

# **Perplex of the Transnational Aid Industry including Faith Based Organizations (FBOs) and African Governance Institutions**

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## **Abstract**

*Historically, many African countries have been receiving aid from developed countries. Since then most of African countries receiving aid from aforementioned were submissively accepting any political conditions that could open the gate for foreigners to intrude in the internal affairs of the continent as an exchange for any sort of aid. Freedom of sovereign political decision was compromised for any charity in the name of foreign aid. Western civilizations started to move steadily into Africa through imposition of imperial ideologies. African scholars argued that this practice continued even after independence in the continent. The paper argues that transnational aid industry including Faith Based Organizations (FBOs) is similar to the mission of the past and that undermines African governance institutions and thus forms parallel governance structures to foster its imperialistic motives that have remained the same. Parallel to that FBOs are among the earliest aid providers in terms of services and care to their communities. This paper partly will draw a sharp interest in looking at FBOs and its activities towards governance of Tanzania. Although much of the literature contends positive services delivered by FBOs my focus will be to reveal some negative aspects related to governance. It should be understood that the paper is not ignoring good services provided by FBOs but rather is challenging loopholes left to be addressed. The paper will start by first interrogating and show that the motives behind aid industry is to foster imperialists motives of exploiting and undermining weaker states and is nothing but a tool to foster imperialist motives. After that the paper will its attention to FBOs as a case study to show how these organizations are similar to the mission organizations of the past, in terms of assisting or undermining African governance institutions*

**Keywords: Africa, Aid, Faith based organizations (FBOs), Dependence and Governance**

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## **1.0 Introduction**

Foreign aid as an institution began in 1947 with the Marshall Plan when America provided over USD 12 billion to Western Europe countries to help them to rebuild their economies after WWII. Immediately concerns arose over the impact of large amounts of aid on the behavior and attitudes of recipient governments. Critics of foreign aid employed a variety of political, strategic, and economic rationales to make their case. In Africa, aid has been used by western countries as of their main foreign policy instrument to represent donors' social, political, and economic interest in exchange of aid. There has been mixing critics on the impact of aid in African countries. Aid has huge negative results in the political life of recipient countries in pre and post independent African (Bauer, 1991). I have reasonable points to be skeptical about benefits of aid to the recipient African countries. I argue that aid has been impinging recipient countries power to exercise their authorities, and control.

Governance has been added to the many conditionalities imposed as a requirement for funding from the International Monetary Fund (IMF), World Bank, and bilateral donors and FBOs. Further it should be noted that the motives of imperialist nations of exploiting weaker nations have never changed, the forms might have changed but the inner motives of the imperialism have never changed. Rugumamu (2000) argued that capitalism has undergone major internal changes but its aim has remained the same i.e. production for profit, alienation and exploitation of labor, centralization and outward expansion, capital concentration, exploitation and domination of the weak regions, economies and societies

## **1.1 Theoretical Stances**

Dependency theory will help explaining how the North has exploited the South and the way the latter can walk out from persisting exploitations. Dependency theory states that peripheral and developing states (such as those in Africa) are pawns in a system enforced by powerful, dominant states that repress development (Smith, 1979).

Dependency is a condition that evolves over time, in which a relationship--generally between two states--develops to the advantage of a dominant state at the expense of another (Prebisch, 1950). Dependency is analyzed mostly as an economic condition which arises from the flow of economic surplus from the Third World to western capitalist countries. Dependency theory emerged in the 1950s as a way of understanding relations between countries, in particular those between more developed and less developed countries (Ferraro, 1996). Dependency exists when one party relies on another without the reliance being reciprocal such as aid dependency. Aid dependence has reached a point where it is counterproductive and hardly generates processes that would obviate the need for it.

The aid recipient relationship in Africa has developed into one that neither generates mutual respect nor harnesses the capacities of all those involved. Instead, it has generated the dependency syndrome, cynicism and aid fatigue. The net effect of aid to African countries is that it has eroded self-confidence, creativity, and the pride of citizens and leaders. Moreover, aid dependence has eroded and undermined the moral authority of the African leaders to govern (Ishengoma, 2002). McKinlay (1977) further elaborated that in such a relationship, one party may choose to terminate the relationship with little or no costs while the other can do so only at considerable costs. Goldsmith (2001) viewed aid as a narcotic; fostering addictive behaviour

among states that receive it. States are thought to exhibit the symptoms of dependence that provides a short run benefit from aid, but increases the need for external support that does lasting damage to the country. By feeding this addiction, the aid donors have supposedly weakened the resolve of African states to act on behalf of their citizens (ibid). Mkandawire et. al. (1999) blasted aid dependence as it has given foreign institutions so much power on African national affairs and the capacity to impose Structural Adjustment Programmes reflects this.

However, dependency theory has since been discredited because it lacks cohesion and clarity (Chilcote, 1978; Snyder, 1980). Dependency theory also commits the fallacy of composition by equating economic development with development. This is partly because it deems import substitution industrialization as a key pathway to development. Secondly, its core/periphery dichotomy serves merely to analyze the structure of economic relationships between the developed and the Third World (Ajei, 2007). More importantly, it fails to account for the influence of local elites' political policies in developing countries and the resulting impact on economic growth (Sandbrook, 1993).

Nevertheless, many of the arguments made on the nature of economic relations between North and South states still borrow heavily from the logic of dependency theory since dependency is a "historical condition... in which the economy of a certain group of countries is conditioned by the development and expansion of another economy to which their own is subjected" (Fann and Hodges, 1971:

## **2.0 Scope and Methodology**

The scope of this paper has been limited to Africa. Given limited time and resources available the sources of data has been desk study review and included; books, journals, papers, reports some cutting across the World and others focusing Africa. Also this paper is supported by personal observation and observation gathered from other people.

## **3.0 TRANSNATIONAL AID INDUSTRY AND AFRICAN GOVERNANCE INSTITUTIONS**

### **3.1 Weakening of accountability**

Knack (2000), investigating the possible link between foreign aid and the quality of governance in the recipient country, indicates that aid dependence can potentially be harmful to the institutional quality because of high probability of increased weak accountability. Donors sometimes used aid as leverage to pressure a developing country to carry out certain political and social reforms. The US, especially after the Cuban revolution in 1959, worried that conspicuous inequality in poor countries increased the chances of socialist revolutions paving the way for alignment with Moscow. Promoting democratic institutions abroad became an explicit goal of US development aid in 1961, with the enactment of the Foreign Assistance Act. Other studies have recorded different outcomes of the effects of foreign aid to recipient countries. For example, Mosley et al. (1987) in Mercieca (2010) found that aid does not lead to increased growth and may have even worsened recipients' economic performance.

Moreover, studies have found that aid is primarily a form of power hegemony that undermines African states' sovereignty but not a humanitarian intervention of donation giving (Riddell, 2007;

Moyo, 2009; Brown 2013). Furthermore, it has been advanced by Derouen and Heo (2004) that the more dependent a state is on foreign aid; the more responsive it is likely to be to external pressure. The reason according to these authors is that, “it is sufficient that the smaller state is aware that the ‘Big Brother’ is watching”. Babu (1981) stated that most African countries tremble in horror if they are threatened with the withdrawal of aid. Interestingly, this intimidation has been used as a weapon with which to coerce African countries into accommodating unpalatable policies (ibid). Furthermore, the role of the African state in development is questionable in such a milieu of dependence. Arguing on the same line, Bradshaw and Tshandu (1990) stated that because of foreign aid, the African state is weak, repressive, feeble, fragile, dependent, and collapsing. It has also been noted by McGowan et. al. (1988) that African countries’ have little decision latitude in their attempts to devise policies appropriate to overcoming underdevelopment.

### **3.2 Weakening of democracy**

Many authoritarian regimes display considerable ingenuity to evade political conditionality and resist democratization. In Zaire, for instance, President Mobutu Sese Seko responded to domestic and donor pressure by allowing multiparty in 1990 (Joseph, 1997). Independent policy making and national economic management were considerably diminished and narrowed in Africa (Adedeji, 1995). Aid dependent governments can lose the space to design and implement their own home-grown development policies. This can occur as a direct consequence of aid, because donors insist, for instance, on recipient countries implementing the donors’ policy priorities. Or, an indirect consequence, because countries are so busy engaging with donors that they fail to develop their own alternative policies, or because aid distorts government spending towards a particular sector

Most of the current empirical studies focus mainly on assessing the potential merits and demerits of foreign aid to developing nations. For instance, a study by Mosley et al. (1987) in Mercieca (2010) concluded that aid does not lead to increased growth and may have even worsened recipients’ economic performance. Moreover, studies have found that aid is primarily a form of power hegemony that undermines African states’ sovereignty but not a humanitarian intervention of donation giving (Riddell, 2007; Moyo, 2009; Brown 2013). Likewise, Action Aid (2011) noted that Aid dependent governments can lose the space to design and implement their own home-grown development policies. More to say, it has been established that the focus of the Millenium Development Goals (MDGs) on poverty reduction and social sectors has taken attention away from the more productive sectors of the economies of developing countries, thus handicapping the internal capacity for poverty reduction (Ha-Joon Chang, 2012; 2014).

Maintaining a similar point of view, Rugumamu (2011) found that although one could legitimately argue that some few Finnish aid interventions produced intended and/or unintended long-term positive developmental impacts, interventions that were provided were purely intended for donor’s interests, security concerns, or even for promotion of specific Finish cultural values and ideological interests tended to leave behind an unfortunate legacy of aid-dependency, misguided policies, crippled institutions of the state and society, undemocratic regimes, and undermined the social capita of the citizenry.

### **3.4 Increasing exploitation**

The aid relationship has created a condition of economic subservience and of a master-servant relationship that could generate persistent seeking and lobbying for foreign aid through borrowing. Aid makes a form of taxing the poor in the west to enrich the new elites in former colonies (Moyo, 2009). Furthermore, aid-dependent governments put less effort into pursuing tax revenues thus making them less accountable to their citizens (Djankov, 2008; Lancaster and Wangwe, 2000). Additionally, aid contributes to an aid recipient country losing the incentive to mobilize tax revenue, especially from powerful groups such as wealthier citizens or foreign investors (Lancaster and Wangwe, *ibid*). Pender (2001) further elaborated that because African countries are weak, they are forced to abandon protectionism to foster infant industries, and instead to establish primary commodity exports, particularly agricultural as the centrepiece of economic strategy.

### **3.5 Undermine Rule of law**

Foreign aid may hinder the emergence of a cultural or political commitment to the rule of law, particularly on the part of the political elite. If the cultural or political elements of the rule of law require political accountability to the rule of law and a commitment to maintaining a well-ordered society, then foreign aid can undermine that by thwarting the emergence of democracy and democratic accountability, decreasing the quality of governance, and (Stephen, 2004)

Moon (1983) noted that in most cases, the powerful countries secure the cooperation of the weaker states using the reward and punishment behavior. Thus, most developing countries found themselves in this tragic situation. For example, the IMF and World Bank policies emphasize the importance of rolling back the role of the state and minimizing any restriction on the free play of the market forces (Pender, 2001). These policies of the IMF and World Bank are highly politicized as they stand in direct opposition to those policies of many economies, which remained organized around a state-led model.

Furthermore, it has been advanced by Derouen and Heo (2004) that the more dependent a state is on foreign aid; the more responsive it is likely to be to external pressure. The reason according to these authors is that, “it is sufficient that the smaller state is aware that the ‘Big Brother’ is watching”. Babu (1981) stated that most African countries tremble in horror if they are threatened with the withdrawal of aid. Interestingly, this intimidation has been used as a weapon with which to coerce African countries into accommodating unpalatable policies (*ibid*). Furthermore, the role of the African state in development is questionable in such a milieu of dependence. Arguing on the same line, Bradshaw and Tshandu (1990) stated that because of foreign aid, the African state is weak, repressive, feeble, fragile, dependent, and collapsing. It has also been noted by McGowan et. al. (1988) that African countries’ have little decision latitude in their attempts to devise policies appropriate to overcoming underdevelopment.

## **4.0 FAITH BASED ORGANIZATIONS (FBOs) AS PART OF TRANSNATIONAL AID INDUSTRY AND AFRICAN GOVERNANCE INSTITUTIONS**

### **4.1 Introduction**

It is perhaps inevitable to denounce long charitable services provided by FBOs. Yet the loopholes existing in the service provision process are debatable. The loopholes have knowingly or unknowingly weakened African governance in diverse ways. I should maybe make it clear from the beginning that, I am not criticising efforts taken by FBOs through aid provision to African countries but rather I am trying to show where they went astray. My opinion is, although; *FBOs could have improved or strengthened African countries' governance, their nature of operation, roles, mission and autonomy misled them.* I contend this simply because FBOs are faith oriented whether Muslim or Christian. Following this the faith identity can have profound organizational implications. It can affect how they operate internally – the leadership, relationships, culture, and policies of an organization. It can alter how they relate externally and with partners, donors or other interested parties. It can affect how they build their own capacity and that of others. Moreover faith has an undeniably dark side. It can do more harm than good (Rick, 2009). So engaging with faith has to be done with great care in an inclusive, positive and sensitive way reasons made me to be a bit skeptical regarding FBOs aid. Thus my intention is to show how FBO's through engagement into development activities have failed strengthening or making effective governance in terms of enforcing rules and deliver services.

#### **4.1.1 Definition of Key Terminologies**

To start, the term FBO is confusing as it is difficult to grasp its meaning outside civil society and civil society organizations. Worse FBOs in some different context is understood in relationship with Non-Government Organizations, Community Based Organizations to mention few. Although the central idea of FBOs is based on world faiths it is still controversial as diversely understood by Christianity and Islam (Scott, 2003). To a degree my analysis will be limited. Considering such diverse I will rather define FBOs using Tanzania context that is religious organizations that are engaged in development activities. Aid means community support provided by FBOs for the purpose of covering unattended particular needs for the intended community of group of people. In most cases aid is given as a charity. To undermine is to make weak or ineffective. Governance is government's ability to make and enforce rules, and to deliver services.

#### **4.2 African governance undermined by FBO's aid**

Local churches and FBOs have worked with international FBOs to improve local communities through service delivery. Through these relationships, religions in Africa often demonstrate both dependence and agency (Patteron, 2014). In many cases, religious entities rely heavily on international funding, a fact that potentially limits their ability to challenge donors' agendas (Patteron, *ibid*). As already argued in the introduction FBO's aid undermines African governance basically by the former failing to recognize the desires of the latter. And possibly this happens when aid becomes a form of patronage and means of control. Following this FBOs efforts have no direct conditionality but require the recipients to be converted into a particular belief system (Bradley 2005).

To be more specific the logic behind aforementioned sentence is that; FBOs are considered to be agents of development partners as they are influencing the opinions and attitudes of their followers. Having this in mind let me hereunder examine some supportive arguments.

### **4.3 FBOs nature of operation**

It is very important to note that most of FBOs services are supported by Western countries<sup>2</sup>. From previous years Western countries provided aid which benefited them directly or indirectly. Any aid given conquered their interests. In this circumstances when governance is less prioritized by Western countries, FBOs tend to do the same. This is maybe reasons made UNFPA (2014) to claim that when it comes to the creation and management of effective institutions (rooted in communities, able to mobilize resources from within and to manage social service delivery relatively well), FBOs successfully constitute local, national, regional and international networks. However, most FBOs have, over the years, learned to be wary of opening themselves up to random criticism as well as limiting themselves when engaging the governance agenda. Religious leaders and FBOs are not necessarily equipped to play a prominent a role in national governance matters, nor would they want to. The logic behind is that FBOs are providing service which aid is being channeled to as determined by donors' interest and not otherwise.

### **4.4 FBO's roles in Africa (Historical baggage)**

Colonialism brought Africa formal education through Christian missionaries, and the spread of Islam also led to the provision of education throughout the continent (Daun 2000). While Christian missionaries spread education from 1800s Islam has been in West Africa for example for over 1000 years (MEST 2007, Kaplan et al. 1976). Although FBOs participation in public development is powerful as there is notable positive effect, essentially in terms of the development of education, the potential weakness is that FBOs through engagement in long-term work based on pursuing their religious mandate, they may be lacking in a focus on results and professionalism (Belshaw 2005). For example the intention of colonial education spread by missionaries was to equip African with elementary knowledge of the English language which would have enabled them to serve as clerks in colonial governments (Coleman, 1986). According to Colin (1968) certain amount of technical training given by missionaries was essential to provide cheap semi-skilled labour but that it could not be allowed to continue beyond a given standard or the Africans as they could have be competing with whites<sup>3</sup>. Similarly today the education inherited from missionaries weakens African governance. As Kibanda puts it:

*“Eurocentric literature and formal education generally has developed graduate skills associated with individualism spirit rejecting the values of ethno cultural African communitarian (normative) right and wrong in lure of administrators or state apparatus, public service administration, private sector and mainly the*

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<sup>2</sup> The majority of the faith actors with a voice in many UN-related endeavours at UN headquarters, particularly New York and Geneva, are Christian-based. The perception that the dominant secular western development discourse is more easily accommodated by Christian faith actors is hard to ignore; both have roots in missionary and colonial history. This consideration should feature in the 'faith outreach' claimed by the post-2015 consultation processes. (Religion and Development Post-2015 Report)

<sup>3</sup> It is often argued, however, that mission education coincided with the colonizers' interest, as Rodney (1972) remarks: "Only education could lay the basis for a smooth-functioning colonial administration."

*state constitution obedience for citizenship which is a common tool of implementation and manipulation to unethically govern and provide public service in modern states of Africa. Due to this, communal ethical codes are rejected by formal education which places a great deal of emphasis on human welfare in the whole community.” Kabanda (2013:17)*

#### **4.5 FBO’s mission in Africa**

It is worth noting that the first foreign religion to intrude in Tanzania was Islam (Wagao, 1993). According to Mallya (2010) the coming of Islam led to the influence of political development along East African Coastal Communities. However, Muslims did bother neither to strengthen nor to make East African countries effective due to the following reasons. Arab-Persian immigrants arrived in 13<sup>th</sup> and 14<sup>th</sup> centuries with the aim of expanding their business and not to reform by then traditional governances (Mallya, 2010). Although Muslims established various Sufi brotherhoods that were spread in Tanzania and East Africa these groups were intended to spread and strengthening Islamic rather than governance. The formation of the East Africa Muslim Welfare Society (EAMWS) in 1945 as an Islamic apex body was intended to advance welfare of Muslim in East Africa rather that strengthening East African governance (Chande, 1998). In post-independence Africa Muslim organizations concentrated with promotion of Muslim unity and education (Westland, 1980). Muslims apex organization (baraza kuu) was founded in 1992 aiming at fighting rights of Muslims such as Muslims participation development plans and activities rather than strengthening governance. On the other hand Christian mission were established in East African in 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> Centuries. The demand of local people in the government through indirect rule demanded missionaries to expand education to indigenous African whom in turn would have helped them in leadership rather than instituting African governance (Lange et al., 2000). The main contribution of Christian was the provision of social services especially education and health (Jennings, 2008). FBOs development practice has evolved from the early focus on charity, relief and service delivery to include governance although their scope is influenced by programmes for which external funding is available which is accompanied by many conditinalities.

#### **4.6 FBOs autonomy**

Charities, Catholic institutions, lay Christians, pastors in Africa are already engaged in partnerships that are as numerous as they are complex and diversified, involving a plurality of actors such as UN agencies, funds and programs (UNDP, UNICEF, UNFPA, UN Women), bilateral aid agencies (such as USAID, the *Department for International Development* of the British government or the *Development DG* of the *European Commission*), foundations such as the *Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation*, multinational enterprises, think tanks, countless NGOs to mention few (Peters, 2012). Paper by Peters (2012) to the meeting of bishops and president of Episcopal conference and Caritas Africa depicts skepticisms regarding FBOs turning to be Western development partners agents. The paper for example argued that; Partnerships gravitate around international institutions, in particular the UN and its specialized bodies, and constitute, together with them, global governance. These partners, ideologically aligned with western post modernity, participate as experts in global policy-making and monitor the implementation of the policies through various surveillance mechanisms.

They operate in parallel with democratic institutions<sup>8</sup> and through them – through our governments which, we witness it, have adopted the language and priorities of global governance and have entered its normative framework. In other words, the powerful network of actors partnering with global governance self-positioned itself *above* governments. Ever since the days of slavery in the West Indies, the church had been brought in on condition that it should not excite the African slaves with doctrine of equality before God (Rodney, 1972: 278).

## 7.0 CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

*“Africa has been asymmetrically integrated into world economy order throughout the modern history whether through slave trade, colonial conquest and partition during cold war ideologies competition or under current globalization and hence been a victim of exploitation suffered domination and humiliation by multi-lateral institutions, transnational corporations. The deeper Africa integrates to the world economy the more it becomes structurally weakened and marginalized, the more it liberalizes its economies and policies, the more it becomes structurally excluded”*  
**Rugumamu (2000)**

From the above findings, Faith-Based Organizations (FBOs) play an increasing role in developing countries as recipients of aid and providers of services and further opening up to western ideologies and policies. The predicament of heavily conditional aid often marginalized undermines African Countries’. The paper has shown that involvement of religion as part and agent of integration of African countries to Western world have started long before colonial and missionaries<sup>4</sup> who acted as agents of imperialism and one of their strategy was aid such as building clinics, schools, supplying clothes and provision of other social services. These were used to change African traditional institutions in the name of civilization. Currently, foreign aid has become condition driving governance in Africa. During cold wars which were used to support dictatorial governments. The role of the missionaries in the colonization of the region was also considerable in terms of cultural and political domination of the people. Although the missionaries' task was to make people accept the Bible and its teachings, Christianity was turned into an ideology which could be used to convince people not to resist white domination. Religion was used to legitimate, sustain and even promote political tyranny and oppression, as well as in other instances for reasons of political liberation of the people (Antsen, 1997). My main argument is that despite remarkable work that FBOs have been doing, they are also nothing more than imperialist tool that are used to further foster imperialist motives that have not changed.

It has been remarked that for over fifty (50) years of its existence since its independence, Tanzania has been receiving billions of dollars in aid and, yet, the said aid has had little impact on the country's socio-economic development (Tribe, 2013).

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<sup>4</sup> Historical baggage issue in relation to work of FBOs was highlighted during the 12 – 13<sup>th</sup> May, 2014 Conference in New York on Religion and Development as follows “ The majority of the faith actors with a voice in many UN-related endeavours at UN headquarters, particularly New York and Geneva, are Christian-based. The perception that the dominant secular western development discourse is more easily accommodated by Christian faith actors is hard to ignore; both have roots in missionary and colonial history. This consideration should feature in the ‘faith outreach’ claimed by the post-2015 consultation processes. (Religion and Development Post-2015 Report)

Furthermore, the said aid might have been of little benefits to the country's poor who constitute the vast majority of its population (UNDP Report, 2015). As a matter of fact, it is not quite clear why Tanzania has been continuing to depend on foreign aid while the country is endowed with plenty of natural resources such as fertile land, minerals, water, forests and gas, to mention but a few. It is through this argument that this paper asserts that in order for a country to develop, it should really reduce if not do away with heavy reliance on foreign aid or official development assistance. Emphasis on a country to develop should be from internal resource mobilization. Of course I acknowledge the challenges associated with internal resources mobilization but I argue that Tanzania stands a bigger chance of achieving its 2025 vision of becoming a middle income country if it's to highly depend on internal resources mobilization than depending on foreign aid. Thus this paper suggests the only possible way out for in this development quagmire would include gradual but strategic reduction of aid dependency through domestic resource mobilization, domestic borrowing, international borrowing, aid and grants with minimal conditionalities

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