

Socio-Demographic Negligence and State Stability in Africa

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ABSTRACT

No state has ever attained stability neglecting vital socio-demographic issues that encourage good governance and cause citizens to enjoy dividends of democracy. This work focused on socio-demographic negligence and state stability in Africa. It concentrated on such factors as age, gender, education and place of residence and how they could be leveraged on, to enhance governance in Africa. The work was anchored on the demographic transition theory to explain how the negligence of the socio-demographic factors could mar the chances of African states coming out of state instability evident in the myriads of political, economic, religious and ethnic and security crises they face. Data was generated through secondary sources such as academic journals, books and internet sources while the analysis was critically presented and interrogated. It was observed that African states are largely unstable because of abandonment of their productive and energetic young people for old ones in governance. Besides, the neglect of women in governance; preference for educationally inadequate office holders; inconsideration of place of residence and proper understanding of the plights of the rural people in political offices/appointments affect African states stability negatively. It was concluded that true democracy is lacking in Africa; and therefore recommended that a true democracy should be allowed to thrive in Africa to mitigate challenges of political instability, crisis and poor democratic dividends and remove the negligence of socio-demographic issues in African politics.

Keywords: Socio-demographic; Negligence; State stability; African politics; Governance

INTRODUCTION

The way salient social and demographic issues in state stability are being neglected in many societies especially in Africa, has become a cancerous challenge to the smooth running of state affairs in the continent. In Africa, a situation of instability can be caused either by the colonial past, the thirst for power (military coups or constitutional), ethnic hatred (as in Rwanda), the absence of strong democratic institutions, the existence of great inequalities leading to frustration to name but a few. Such a situation affecting a state manifests itself in several ways, either by civil and ethnic wars, leading to general chaos, destroying lives and families and creating a society of orphans and refugees. A situation of political instability will bring uncertainty in the current government, which will cause it not to lay any action over the long run and not lay any vision of development and thus lead the state in a critical situation that could cause a

vicious circle of low growth and underdevelopment. In fact, many scholars have reported that political instability adversely affects the economy of a state and in diverse manner [1].

There is no gainsaying the fact that African quest for development has only marginal success for many years now to the extent that there are problems in Africa for several decades even after the various countries in the continent had gone through transitions from colonialism to independence. In terms of state instability in Africa, it is also undeniable that the continent has had some difficult moments during the last fifty years or more. What is still constant in many analyses that have been focusing at events in Africa, however, is the fact that in almost all the cases of state instability in Africa, it is evident that the major problem is leadership.

In this context, Africa has seen its freedom heroes turn into dictators, while squander of natural resources, politics of

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exclusion and deprivation continues to dominate the public sphere. Moreover, these problems have been pointed out and fought gallantly by ordinary Africans who have over the years, expressed their discontent with regimes imposed on them, through the complicity of the international community.

Even till now, virtually all the countries in the African state are still being confronted by historical, prejudices, injustices and oppressive structures that are likened to the early independent era of leadership. This is an aspect which reveals the weak institutions of the state, failed legislative systems and constant struggles for political power to the detriment of the well-being of many nations, which could have moved on a path of development as part of modern societies.

Most African countries are not better than they were with almost an outright neglect of social, political and demographic issues bothering on health, structural development and nutrition problems which are wide spread, infrastructural decay, coups, ethno-religious conflict, corruption, poverty, unemployment and diseases have become the basic features that dominate the third world nations. It is important to state that societies that neglect the effects of population distribution by education, age, gender, places of residence, employment status and religious affiliations of its citizens, on the peace and security of the state, are bound to be thrown into a state of turmoil. For example, Qadir, Khan and Prince hold that male gender preference is deeply embedded in the culture of some countries. Boys are seen as carrying the family name and are expected to provide for their parents in old age and these make them to be valued more than girls. The authors further explain that gender disadvantage on the part of girls has pervasive effects all through their life time; much of it mediated through poor care and restricted opportunity. It will certainly not be bad idea to say that the value placed on men may likely be the reason the world societies, especially the developing world are largely male-dominated, resulting in lopsided policies that affect state stability.

In Africa, male employment-to-population ratio was estimated at about 69.2 percent compared to the female employment-to-population ratio of only 39.2 percent. Again, women's participation in the administration of various tiers of government in Nigeria shows that women's participation is still very low. For example, between 2003 and 2005, out of 109 senators, only 4 were women, out of 360 members of the federal house of representatives, only 21 were women and out 8,810 councilors, only 143 were women. In the period of 2015-2018, out of 109 senate seats, 100 were men; only 7 were women while two seats were vacant [2].

Age tends to be another neglected determinant of leaders' behaviour and effectiveness and thus, a factor in state stability. According to Boerrigter, a leader's chronological age is one of the most important demographic factors in relation to effectiveness. The author explains that an individual's age has consequences for their emotional functioning and affective state and that since it is inherently an emotional phenomenon, age decisively may influence key aspects of leadership, such as the behaviours of leaders, which may either result in either state stability or instability. In Africa for example, young people tend

to be maligned in the leadership of their societies, this explains why many African countries have old men as presidents and senators unlike what is obtained in the developed world and this may likely have implications on the stability of African states [3].

LITERATURE REVIEW

Education also as a socio-demographic factor may likely affect the stability of a state. Educated leaders seem to be more publicly spirited in terms of participation in the socio-economic and political development of the state since it increases the chances of civic awareness and thus it is capable of enhancing leadership and followership qualities thereby producing stability in the running of state affairs. The author explains that educational attainment is positively related to several measures of political interest and involvement and as such can enhance development and stability.

This work therefore focuses on the consequences of neglecting vital socio-demographic factors (age, gender, education and place of residence) in the governance of African states. This is because an understanding of these factors and the implications it poses on the socio-economic development of Africa will enhance peace, security, stability and development of the continent [4].

Conceptual issues

Socio-demographic factors: These are important background information about the citizens and the people living in the state. Such background information includes age, sex (gender), educational attainment, occupational status, place of residence, income, religious affiliation, etc. These factors can be important in the explanation of state stability across the globe. The way issues relating to these factors are handled in a state, for example, in the political appointments/positions, employment, policy-making and general governance, can affect the stability status of the state [5].

State instability: Several positive analyses of political organizations use the political instability concept to narrate theoretically and empirically the reason why the political and economic situations differ greatly between countries and also within countries over the last decade. Such analyses have shown that political (state) instability can be explored in two divides. The first includes political unrest phenomena (political violence) such as deaths and killings under political motivation, protests and revolutions and advanced thesis was based on ethno-linguistic, religious, ideological and economic conflicts that have not found appropriate solutions through institutional channels. The second includes unforeseen and unexpected events such as the end of a government or of an electorate that occurs either legally or by force (government instability), the latter resulting from interactions between the competing interests represented in these institutions and changes in electoral preferences.

Therefore, state instability is a situation when things fall out of stable control to the point that human lives and well-being are poorly considered in governance. It is the measure of a collapsed government. It can also be seen as political instability political

instability can be defined as an eruption of political violence (demonstrations, riots, coups, etc) as a fallout of economic policies and are related to the redistribution of wealth despite withdrawals made by the government, which lead to the problematic economic inequality and to a high human cost when repression is severe. In other words, the opposite of stability is instability where the well-being of the people is grossly neglected by unleashing harsh economic policies that can only favour the political elites and leaving the lower class in abject poverty. It is of great interest to know that when the political structure of a state is in the phase of instability, then, its social demography suffers the effect because such state's population upsurge will be scarcely looked after while the population who are at the dependency category suffer more because state instability led to a decline in the standards of living.

State stability: State stability is the opposite of state instability as already noted. Stability tends to be synonymous with sustainability which is a means to achieving the well-being of all, today and in the future under a stable condition or framework. Besides technology and the economy, sustainability is largely determined by the consumption and production patterns of people, their distribution in rural and urban settlements and their impact on the environment with unflinching regards for core cultural values. de Rouen and Goldfinch associate state stability with state capacity, the legal-rational state, legitimacy, good governance, income/percapita, democracy and human rights [6].

Theoretical framework

The theory appropriate for a thorough conceptual understanding of the marriage between social demography and state stability in Africa is the demographic transition theory. Demographic transition theory describes changes in birth and death rates, in the size of the population and in the rate of natural increase. According to this theory, changes in socio-economic conditions lead to transitions in death and birth rates, which in turn are reflected in the growth of human population. In other words, this theory tells of the changes in fertility and mortality rates in a predictable manner, when a society evolves from a traditional to a modern form. At the beginning of modernization, technological and economic progress reduces death rate, but birth rate remains high through social inactivity, so there is a population explosion. Eventually, birth rate comes down as well and the result is a stable population with low fertility and mortality rates [7].

With due consideration of the requirements of this paper, this theory is in tandem with the social demographic discourse and can lead extensively into the evaluation of the ills of neglect done on the social inclinations of the growing African population as a result of state instability. Using the theory of demographic transition, this paper shall discuss the social variabilities of population growth rates and the ensuing effect on the societal development.

A French theorist, Arsene Durmont, in his book, social capillarity upheld that young adults should delay marriage until they are economically stable to ensure family subsistence if not so, when demographic changes occur especially in an era on

state instability, such family will be subjected to vulnerable conditions that might lead to disease infiltration into the family circle and introducing mortality at all levels and that can be due to poverty and inability to access healthcare because of paucity of fund [8].

DISCUSSION

Levels of neglect of socio-demographic factors in state stability in Africa

The overall social situation in Africa has continued to deteriorate. This is found in the rapid population growth rate and the pressure of urbanization and rural emigration, the decay in educational and health infrastructure, growing malnutrition and poverty, the worsening plight of refugees and displaced persons and widespread unemployment and underemployment [9].

Education seems to be neglected in Africa. Serious reduction of expenditure on education and emphasis on cost recovery and cost sharing continue to have adverse effect on the education sector, evidenced in falling gross enrolment ratios, unserious attendance and high loss of values, low morale and exodus of teachers from the profession. In some cases, the disputes between governments and teachers' associations as well as political tension or strife have contributed to the closure of many educational institutions. The educational sector is not alone in this; the health sector also suffers the same fate. Cost recovery programmes and disputes have interrupted the demand for health care in many countries. All these issues put together, have resulted in the low level of state stability in Africa.

Women, children and youth, who constitute greater percentage of the population and a reasonable share of the unemployed and participants in the informal economy, bear a heavy burden of the social crisis in Africa. African women experience the highest maternal mortality rates in the world, while the level of illiteracy among them is almost unsurpassed anywhere in the world. Poverty has become the bane of the African state because of instability in its political leadership.

Although social demography enjoys a high status within the social sciences, there are limitations to its applicability. Not all changes that occur within a society are a function of population composition. For example, the mid-twentieth century baby boom occurred across all educational, age and racial groups. Therefore, the common approaches social demographers use cannot isolate the source of the variation in fertility. However, it is in the least expectation to have all eyes on socio-demographic factors because state instability has taken a toll on all the fabrics of the society and thus the total neglect thereof. Issues of population changes are not on the table of political discourse because the state leadership is only concerned with themselves and nothing else. This is because every aspect of the African continent is bearing on it a colonial stamp which has modeled the societal consciousness against its social responsibility. There is high mortality rate with a booming youth population with little or no place in the running of the state. It is however never in the thought of the African leaders that before the colonial

invasion, we already had a traditional instituted leadership structure that has been on ground and informed our oneness and mindset towards development and social responsibility having in mind our population characteristics and the ethnic make-ups of our people.

Nevertheless, when the colonial masters left us, they replaced their physical presence with the post-colonial slave ideology called independence. From the late 1950's through the 60s, most African nations got their pseudo-freedom under the influence of independence with a constitution written and packaged by their colonial masters. The provisions of the constitution painted a socio-demographic outcome as its priority but underneath, it has neglecting plans against culture, socio-economic position and demographic composition of the entire population at sight.

Therefore, the level of neglect of the socio-demographic factors in state instability in Africa is almost becoming irreparable because even in democratic governance which has the people as the priority, has proven to be the worst form of government to cling on [10].

Levels of state instability

State instability in Africa and other related crises seem to be consequences of its leadership problems. Internally, most African countries are governed in ways that have been regarded as far from the modern western state systems upon which they are modeled [11].

Leadership is not a new concept in the African traditions or cultural practices. Though, the forms and context could be different but these nations have their own efficient ways of governance, even before the advent of colonialism.

During the onset of multi-party democracy in the third wave of democratization, most regimes in the African continent did not embrace the changes that accompanied the transition. For instance, most nations accepted multi-party democracy out of western pressure and agitation for change. Consequently, the constitutional framework and the state institutions have been tempered with in order to create a non level playing ground for the oppositions. This is to the satisfaction of the colonial masters.

Some of these practices have witnessed a serious violence during electioneering periods, which inevitably cause political instability. Though the form and context vary from country to country, evidences abound as could be found in the elections in Nigeria, Kenya, Zimbabwe, Sudan among others.

In respect to crises, the African nations suffer a lot of setback particularly the situation where both political and social crisis thwart the developmental path of the nations. Instances of skirmishes and full blown wars are evident in the continent, prominent among which is the crisis in Sudan (Darfur, Janjawid and Sudan Liberation Army), Rwanda (Tusi and Hutu), Ivory Coast, Chad, Niger (recent coup by the military), Madagascar, Nigeria (Religious and ethnic crisis in Jos, Kaduna, Borno and Yobe states) and Somalia (Al-Shabbab and the fragile government backed by the AU).

Secondly, African governments became disconnected from their people and governed without accountability. As a result of this, public policy is completely dissociated from social needs and even from developmental relevance.

Furthermore, the trauma of repeated subjection to arbitrary and coercive rule has turned African societies into hostile force to be feared, evaded, cheated and defeated as circumstances permit. They turn their loyalty from the all-embracing level of the state and localize it in community groups, kinship groups, ethnic associations or even religious organizations.

What is happening in Africa now is in effect the strengthening of the process of the localization of loyalties. We might say that as a result of political repression, we are not witnessing nation building, development, but in fact, the dissolution of society. Most people go on to argue that suppression has caused Africa's human resources, the very engine of development, to be worthless. At the level of the community, it has undermined the people's traditional capacity to cope, leaving many of them at different stages of confusion, withdrawal, despair or silent revolt. The resultant human toll can be seen in the growing multitude of refugees.

As many elites have voted with their feet by migrating outside, African countries have lost the bulk of their most capable and talented people. Regrettably, those who have stayed behind have been denied opportunities and room to cultivate their talents for the development of their countries even after having been victimized by several moments of instability. Besides, some authoritarian states such as Kenya, Cote d'Ivoire and Malawi (among non-oil producing countries) may have actually produced reasonably stable periods of accumulation since independence, as evidenced by high growth rates almost throughout the 1960's and 1970's.

One of the major factors responsible for political instability is the failure of the political class to adequately stick to the basic tenets of democracy and constitutionalism. As Harriman (2006:2) has rightly noted, "this situation has encouraged abuse of power, conscious corruption, disrespect for due process and the rule of law, vicious attack on political opposition, neglect and abuse of the electoral process and paralysis of institutions". This contradicts the tenet of governance, which presupposes the process of social engagement between the rulers and the ruled in a political community. With such level of instability, the rule of engagement on social contract tends to be neglected because whatever socio-demographic change that occurs will be at the disadvantage of the people irrespective of a government that is supposed to take responsibility over the ruled. In normal circumstance, good governance could be accomplished when the operation of government is in line with the prevailing legal and ethical principles of the political community. In this case, the people would collectively aspire to participate in the activities of the state, knowing fully well that adherence to the rules and procedures would serve the interest of the greatest number of the population. Deprivation of benefits and selective justice would not be encouraged, as individuals' rights would be protected within the ambit of the law. A balance to socio-demographic issues with regards to welfare would be granted if

political leaders would stick to transparency and accountability in governance.

Analysis of the connection between age and state stability in Africa

One of the relevant connections between age and state instability in Africa is the large youthful populations suffering from widespread exclusion combined with rapid urban population growth. Generally, a demographic transition—a population's shift from high to low rates of birth and death is associated with reduced vulnerability to instability and civil conflict [12].

Much of sub-Saharan Africa is currently experiencing this transition. However, the magnitude of the present instability issues in Africa appears to depend on the ability of an economy to absorb and productively employ the extra workers. The relationship between marginalized young men and crime has been well established within the academic literature, but the correlation between age structure transition (that is, size of youthful populations or 'youth bulge') and state instability has only been explored more recently.

The growing youth population in poor countries are robustly associated with increased risk of conflict and high rates of homicide, particularly when young people lack opportunities, for example; failing economic development; high youth unemployment rates; limited education and training opportunities; and low access to participation in governance. Most academic works discuss an emerging consensus in the literature that youth bulges appear to be more related to low-intensity conflict than high-intensity civil war but state instability has proven that to be false [13].

More so, the year 1999 having been declared by the United Nations, as the International year of older persons, more than two decades have passed since then and it is essential that we take stock of the advancement done to improve the welfare of the ageing population. A "prise de conscience" among the World Population, which has reached 7 billion in October 2011, is more than necessary given the new challenges awaiting us all to make the lives of the elderly enjoyable. What more can we say when the younger population is marginalized, then what can be the fate of the aged population in the affairs of the African state?

Some years back, this ageing issue was a concern of mostly the European countries which had already completed their demographic transition. However, the dynamics of an ageing population has become a global issue with serious implications for the developing countries as well. Consequently, the African governments as part of the developing continents of the world, have done little or nothing in developing plans and programmes to address the challenges posed by ageing and as such the young and aged populations have been subjected to all forms of neglect as a result of poor governance [14].

Analysis of the nexus between gender and state stability in Africa

May we reiterate that the gender topic is not basically discussing about a particular sex but both feminine and masculine. In the discourse of state stability in Africa, we shall lay more emphasis on the female gender as women have also been marginalized and subjected to abject suffering and poverty with all manner of abuse seemingly because of state instability backed up by trade cultural biases [15].

Moreover, given the negligence of socio-demographic issues in Africa, the gender gap is much wider with a more complex condition due to the cultural and traditional context which relied on beliefs, norms and practices as well as gives rise to discrimination and feminized poverty. There is feasible evidence that the number of women in Africa living in poverty has so much increased than that of men. Women's participation in the market economy has increased, especially in the informal sector, however at the same time women's domestic workloads have not declined. Women in Africa continue to be primarily responsible for such activities as the care of children and the elderly members of the household, cooking and cleaning, fetching water and firewood and managing the household in general. This is especially true for poor women who do not have the resources to hire additional labour to take over some of the household responsibilities when they engage in market activities. HIV/AIDS is also worsening the situation as women take on the burden of shifting care for AIDS patients from the hospital to the home without shifting health budget allocations from hospital care to home based care.

The issue of gender is critical to the economy of Africa. While there are many things to be done to show the particular ways in which gender gaps undermine Africa's potential for growth, using a gender lens to look at such issues is an essential step in recognizing how policy can be shaped in a way that is overtly gender inclusive and beneficial to growth and the poor. This can be possible if the issue of state instability is addressed reasonably to an extent. It is believed that growth rates can significantly contribute to the reduction in the proportion of poor people in general, as demonstrated by countries with higher income per capita which have indeed experienced a major decline in the number of people living below a square meal per day [16].

Evaluation of the link between education and state stability in Africa

The problem of political instability on the implementation of educational policies in Africa cannot be better understood outside the conditions and environment that the system operates. Education and politics are inseparable because the most vital aspect of the link between the two is the possibility that the political hegemony uses the educational system as their campaign instrument towards promoting political interests, the core values and beliefs of the government in power. Therefore, any political organization that clinches powers will make haste to lay hold of the educational system, promising a repair or possible overhauling and support of the system and thereby assumes a position of authority and total control of the sector. It

is, however, feasible in some events that the objectives and interests which the administration will come up with may or may not be workable for the educational sector and the larger society. More so, the educational system by reason of its political affiliation cannot operate outside the dictates of the political context wherewith it receives 'funding' per se.

Therefore, it is evident that state instability can constitute decay on several social structures and amenities owing to the neglect of socio-demographic issues as we have seen on the background attachment which politics has with education. In other words, if there is failure in the educational sector, it is then made possible by state instability in Africa because a stable state is a product of a viable educational system being encompassed with workable policies that promotes core values and societal inclusion in its operations [17].

More so, the neglect of social demographic issues in state instability in Africa cannot spare the educational system for any reason because it is one of the primary yardsticks to judge a failed state. It is a universal belief that education is future of every nation and the wheel that carries the state to its development base. Other countries of the world have education as an instrument of national development and progress wherein they build their human capacity for self-reliance. Therefore, it becomes a hopeless venture seeing that a neglect necessitated by instability is suppressing the educational sector in Africa.

Another angle to this is that some of the African leaders are not educated; a lot of them clinch to power through electoral fraud. It even came to a point that an African leader was sued for not possessing a secondary school certificate and nothing still happened. Political appointments in most African countries do not consider ones area of specialization and education is poorly funded. All these lead to negligence of education as a major social factor in African stability; affect good governance and reduce dividends of democracy.

Assessment of the relationship between place of residence and state stability in Africa

The limited capacity of the public sector to provide viable employment opportunities for the rapidly growing labour force resulted in large numbers of unemployed youths. Most of this population who live in rural areas are illiterate and work on subsistence agriculture that employs about 70 percent of the informal and non-mechanized labour force. Hence, the need for geographical relocation and sought for residency becomes inevitable. State instability in Africa is a motivating factor for migration as the youth population will want to relocate in search of greener pastures and to enhance means of subsistence to care for their families [18].

Africa has experienced a variety of migrations caused by the neglect of social demographic issues such as population pressure, population composition especially the age structure of its population, poverty, poor economic performances, education, employment opportunities for its youthful population and other issues. Historically, migrants regarded the sub-region as an economic unit within which trade in goods and services flowed and people moved freely [19].

In developed countries urbanization (which is as a result of migration) is usually accompanied by industrialization and as such was closely connected to rapid and sustained economic growth. In contrast, for most countries in contemporary Africa, rapid migration is taking place in an economy with appreciable level of negligence to socio-demographic factors. Moreover, this rapid urbanization has occurred during an era when economic growth was more or less stagnant and even declining. It has been estimated that between 1970 and 1995, Africa's urban population grew at about 5 per cent per annum. The Gross Domestic Product (GDP) per capita hardly increased or even declined slightly during the same period. Africa stands out as an archetype of the phenomenon of 'urbanisation without growth'.

Africa has so highly become an urban continent with a high migration history in the world and an average annual growth rate of 3.3 per cent of urban dwellers between 1990 and 2000, the highest in the world. This expansion of Africa's urban population has persisted at a rate that greatly exceeds the rate of creation of possibilities for gainful employment for job seekers. Employment is particularly hard to find for unskilled rural migrants. Large numbers of school leavers of both rural and urban origin remain unemployed for many years after graduation. Some of these unemployed people find shelter with and depend on relatives. This impairs the cities' ability to meet service delivery needs. Others survive through engagement in the informal economy. This growing group becomes part of the urban poor [20].

CONCLUSION

Economic growth can be understood using the Gross Domestic Product (GDP). However, to understand the time dependence of income per capita, expressed as GDP/cap, it is necessary to understand not only the economic growth, expressed in terms of the GDP, but also the growth of human population and state instability that might hamper the progressive growth.

Sustainable development cannot be achieved without assuring that all women and men, and girls and boys, enjoy the dignity and human rights to expand their capabilities, secure their reproductive health and rights, find decent work and contribute to economic growth. Developing policies and investments to secure that future requires that governments know the size, sex, location and age structure of their present and future populations.

Countries with the greatest demographic opportunity for development are those entering a period in which the working-age population has good health, quality education, decent employment and a lower proportion of young dependents. Smaller numbers of children per household generally lead to larger investments per child, more freedom for women to enter the formal workforce and more household savings for old age. When this happens, the national economic payoff can be substantial and this is called demographic dividend.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The following recommendations are made given the outcomes of this discourse:

- A true democracy should be allowed to thrive in Africa. This will go a long way to bring solution to our political instability, crisis and underdevelopment and thus a reverse from the negligence of socio-demographic issues in the governance of Africa.
- Persons in Africa should be given the opportunity to participate in the politics of their countries which will make for viable succession.
- Women should be encouraged through a constitutional provision to get more involved in African politics. This will change a whole lot of things in the outcome of governance and enhances state stability in Africa
- Constitutional amendments with regards to the educational statuses of those seeking to occupy public offices, either through elections or appointments, in African countries should be encouraged by African stakeholders and the United Nations. Those who do not possess university degrees or its equivalents should not be allowed by the constitution to either contest or be appointed into political offices
- Only those who live in rural areas and understand the plight of rural dwellers should be allowed to run for the office of the president in African countries. This will go a long way to mitigate the challenges of rural underdevelopment and poverty with a multiplier effect of improving governance and reducing state instability in Africa.

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