**“WHERE THE STATE FALTERS, DO PUBLIC POLICIES OFFER A BUFFER?”**

**An Inaugural Lecture Delivered at Oduduwa Hall,**

**Obafemi Awolowo University, Ile-Ife, Nigeria**

**On Tuesday, October 8th, 2024**

**By**

**Taiwo Akanbi OLAIYA**

***Professor of Public Administration***

***B.Sc., M.Sc., LL.B., Ph.D., (Ife); BL, (Abuja);***

***FCIT; FCIPALG; CArb***

**Inaugural Lecture Series 387**

An Inaugural Lecture by Professor Taiwo A. Olaiya, *Esq.* (8th October, 2024)

**“Where the State Falters, Do Public Policies Offer a Buffer?”**

*“The problem of the nature of the state created after independence is…the secret of the failure of African independence”. Amilcar Lopes Cabral (1924-1973)*

*“I have never regarded myself as having a monopoly of wisdom. The trouble is that when most people in public life and in the position of leadership and rulership are spending [ ] days and nights carousing in clubs or in the company of men of shady character and women of easy virtue, I, like a few others, am always at my post working hard at the country’s problems and trying to find solutions for them. Only the deep can call the deep”. The Sage, Chief Obafemi Awolowo (1909-1987)*

**Preambles**

Mr. Vice Chancellor, my joy knows no bounds today delivering the 387th Inaugural Lecture of this great University. This evening, I am humbled by your towering presence and eternally grateful for this important opportunity. First and foremost, permit me to attribute everything to Almighty God for the strange success story that is me. I stand before you today as a child of history, just short of a miracle: for how could any mortal have imagined that that poor pupil with woeful elementary, primary, and secondary education could progressively rise through thick and thin to become a professor. I appreciate the Obafemi Awolowo University, Ile-Ife, for the rare opportunity, particularly, as I join, on this hallowed podium, my three hundred and eighty-six worthy predecessors in the Inaugural Lecture Series at the quintessential Ife. Following the tradition, I wish to solemnly render before you and to the entire humanity, *ad infinitum*, an account of my humble contribution to knowledge, especially from the standpoint of the eclectic discipline of Public Administration and my field of specialisation, namely, comparative governance and public policy analysis.

I must confess that it was not difficult for me to choose the topic that would be appropriate for this Inaugural Lecture. I have been learning Public Administration since 1996 under the exemplary tutelage of Professors E. J. Erero and Bamidele Ayo (both of blessed memories). Professor Anthony Mayowa Oladoyin, on whose erudite shoulder I rose to attain doctoral status, provided the philosophical foundations. I have served, and still serving, in practical public administration positions from ward: as a supervisory councillor For Finance (and later Works) appointed from More/Ojaja Ward in the Cradle City of Ile-Ife; to local government, as an appointed chairman Ife Central Local Government; to state as a member of Local/State Joint Allocation Account Committee; and Federal, as Chairman, Governing Council of the Federal Polytechnic Ede. After consulting widely with friends, family, teachers, and public intelligentsia, I reached a harmonising topic “Where the State Falters, Do Public Policies Offer a Buffer?”.

This journey for a thousand miles started in All Saints Primary School, and Saint John’s Grammar School, both in Ilode, Ile-Ife. After four years of wandering and remediating the poor beginning, God finally used the trio of Mr. Timothy Adefiwitan, Professor Sayo Omidiora, and Mr. Sunday Akinbode (Coordinator) to provide the pathway that opened the way for scaling through the gigantic fence of WAEC O’Level. From there on, I discovered myself, and the rest is history. As my dear mother and father (both of blessed memories) were always urging me on, and my friends Magistrate Lekan Ijiyode, Professor Yinka Adesina, Mudasiru Adeboye and Femi Elufioye (Pharmacists), were fond of calling me a 'Professor', the zeal to arrive here was a determined and destined journey.

Mr. Vice Chancellor, Sir, let me crave your indulgence to go to today's duty.

As we gather today to explore the intriguing topic "Where the State Falters, Do Public Policies Offer a Buffer?", we are reminded of the complex dynamics between state capacity and public policy effectiveness. The notion that states may falter in their duties is a pressing concern, and it is crucial to examine the role of public policies in mitigating such failures. This lecture will delve into the intricate relationships between state capacity, public policy, and their combined impact on societal well-being. In this lecture, there is a deliberate departure from state failure to the novel state faltering. The concept of state failure refers to a complete breakdown of government capacity and the loss of monopoly of force, resulting in a total collapse of the state's ability to govern. This is a catastrophic scenario where the state is unable to provide even the most basic amenities, and its institutions are rendered utterly ineffective. In contrast, state faltering refers to a more nuanced phenomenon, where economic, social, environmental, and political factors contribute to a decline in government capacity and willingness to provide for basic needs. It is characterised by a decline in the quality and quantity of public services, rather than a complete collapse. As such, state faltering is a more pervasive issue, affecting many countries around the world.

**Introduction**

The faltering of the nation-state is hardly hidden on the global public space. Rarely do moments pass without reports of agitations against certain government plans or actions in national and international media. On the streets of London, Washington, Brussels, Paris, Sao Paolo, Beijing, Tokyo, Moscow, New Delhi, Baghdad; and not in the least Lagos, Abuja, Banjul, Kinshasa, Cairo, and Johannesburg (to mention a few), the worrying echoes of frustration and misanthropy, and raw anger against governments and public authorities can be heard, felt, and seen clearly. Within the last five years, protesters have shaken Nigeria polity to the foundation. In the last quarter of 2020 and mid-2024, respectively, ‘#EndSARS’ and ‘#EndBadGovernance’ protests rocked the Federal Capital Territory, Abuja; State Capitals, and major cities of Nigeria. Although the two protests were visibly hijacked by rioters and hoodlums who cashed in on the legitimate agitation to loot and vandalise many places. In Sudan, Brazil, and a host of other states, protesters are tinkering with regime change campaign with a zeal that can only be as historical as ever witnessed. In the United Kingdom, some citizens saw the opportunity of the murder of three children to take to the street on 30th July, 2024. As the British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC) aptly captioned the scenario, the “protests reveal deep-rooted anger…it is a compelling narrative to those looking for someone to blame for the struggles they face in their daily lives: the cost of living, unaffordable housing and poor-quality public services”. In all of these scenarios, the state has not completely broken down, only unable to meet citizens’ expectation.

In this essay, I shall highlight three major proximate causes of state faltering— jinxed democracy, derailed capitalism, and excessive population growth. The issue, for me, is that attentions have been granted to each of the conjoined twins severally, never jointly. I will attempt to reverse this yawning gap with evidences from not only the states of Africa, but also from the so-called nation-states across global continents.  At another level, I shall argue that the so-called Industrial Revolution, colonialism, imperialism and globalisation constitute the remote causes and continues to make public policy formulation and implementation forlorn, particularly in Africa.

Just before that, I shall analyse the notions of state and public policy, particularly in Africa and specifically in Nigeria, with a view to explaining the connections and how the faltering of the former can be revived by the latter.

**The ‘State’ as Given**

Political scientists often commence the discourse of state as a departure from the state of nature, where, according to social contract theories, life was ‘brutish, nasty, solitary, and poor’. To escape the chaos, people formed the state. The ‘state’ is a human entity that has a system of governance with a defined territory where it exercises absolute control over its population, claims a monopoly of legitimate, protects citizens from internal and external threats, provides public goods and services. It is a web of institutions, relationships, and power dynamics, woven together by the threads of history. However, the state can be a source of oppression, an instrument of control and domination, and a perpetuator of inequality and injustice. Its power can be wielded for good or ill, depending on the intentions and actions of those who control it.

It is, indeed, widely believed that the concept of the state originated with social contract theorists like Thomas Hobbes, John Locke, and Jean Jacques Rousseau. However, numerous scholars have challenged this notion, arguing that the idea of the state predates these thinkers. For instance, Historians have generally written about Mesopotamia, that was home to several influential cities and civilisations around 3500 BC. Similarly, philosophers and political scientist, like Niccolò Machiavelli (1469-1527 CE), Baron de Montesquieu (1784), Leonid (2008), Jessop (2015) write that the concept of the state has its roots in Ancient Greek and Rome, where philosophers like Plato (c. 428-348 BCE) and Aristotle (384-322 BCE) discussed the idea of a centralized authority. As Willet (1967; 2003) also writes, Ife, according to Yoruba traditions, is the centre of the world where the children of the High God [Olodumare] came down [through] a chain from heaven with a five-toed chicken and a bowl of sand that the chicken scattered across the primordial ocean to make the land. That the inhabitants of Ife possessed such an evolved urban civilisation (Willet, 1967) is one of the viable testimonies that the idea of states in the black world predated the social contract theory.

Nevertheless, there is little doubt that the social contract theorists' revolutionary ideas unleashed a transformative force that reshaped the very fabric of political thought, paving the way for the modern states. By positing that political authority stems from the consent of the governed, they shattered the traditional notion of divine right and absolute monarchy. Thomas Hobbes' Leviathan, John Locke's Two Treatises, and Jean-Jacques Rousseau's Social Contract collectively formed a triumvirate of influential works that redefined the state's purpose, scope, and legitimacy. Their ideas trickled down, permeating the intellectual landscape, and inspiring subsequent thinkers to build upon their foundations.

**Is the State Faltering? Nature of State and State of Nature**

At the epicenter of the social contract that birthed the state lies the mutual trust between the governors and the governed. However, the domineering status, assertive powers, and monopoly of violence wield by the state in sharp contrast to citizens’ helplessness and (over)dependence on the state suggest that the social contract is largely undermined, if not defeated. As Thomas Hobbes pointed out, the state of nature was like an existence where each man lives for himself. Similarly, the modern states, as Amatrudo (2009, p. 11) argues, is the “hegemony of the capitalist state” that “maintains dominance over the people” with or “without the use of force by moulding the ideas and values of ordinary people”. In this essay, intellectual lines are drawn connecting the state of nature— i.e. where the might yields the right— and the nature of state where the sovereign makes, executes, and interprets the law with increasingly diminishing impact from the citizens. The strong that clamps down on the weak in the state of nature may have just materialised as the governments that arrogates and abuses power, without a whiff of consensus from the citizens. As the state becomes increasingly dysfunctional, it begins to exhibit characteristics of the state of nature. Factionalism, tribalism, regionalism and populism emerge, as different groups vie for power and resources. The social contract, which is meant to be the foundation of the state frays and eventually breaks leading to a collapse of social cohesion.

Singers are not mere rhythm or fun givers. For me, they are social commentators, storytellers, chroniclers, and situations resonators capturing the human experience, emotions, and struggles. In 1979, Bob Nesta Marley, the arguably greatest Rock Reggae star, hauntingly depicts the harsh realities of state’s failing system, where citizens daily struggle with poverty and inequality. In his song titled “One Drop” he says:

“They made their world so hard (so hard). Every day we got to keep on fighting (fighting)

They made their world so hard (so hard). Every day the people are dying (dying), yeah

(Dread, dread). For hunger (it dread, dread) and starvation (Dread, dread, it dreads, oh dread) Lamentation”

Earlier in 1977, Nigerian poet, Lanrewaju Adepoju, waxed *Ilu le,* recognising the menace of cash crunch as a deliberate attempt by the state to punish the citizens. Also, Dr. Victor Olaiya, in a very arresting and melodious voice, sang the track *Ilu Le o* (Time is hard) in 1983 thus: “*ilu le o, ko sowo lode, ilu le o, ko sowo lode, obinrin nkigbe okunrin nkigbe, kaluku lon kede owo*” (time is hard, there is no money, everyone is lamenting, for lack of cash). When Eedris Kareem (2004) lamented “Nigeria *jaga jaga*, everything scatter scatter, poor man *dey* suffer suffer”, he pointed attentions tothe dystopian reality of the Nigeria state. In a nutshell, the striking resemblance between the state of nature and states, as it were, serves as an unambiguous revelation that the state has faltered. It highlights the need to interrogate the various global and historic facts that accounted for such vicissitude.

**Why do States Falter?**

***Proximate Causes: Jinxed Democracy, Derailed Capitalism, and Excessive Population Growth***

Democracy packs exemplary ideals. In 2000, Lagbaja sang “Suuru Lere” to showcase the promise of democracy as good governance and welfare, not altercation and crisis. Rhetorically, the singer asked “kila wa se, sejo lawa faye gbo”? (Are we here for arguments?) and followed up with “kila wa se, se baye lawa je nibi” (we are here to enjoy benefits).

I ask: where is democracy’s government of the people described by Abraham Lincoln at Gettysburg, Pennsylvania, on November 19, 1863? Truth be told, the people no longer have a say, not to say the way. In all countries, the system throws up any mediocre and thieves with the deepest pocket and smartest propaganda machine. Capitalism, on its part, driven by technological advancements, led to increased efficiency, productivity, and profits. For me, the system of free market and laissez faire capitalism that Adam Smith wrote about in the Wealth of Nations in 1776 has vanished. What we have now is a bunch of well-organised corporate autocrats cornering frightening wealth by squeezing the masses dry; and some, stealing from their own companies and widening inequalities. Whoever still consider the present human number at 7.9 billion as procreation is selfish and decidedly ignorant. The finite earth resources can no longer cope and supplies now fall short of demands. In short, with poor leadership in government, dedicated rogues in business and endless citizens to cater for, there is little wonder why the state will not falter.

***Remote Causes: Industrial Revolution, Colonialism, Imperialism, and Globalisation***

The threads of industrialisation, colonialism, imperialism, and globalisation are intricately woven, forming a complex tapestry that has contributed significantly to state faltering. The Industrial Revolution marked the beginning of this trajectory, as European powers exploited resources and labour from colonised territories to fuel their economic growth. Colonialism and imperialism subsequently perpetuated unequal relationships, imposing Western systems of governance, economy, and culture on subjugated nations.

The cumulative impact of these historical forces has weakened state capacity, fostered corruption, and exacerbated inequality. Post-colonial states, in particular, struggle with institutional fragility, as colonial powers often deliberately undermined indigenous governance structures. Globalisation's pressures have further eroded state control over economic policy, leading to vulnerability to external shocks and dependence on foreign aid. Meanwhile, imperialistic tendencies continue to manifest in modern forms as powerful nations and corporations exploit resources and markets in weaker states. The consequences include compromised state legitimacy, social unrest, and, ultimately, state faltering.

**State faltering in Africa: From State-Making to State Capture**

Africa's post-colonial journey has been marked by a troubling trajectory from state-making to state capture. At independence, African nations embarked on state-building endeavours, seeking to establish robust institutions, promote economic development, and foster social cohesion. However, this process was soon derailed by internal and external pressures. Weak institutional foundations, coupled with Cold War-era geopolitics, enabled authoritarian leaders to consolidate power and exploit state resources for personal gain. As a result, many African states succumbed to neopatrimonialism, characterised by corrupt networks, patronage politics, and crony capitalism.

Today, state capture by elite interests has become a defining feature of many African states. Powerful politicians, businessmen, and foreign actors have infiltrated and manipulated state institutions, bending policies to serve their private interests. This phenomenon perpetuates inequality, entrenches poverty, and fuels social unrest. External actors, including multinational corporations and foreign governments, often collude with local elites, exacerbating the problem. For Nigeria, the post-colonial journey exemplifies Africa's tragic trajectory from state-making to state capture, as a promising nation-building project succumbed to entrenched corruption, nepotism, and elite manipulation, transforming the state into a conduit for personal enrichment and power consolidation, leaving citizens disenfranchised and institutions crippled.

**Whither Public Policy?**

To all intent and purposes, public policy refers to the actions, decisions, and positions taken by government entities, guided by existing laws and regulations. It outlines government's intentions, goals, and objectives, shaping the allocation of resources, services, and benefits to citizens. Public policy comes with many characteristics. I shall mention a few here.

Public policy follows the law. It is not a replacement or substitute to law; rather, it emanates from the law. By following the law, public policy ensures that government actions are legitimate, accountable, transparent, fair, and just.

Public policy is law in motion. Public policy serves as the dynamic manifestation of law, transforming legislative frameworks into tangible actions that impact citizens' lives. It bridges the lacuna and prevents the excesses of the law. It serves as a vital link between the letters of the law and the nuanced realities of societal needs.

Finally, public policy is soft and subtle as it injects morality into the society and harvests raw talents of individuals to get things done in ways that the law may not. In Nigeria, the government of former Oyo State enlisted a number of brilliant personalities to champion public policies. Baba Yemi Elebuibon led the campaign for quality education with a popular jingle addressed to educationists, thus:

*Asiri ikoko o ye ko toju aja tu (ehn)* (The wolf is rather too powerful for a dog to betray)

*Asiri idanwo koto ko tenu re jade (ehn)* (Examination questions are confidential)

*Eni feyinti bio baye wiwi niwi (ehn)* (Trust begets scruples)

*O difa fun eyin ti a feyinti ninu idanwo o* (It’s instructive for all educators)

*Iwo oluko, Iwo akowe, Iwo atewe* (Especially teachers, tutors, and typists)

*Mon fasiri idanwo han omo re,* (Do not leak examination question to your wards)

*Mon fasiri idanwo han nitori owo* (Or for any material gain)

*Mon fasiri idanwo han olufe* (Do not leak to your lover)

*Aki monmon ise’rue ko mon hun ni* (3ce) (Every bad action has repercussions)

Traffic policy was led by the duo of Baba Decency Olayera and Chief Ogundare Foyanmu. Despite the law, government harnessed the raw talent of the latter to stimulate commercial vehicle passengers with a jingle cautioning the driver thus:

*Onimoto ngbe o rorun ositun nrojo wewe* (The driver is on overspeed and you’re busy chatting)

*Tie sewa je kiki aroye bi eye ibaka* (Like a chatterbox)

*O roju wo’nimoto tingbe o sare, ko mon gbeyin rorun osan gangan* (Overspeed kills)

*Sunmo mi, jadi kuro lo’do mi lorin tin nbo sio lenu* (Pay attention and stop haranguing)

*Iwo leyan fegbe gbu, Iwo niwon fori lu nigba’ya* (Ranting is distracting you)

*Ja’wako o pokan, ko wa moto re le mori dele* (Allow the driver concentrate)

*Sinmi porompoto mon sapepe* (Stop ranting)

*K’eledua oje ke gunle layo!* (And safe journey to your destination)

The former followed up with a powerful admonition to the driver, thus:

*Onimonto mon sure wo kona o* (Driver, please approach the bend with caution)

*Mon sure wo kona o* (Please be decidedly cautious at the turning)

*Mo bimo sile mo loniyan sile o* (My children and relatives expect me back home)

*Me fikanju ja’ye mi (Mo bimo sile mo loniyan sile o)* (I prefer a solemn lifestyle)

*Biri biri laye nyi (Mo bimo sile mo loniyan sile o)* (Life is critical)

Mr. Vice Chancellor, Sir, these are a tip of the iceberg in the ways governments have keyed into public policy as the ultimate driver of the state.

**Where the State Falters, Do Public Policies Offer a Buffer?**

The foremost ghastly defect in the idea of the state, which equated the state with the power of government, where citizens are reduced to mere puppets, is a fundamental flaw from conception. The perspective perpetuates a top-down approach, where the government exercises absolute control, disregarding citizens' participation. As political philosopher, John Locke, astutely observes, the power of the government is not the power of the state, but the power of the people, who have chosen to vest it in the government (Locke, 1689, Ch. 13, Sec. 149).

Fortunately, equating the state with the power of government, where citizens are reduced to mere puppets, can be bridged by credible public policy. By recognising the agency and autonomy of citizens, public policy can empower them to participate in the decision-making process, ensuring that their rights, interests, and needs are addressed.

A well-designed public policy is like a masterfully crafted puzzle, where each piece fits harmoniously to create a beautiful picture of prosperity and well-being. It is a symphony of wisdom, expertise, and compassion, orchestrated to address the complex needs of society. With best practices, a well-designed public policy will seamlessly address pressing social issues with clarity of purpose, balancing individual freedoms with collective responsibilities.

Mr. Vice Chancellor, Sir, it is important to state that public policy rests on five chronological and systemic philosophies of public administration, which are:

1. Philosophy of Public Happiness: The philosophy rests squarely on Utilitarianism and Pareto Optimality. Utilitarianism, as formulated by Jeremy Bentham and John Stuart Mill, is a moral theory that posits the greatest happiness of the greatest number as the ultimate goal of government action. Also, Pareto optimality is a concept in decision-making that is focussed in public policy enunciation. It refers to a state where an individual can be better off without making another individual worse off.
2. Philosophy of Best Instinct: In the context of public administration and public policy, the philosophy of best instinct holds that public officials should rely on their well-developed instincts to make decisions that promote public interests. A good explanation of intuitionism are the intuitive contingencies in the decision taken by the historic Yoruba cosmology of decision making. Two individuals faced with the same situation at different times. On one hand is *Oluronbi* who promised his only child for sacrifice for communal peace. On the other hand, *Alujanjan kijan* hid his mother while others killed theirs. The advice of the mother would later become helpful to the community.
3. Philosophy of Rights and Privileges: In public policy, liberalism influences the allocation of privileges, such as access to education, healthcare, and social services, to ensure that they are distributed fairly and based on need rather than privilege or status
4. Philosophy of Equity or a Just Society. The philosophy emphasises the importance of fairness, impartiality, and equal treatment in the distribution of resources and services, i.e. treating the equals equally and the un-equals un-equally.
5. The Philosophy of Cultural Contingency. The philosophy acknowledges that a one-size-fits-all solution is often inadequate and that cultural sensitivity is essential in designing and delivering public services.

In all, public policy insists on morality, orderliness, hindsight and foresight. The virtues of a sound public policy were displayed in Tunde Kelani’s *Saworoide* (1999). In that epic movie, *Baba Opalanba* (Adebayo Faleti) and *Baba Amawomaro* (Peter Fatomilola) insisted that the idea of an ordered society is the only guarantee for good governance. Public policy, in the movie, is riddled in primordial “parable of the drum”, which created “a pact between an ancient community and the kings that ruled over them”. It involved the making of *Ade Ide* (brass crown), *Saworo Eti Ilu* (drum jingle bell), *Ado Ide* (small brass container), and *Ilu dundun* (mother talking drum). The mobilising force was an *odu ifa* (Ifa divination) named “*otura meji…Aso funfun ni sunkun aro, ipinle oro ni sunkun ekeji tan tan tan…a difa fun Aderomokun, Omo Ooni Alaka esuru nijo tin mekun seraun ire gbogbo…b’okan ba yo nigbo a bona wa… ire gbogbo o mon wa Jogbo wa o, ire gbogbo…baa ba dami sori a b’ese wa…ire gbogbo o mon wa Jogbo wa o, ire gbogbo*” (only a white cloth appreciates good dyes, a good turn often calls for another…as Aderomokun was instructed…a well-hunted animal will always come to target and water poured on the head will get to the feet. Let good tidings come to the community). A new king is then tied intricately and irretrievably with good governance in a way that makes it impossible for the monarch to amass wealth from public coffers. The meticulous engineering of the public policy process in *Saworoide* is certainly akin to today’s policy enunciation and implementation procedures with strict adherence to rules, ethics and regulations.

All said, Mr. Vice Chancellor, Sir, three states are discernible within the context of this discourse.

1. A state with good governance or semblances of it;
2. A state in transition; and
3. A faltering state.

For a state in full grip of good governance, if any, public policy can ensure the seamless continuity of the indices with no hazard of deviations. In that state, public policy serves as the linchpin, ensuring the uninterrupted continuation of progress and development. Like a masterful conductor leading an orchestra, public policy harmonises the various indices of governance, creating a concerto of stability and growth. As such, the state's trajectory remains steadfast. The ship of state sails smoothly, its course charted by the wise and visionary leaders who have crafted policies that prioritise the well-being of all citizens.

For a state in transition, public policy has the capability to show directions and ensure adherence to strict rules for achieving the set goals. In such a state, public policy serves as a beacon of guidance, illuminating the path forward and charting a course. Like a skilled navigator, public policy sets the direction, ensuring that the state remains on track, even as it traverses uncharted territories.

Where a state is faltering, public policy has the stern capacity to initiate a planning direction that can be plied until a prosperous nation emerges. In that state, public policy stands as a stalwart sentinel, ready to sound the clarion call for renewal and rebirth. Like a master cartographer, public policy can be utilised in mapping out a new trajectory, charting a course through the treacherous waters of stagnation and decline. With a stern resolve, public policy sets the direction, imposing order on chaos, and discipline on disorder. It summons the collective will of the nation, mobilising resources, and harnessing the energies of citizens.

In a state where public policy is strictly adhered to, the government's promises are tempered by the reality of the state's capacity. Like a responsible steward, the government avoids making promises it cannot keep, and instead, focuses on delivering tangible results within the limits of the country’s resources. The citizens, too, understand that the state's resources are finite and that excessive demands can lead to unsustainable burdens. In this harmonious relationship, the government and citizens are bound together by a shared understanding of what is possible.

**Conclusion**

On a note of conclusion, it is important to admit most states of the world hardly came into being by social contract or any *consensus ad idem* among the occupiers. In fact, the time hallowed submission of Olaiya (2024) that subjects of states are like a new born baby who grows up into ancestry without a choice. The infant will later be told the constitution that even the forbears did not partake in crafting is the supreme law. Potentially, in short, the state is a haven of non-committal actors. Over time, the subject crafts capitalism and shifts the goalposts of price mechanism to allow exploitations of fellow subjects. Democratic processes are deliberately gamed to impose self-serving leadership and, gradually, democratic autocracy emerges. The subject also brought Industrial Revolution, AI, and mega factories that took jobs away from other subjects and render them poor while he becomes super-rich. Empires, colonialism, imperialism, and globalisation came to forcefully and mentally enslave other subjects and rob them of their generational treasure and toil. The so-called governments are incapable or unwilling or, perhaps, confused. In the milieu, the nature of state returns infinitesimally to state of nature. Added to the conundrum is human nature of ‘me first’ before ‘them’. By such chemical reactions from subjects and governments, the state falters.

However, public policy can provide the calm, commitment and cool demeanour of both subject and sovereign. Because public policies are fashioned purely on five cardinal philosophy of Public Administration discipline, earlier discussed, the citizens and government are always on the same page. More so, public policy rests on legal equitable principles of *“nemo dat quod non habet”* (Latin for "No one gives what they do not have") on the part of government; and equitable maxim v*igilantibus non dormientibus iura subveniunt* (Latin for "The law assists those who are vigilant, not those who sleep"). The former implies that the government cannot provide what it does not possess. In that end, public policy is grounded in reality, acknowledging the government's limitations and capabilities. The latter suggests citizens have a responsibility to be aware of their rights and interests. The law will protect and support those who actively engage with and assert their rights, rather than those who remain passive or uninformed.

The collective body of my research underscores the critical role of public policy in addressing state faltering. Individually, the articles highlight specific policy areas that require attention, such as tax administration, intergovernmental relations, political economy of oil and agricultural development, healthcare, education, sustainable development, and environmental conflict resolution (Olaiya, 2001; 2011a; 2011b; Olaiya & Ejimokun, 2011; Olaiya, 2012a; Omoleke & Olaiya, 2012a; Ejimokun, 2011; Olaiya, 2012a; Omoleke & Olaiya, 2012b;Olaiya, 2014a; 2014b; Olaiya, 2015a; Olaiya et al., 2016; Olaiya, 2016a; 2016b; Folami & Olaiya, 2017; Olaiya, 2017a; Olaiya, 2020a; 2020b; Olaiya, 2022a; 2022b; Olaiya & Sawaneh, 2023; Olaiya & Salako, 2023; Olaiya & Sawaneh, 2024). The recurring kernel of the research is to lay emphasis on the need for effective fiscal policies to promote economic growth and reduce inequality, deliberative socioeconomic and political policy and its impact on citizens.

The articles also stress the importance of good governance, democratic governance, local governance, institutional frameworks, strategic management in public service delivery, global and continental studies, development and gender studies, decolonisation, cybercrime, financial, youth and social inclusion (Olaiya, 2008; Olaiya, 2010a; 2010b; Olaiya, 2012b; Olaiya, 2013; Omoleke & Olaiya, 2014; Olaiya et al., 2014; Olaiya & Shiyanbade, 2014; Olaiya, 2014c; Folami & Olaiya, 2015a; 2015b; Olaiya, 2015b; Folami & Olaiya, 2016; Olaiya 2016c; Makinde, Hassan & Olaiya, 2016; Olaiya, 2020c; 2020d; 2020e; 2021; 2022c; 2022d; Olaiya & Sawaneh, 2022; Olaiya & Salako, 2023). These studies emphasise the need for an accountable and transparent leadership and demonstrate that public policies can help mitigate state faltering and promote sustainable development.

Furthermore, the research highlights the interconnectedness of governance issues and the need for holistic approaches in terms of governance crisis, democratisation, Party system, analysis of human resource policies, due process, migration and employment policies, privatisation policy, ethnicity (Oladoyin, Olaiya & Oladele, 2006; Olaiya, 2007; Oladoyin & Olaiya, 2009; Olaiya, 2012b; Omoleke & Olaiya, 2012c; Olaiya et al, 2013; Olaiya, 2015c; Olaiya & Iroju, 2015; Olaiya, 2016d; 2016e; Omoleke, Benson & Olaiya, 2017; Olaiya, 2020f; 2020g; 2020h; Olaiya, 2023a; 2023b; Olaiya, 2024). These works explore the complex relationships between resource management, economic development, and governance and the intersections of identity, politics, and governance. By considering these complex dynamics, policymakers can craft more effective solutions to address state faltering and promote good governance in Nigeria and beyond.

Across Nigerian universities, Mr. Vice Chancellor, Sir, I have served, and still serving, as External Examiner and Assessor to various universities. Back home at Great Ife, I have examined over one-hundred and fifty postgraduate candidates in various Faculties, including Social Sciences, Law, Administration, Arts, and Agriculture. I took my time to emerge as a multidisciplinary scholar with bagged degrees from Social Sciences, Administration and Law. To the glory of God, I am a legal Practitioner, Solicitor and Advocate of the Supreme Court of Nigeria. To garnish my thought process, I enrolled in online programmes and successfully bagged certificates from major universities across the globe, including, but not limited to, Harvard University (USA), University of Virginia (Berkeley, USA), Delft University of Technology (Delft, Netherlands), University of Texas (USA), Universite Catholique de Louvain (Belgium), University of California (USA), Yale University (USA), Universiteit Leiden (The Hague, Netherlands), University of Geneva (Geneva, Switzerland), and Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) (USA). I travelled to Europe and bagged Postgraduate Certificate in Constitution Building and Public Policy Analysis at the Central European University, Budapest, Hungary; and America and bagged Certificate in Political and Social Research, with specialisation in Quantitative Methods of Social Research, at the University of Michigan Ann Arbor, USA. These strain paid off and ingrained quality into my published research, which also reflected in the acceptance rate at prestigious refereed conferences and workshops such the ones organised by CODESRIA, UN-ECA, ECOWAS, African Union, European Commission, International IDEA, ECAS, American Society for Public Administration, European Association of Development Research and Training Institute (EADI), International Institute of Social Studies (ISS) The Hague Netherlands, Qatar Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Turkish Police Academy, Obafemi Awolowo University Ile-Ife (various Faculties, Department, and Units), University of Michigan, The Hebrew University of Jerusalem, Central European University, University of Ibadan, University of Lagos, University of Cape Coast Ghana, and African Studies Centers including the Tamar Golan African Centre at Ben-Gurion University of the Negev, Be’er Sheva (Israel), African Studies Center at the Universiteit Leiden to mention a few. By the same token, my research also attracted review invitations from notable and reputable publishing houses such as Springer, Routledge Taylor and Francis, University of Edinburgh in United Kingdom, and University of Tennessee, USA. In a way, I have carved a sizable niche of outstanding scholarship around myself in the discipline of Public Administration. If it suffices to say, I successfully supervised and graduated over two-hundred and postgraduate students, including eight doctoral (Ph.D.) candidates and scores of research master’s candidates.

On a final note, Mr. Vice Chancellor, Sir, apart from research activities, I have been a teacher all my life. I taught in primary schools, secondary schools, continuing education classes, polytechnic, college of education, and universities. At the universities, close to two decades of which are in Obafemi Awolowo University, Ile-Ife, Nigeria, I have been able to advance the horizon of knowledge through teaching of several Public Administration courses. During the period, I have demonstrated a high level of competence and professionalism, such as construction of courses, classroom presentation, tutorials, assignments and grading; innovation in the classroom; commitment to teaching; intensive and sustained attention to the teaching and learning process; instilling in students the desire to be lifelong learners, and availability to students. I am sociable and full of energy, with eyes on the mountaintop. I am the current President of OAU Staff Club, the Patron of National Ife Descendant Students’ Association (NIDSA), and the immediate past Chairman of Great Ife Alumni Association (The Source Branch), among other social and communal responsibilities. I am married and blessed with wonderful boys and a girl.

**Acknowledgements**

As I conclude this inaugural lecture, I am reminded of the numerous individuals who have contributed to my academic journey. I extend my deepest gratitude to the Vice-Chancellor, Professor Adebayo Simeon Bamire, for starting and concluding the process, and pronouncing me a Professor of Public Administration within the first few months of assuming the office. Again, I thank him so much for inviting me to join the esteemed league of professors to conduct inaugural lecture and approving today’s date. My family, nuclear and extended, who have been my rock throughout the years, have supported me unconditionally. I thank my family Mrs. Folake Owojori-Olaiya, Bisola and Akinbiola Owojori-Olaiya, Mrs. Mosekola Akinoso, Mrs. Yemisi Oloyede, Mr. Bunmi Duduyemi, Mrs. Busayo Obisakin, Mrs. Yemisi Ologbenla, Hon. Tunji Owojori, Mrs. Bolanle Alesinloye, and others too numerous to mention. Professors (M. O. Okotoni, A. M. Oladoyin, A. A. Adesopo, I. O. Fayomi-Awodele, C. O. Ogbogu, K. S. Benson, O. O. Popoola) and other esteemed colleagues in the Department of Public Administration, particularly Dr. R. O. Sakpere, Dr. A. O. Hassan, Dr. T. O. Agboola, Dr. O. O. Ayeni, Dr. D. O. Apeloko, Dr. O. I. Alamu, Dr. M. A. Bello, Dr. (Mrs.) P. I. Igbokwe, and my boy Dr. B. W. Shiyanbade have supported me with open arms, and I appreciate the invaluable supports. The Faculty of Administration, currently led by Professor F. O. Fagbohun, and the immediate past Dean, Professor Funso Adesola, provided a stimulating environment, and I am grateful for the opportunity to engage with scholars from diverse disciplines. Professor A. M. Oladoyin, has been a guiding light, offering wisdom and insights that have shaped my research. The lecture organising committee (Appendix I), led by Dr. R. O. Sakpere, worked tirelessly to ensure the success of this event. I am grateful to all members of the committee.

I am indebted to my first doctoral graduate and later research collaborator, Professor Banna Sawaneh of the University of The Gambia, whose contributions have enriched my work. The funding institutions including the Boston University, Massachusetts, USA, CODESRIA, and IFRA provided invaluable supports and space during my doctoral training that concretised my academic journey. My countless students, particularly postgraduate candidates, inspire me with their curiosity and enthusiasm, and I am committed to continually mentoring them on their academic journey. The University's administration has provided support and dedication, and I appreciate the efforts.

I thank you, for your valued attention.