa today, we are repaying the debt, and bringing to the dark places of the earth, the abode of barbarism and cruelty, the torch of culture and progress, while ministering to the material needs of our own civilization. (cited in Taiwo, 2009:6-7)*

It is clear in the words of Lugard that what Fukuyama called 'second wave of colonialism' is driven by extraction of material resources, which the Europeans felt is God-given bounty to them. Consequently, Africans had to suffer decades of inhumane humiliations from their colonisers.

Fukuyama also argued that late start of colonialism and its short duration undermines traditional sources of authority while failing to implant anything like modern state. Fukuyama sounded as if colonialism was a good thing to Africa but unfortunately started late. It was not. Africa is the way it is largely because of the terrible colonialism of the Europeans. Yes, indeed, colonialism undermined traditional authority but it implanted its own institutions; institutions of extraction.

To illustrate, when the British finally subdued the Sokoto Caliphate, the Caliph was renamed Sultan connoting that he was now answerable to an authority (British authority). British introduced all sorts of taxes on persons, cattle, farm produce, glass industries et cetera. Those taxes were to be paid in British pounds and the way to earn British pounds was to either work for the Britons or sell them crops that they wanted such as groundnut. Those crops came to be regarded as cash crops. They took over the mines and forcefully through the traditional authorities conscripted able men to work there. The tax on the people was so heavy that it diverted their attention from farming for subsistence to farming for taxation. Through taxation, conscription and banning of some industrial activities, the colonials destroyed the local economy and instituted an extractive state that is based on supplying to Europe what it needed (Abba, 2017; Nnoli, 1981; and Rodney, 1973).

### **3.3 Critique of Fukuyama's View on Neopatrimonialism in Post-colonial African State**

The exploitative colonial administration gave birth to neopatrimonialism in African politics and governance. It is important to state that, contrary to how Fukuyama depicted, African politics is not purely patrimonial. It is also important to state that the greatest and devastated effect of colonialism in Africa is psychological (Fanon, 1963 & 1986). The question is, how is that so?

What the colonials did in Africa was to invent (new African) traditions and create ideologies that justified and secure their exploitative actions. In so doing, they imposed their European laws and customs on Africans with some modification to change African tradition to suit the colonial rule. And of such invention is the codification of African customs and European-like

coronation rites for Kings and Chiefs. As Terence Ranger has noted that was a profound misunderstanding because:

*In comparing European neo-traditions with the customary in Africa the whites were certainly comparing unlike with unlike. European invented traditions were marked by their inflexibility. They involved sets of recorded rules and procedures – like the modern coronation rites. They gave reassurances because they represented what was unchanging in a period of flux. Now when Europeans thought of the customary in Africa, they naturally ascribed to it these same characteristics.*

....

*The trouble with this approach was that it totally misunderstood the realities of precolonial Africa. These societies had certainly valued custom and continuity but custom was loosely defined and infinitely flexible. Custom helped to maintain a sense of identity but it also allowed for an adaptation so spontaneous and natural that it was often unperceived. Moreover, rarely existed in fact the closed consensual system which came to be accepted as characteristics of 'traditional' Africa (this is because there is no single African identity or tradition. Africa is a very diverse continent). (Ranger, 1983:247-248)*

Furthermore, when the colonials started involving Africans in governance, they did so based on tribal identities they created, colonial education and loyalty to them as qualifications. Hence, involvement in colonial public administration came with lot of privileges and prestige including living in European Reserve Areas (urban areas) where the government institutions were located. However, Philip Akpen in his study of colonial towns in Northern Nigeria, like Ranger above, observed that the colonial rules (and invented traditions) was more harmful than good to the African people in those areas. He argued that:

*The colonial township ordinance virtually destroyed the social values and dislocated the sense of morality that used to govern the principles and dignity of people's conducts. Laws governing urban administration were enacted and enforced. These laws conflicted with the way Africans had lived in pre-colonial cities. (Akpen, 2019)*

According to Immanuel Wallerstein:

*(When)someone imposes in a given area a new institution, (for example) – the colonial administration, governed by outsiders who established rules which they enforce with a reasonable degree of success; it means that all those who act in the colony must take some account of these rules, and that indeed, an increasing amount of each individual's action is oriented to this set of rules rather than to any other set. (Wallerstein, 1961:31)*

Hence, the greatest difficulty faced by colonially educated Africans involved in governance was the simultaneous adaptation to two mentally contraposing orders. To solve this problem, they define one order in moral term and another in amoral term. Consequently, in Professor Ekeh's analysis, this created two publics in Africa – the civic public and the primordial public. The civic public refers to State institutions in the urban areas while the primordial space refers to traditions mostly in the rural areas. The primordial public is moral and operates on the



same moral imperatives as the private realm while the civic space in Africa is amoral and lacks the generalized moral imperatives operative in the private and primordial realm (Ekeh, 1975).

Therefore, all that is not good can be done in the civic space but only good can be done in the primordial space. Since tribal or ethnic identity is the major qualification into state institutions, as initiated by the colonials, this created a view that by virtue of getting government appointment or civil service job, one's ethnic group, religious affiliation, region, state and locality stand to benefit from his/her earnings. Primitive accumulation, such as embezzlement of public fund, therefore, becomes intrinsic to public administration, which, even though it is legally sanctioned, seems to be natively approved. Therefore, power is sought, not for its own sake, but for the material advantages such as location of major government projects, employment opportunities et cetera that comes with it (Alubo cited in Mu'azzam 2009).

Consequently, tribalism emerges as a conflict between segments of African peoples regarding share of the resources of the civic public to differentiated primordial publics. The leaders of the primordial public (they are presently politicians and public servants) want to channel as great share of the resources from the civic public to individuals who are in the same primordial public as they are (Ekeh, 1975).

The above analysis does not mean that there were no efforts at nation-building or Africans have no loyalty to the State. But rather, it is explanation why the existence of neopatrimonialism in African politics, and also arguing that at the heart of the problem of State building is nation-building. This is why African literature are more concerned about nation-building in Africa than State building. Modern State in Africa, due to colonialism, did not emerged out of the African society. It is alien and European. The forceful and sometimes violent implantation of such Euro-centric political and economic institutions which affect the African social institutions such as family system is the reason for persistent disharmony in African society. Moreover, the version of State the Europeans brought to Africa through colonialism and sustain by neo-colonialism is meant to extract wealth (more or less violently). This is why the State in Africa is facing difficulty adjusting to creating wealth; implementing inclusive developmental policies (Nnoli, 1982; and Mu'azzam, 2009).

Therefore, Fukuyama is absolutely wrong to say that the weakness of Institutions in Nigeria and Africa by extension is because of climate and geography which affected the psychology of the people.

In addition, Fukuyama's claim that Africa lacks qualify bureaucrats is only valid at early days of independence of African countries in the 1960s and 70s. The colonialist did not involve Africans in public administration and in places or countries where they did, they did it lately. It was not until in the 1950s (about 10 years before independence) that the British colonials started involving Nigerian in the high level of public service. In Mozambique and Congo, the Portuguese and the Belgium left the countries with less a thousand higher education graduates.

But what Fukuyama seems not to know is that post-colonial African State embarked on aggressive educational policies and invested a lot on education. Thus, Africa now has qualified bureaucrats that are trained in some of the best Universities in the World such as Oxford and Harvard, however, managing the European-like institutions of the State.

One important factor about Africa's problem of weak State which Fukuyama, intentionally or unintentionally, did not mention is that of influence of former colonial masters in African countries. This is otherwise called neocolonialism. The Francophone countries (that is countries colonised by France) are very good example of hitherto neocolonialism bedeviling Africa.

The France, before giving its African colonies independence, made them signed a Pact for the Continuation of Colonisation. One of the items of the pact is that the Francophones have to pay France for 'civilising' them. In addition, the Francophones have to deposit 85%, now 60%, of their reserves with the French Minister of Finance. Moreover, French companies have first-right-of-refusal to any contract in the Francophones. Consequently, France is taking out of Africa over \$500 billion dollars annually. This huge outflow of fund and influence hinders the ability of African States to strengthen their institutions and be developmental.<sup>14</sup>

#### 4. Conclusion

In conclusion first, Fukuyama should not have gone to Africa looking for European-like institutions. Second, Fukuyama should have understood that State in Africa is the way it is because it is alien to the society. Third, Fukuyama should have concluded that European-like institutions are not good for African development.

But Fukuyama is right to argue that development requires State or rather institutions. The question is what type of institutions? What is or are required to build and sustain such ideal institutions?

The European institutions in the governance structure of Africa has to be domesticated while also African traditions has to be reformed and integrated into the governance structure. For example, the Gacaca traditional method of conflict resolution that is based on open confession, forgiveness and compensation should be integrated into the court systems. Contrary to the European system, Gacaca should not be made into a penal code because it depends on allowing the judge to be flexible in drawing confession and deciding, collectively with the disputing parties, on the punishment and compensation on the wrong done. This kind of adjudication is in tandem with the ethnic diversity and high sense of allegiance to ethnicity of Africans. Therefore, integrating it into the modern State judiciary (customary court, for example) in African countries, like the way it was done in Rwanda, will go a long way in checking ethnic conflicts that bedevils Africa.

Moreover, to build a new political Institutions in tandem with African nuisances require a new form of education in Africa. Indeed, education is the backbone to institution building and economic development. African education should be focused on extracting the physics from the African metaphysics and science from the pseudo-science. For example, by using scientific methods to study traditional herbs and drugs, better medicines can be developed to address the epidemics bedeviling the continent. Through this approach genuine break-through will be made that will advance humanity in general.

---

<sup>14</sup> See Speech by Dr. Arikana Chihombori-Quao, Former African Union Representative to the United States of America <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8JpEHDD8dQs&t=118s>

In this regard, Taiwo is right to state that the greatest problem to Africa's socio-economic and political development is that of knowledge.<sup>15</sup> Africans need knowledge on how to exploit the sun to generate electricity, for example; how to exploit the aquifer in the East Africa to mitigate the recurring drought in the region; and most importantly, how to exploit their history and tradition to build institutions that will modernize the continent without necessarily westernizing. Certainly, the past (Africa traditions) offers lot of lessons in governance.

But this exercise of producing a new knowledge and institutions in Africa requires a novel form of leadership and governance style, and approach that appreciates the time conflation dilemma that Africa is currently in. Africa's past is never really the past – it still lingers in the presents (Lardner, undated). In addition, the future is not a tabula rasa but also present in Africa. Thus, time conflation is a fusion of the past, present and future. What this means practically is that Africa is faced with problems of the past (relating to traditions, rural development etc.), the present (relating to modernity such as ethnicity, corruption and other urban crises) and the future (relating digital technology such as digitization of all aspects of life). Managing this tension, which is essential to giving birth to Africa that is modern yet not western, requires careful approach to making public policies. In this regard, the form of visionary leader that Africa needs is not one that is futuristic, but one that sees the past and the future with the and in the present, and try to change the course of history through pursuit of a balance.

---

<sup>15</sup> Professor Taiwo stated this in a TEDTalk titled *Why Africa must become a Centre of Knowledge Again*: <https://youtu.be/MQrhPhan5Gw>

## References

- Abba, Alkasum et al (2017). *Sultans of Sokoto*, Kaduna: Centre for Historical Research and Documentation.
- Akpen, Philip (2019). *Infrastructures and Urban Amenities in Colonial Northern Nigeria (1903 – 1960)*, Ibadan: Kraft Book Limited. Wallerstein, Immanuel (1961:31) *Africa: The Politics of Independence*, New York: Vintage Books.
- Diop, Cheikh Anta (1974). *African Origin of Civilisation: Myth or Reality*, Connecticut: Lawrence Hill & Co.
- Diop, Cheikh Anta (1987). *Precolonial Black Africa: A Comparative Study of the Political and Social Systems of Europe and Black Africa, from Antiquity to the Formation of Modern States*, Connecticut: Lawrence Hill & Company.
- Ekeh, Peter P. (1975). "Colonialism and the Two Publics in Africa: A Theoretical Statement," *Comparative Studies in Society and History*, Vol. 17 (1), 91-112.
- Fanon, Frantz (1961). *The Wretched of the Earth*, New York: Grove Press.
- Fanon, Frantz (1986). *Black Skin, White Mask*, London: Grove Press.
- Fika, Adamu Mohammed (1978:254-255). *Kano Civil War and British Over-rule 1882 – 1942*, Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Fukuyama, Francis (2015). *Political Order and Political Decay: From Industrial Revolution to the Globalisation of Democracy*, New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux.
- Lardner, T. (undated). "Time Conflation in Africa" in *Documentation of Leadership Experiences of Select African NGO Leaders, Volume One of the Non-Profit Leadership Transition Fellowship Program*, Africa: AROCSA and ARNOVA.
- Manuwuik, Emeka (1978). *Dysfunctionalism in African Education: An Introduction to the Philosophy of Modern European Education in Africa*, New York: Vantage Press.
- Nabudere, Dani W. (ed.) (2000), *Globalisation and African Post-Colonial State*, Harare: African Association of Political Science.
- Muazzam, Ibrahim (ed), *Citizenship Question In Nigeria*, Kano: Centre for Research and Documentation.
- Park, Mungo (1858). *The Life and Travels of Mungo Park*, New York: Harper & Brothers.
- Radaph, Ian (1978). "Investigating the Sirius "Mystery,"" in *The Skeptical Inquirer: Testing Astrology*, Vol. III.
- Ranger, Terrence (1983:247-248). "The Invention of Tradition in Colonial Africa," in Hobsbawm, Eric and Ranger, Terrence (eds). *The Invention of Tradition*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Rodney, Walter (1973). *How Europe Underdeveloped Africa*, Dar-Es-Salaam: Bogle-L'Ouverture Publications.

Taiwo, Olufemi (2009:6). *Africa and Her Challenges to Modernity* being a text of a Public Lecture delivered at the Department of Language, Linguistics and Philosophy, Faculty of Humanities and Education, University of West Indies, Mona Kingston, Jamaica.