

Unfair distribution of resources in africa

[Environment](#), [Air](#)



In the article " Unfair Distribution of Resources in Africa: What should be done about the Ethni Factor?", Presbey depicts the reality of African misuse of resources, as governments and their officials allocate resources according to personal or multi-personal needs, rather than fairness, logic and the welfare of the people. Presbey also interviews several people and asks for the opinions as to what can be done to solve the resource problem in Africa. The problem, according to Presbey, is embedded in the way Africans choose to rule themselves. There are two conflicting alternatives regarding how governing in African states should be. The first one supports " continuing to discourage ethnic identification with a view to promoting statewide unity" (Presbey, 2003), or in other words- this approach believes in tearing down the ethnic differences that divide citizens of the same country, uniting everyone and as a result- encouraging a proper and sensible allocation of resources which does not take ethnic origins into consideration when deciding how to allocate the available resources. Contrary to this is the other approach which is extremely prevalent in African governments- taking peoples ethnic allegiances as they are and devising a federal state based on ethnic regions. When this is done, the government then chooses to allocate most resources to the regions associated with their own ethnicity. In other words, government officials allocate resources so that people from their own ethnicity will benefit much more and receive the most, whereas people from other ethnicities suffer from deprivation and an apparent lack of resources. Presbey claims that this method of allocating resources to benefic one group (or groups) at the expense of another group (or groups) started when Africa was controlled by colonial forces. They began a system in which rural

farmers were underpaid for their produce, which later subsidized urban centers. That meant that the farmers who worked very hard did not receive any proper compensation for their hard work, their goods were taken away from them and then sold to everyone else, and while the rich could afford to buy this and gain access to other resources and infrastructures- the poor could not, and did not get the resources they needed. This is exactly like what is happening today, according to Presbey, because the Africans just adopted the " colonial system" of resource allocation. What is done today is very similar to what was done then- those who are in control of the country misuse their power to allocate resources as they see it fit, with most emphasis put on one group which is associated with them. Just like the colonial countries preferred to allocate more resources to the rich people, so do African governments nowadays allocate more resources to their own ethnic group, regardless of its size in comparison to other ethnic groups in the country. This means that a large ethnic group could suffer from poverty, deprivation and a distinct lack of resources and infrastructure, while another group, much smaller, will not lack anything- quite the contrary, they will have more resources than they need. This is an absurd situation because it does not care about peoples needs and is derived out of the governments own personal wishes- to continue having the support of people from their ethnicity. They attained their positions in the government by allocating resources to local leaders of their own ethnicity and by doing so got their support, and the support of all those who follow them. So essentially they took resources that belonged to the country and reallocated them to a single group, in order to gain their support.

This immoral behavior of reallocation of resources is called in several names, among which are tribalism and multi-partyism. This is because the class divide in African states is camouflaged by ethnic divisions. Politics rely on their ethnic voters to support them, and those who gain power distribute more resources to their own ethnic group or party affiliation, and by doing so they're creating ethnic groups or political parties which are loyal to them and will support them.

To sum things up, the critical problem of governments misusing their power to distribute resources unfairly is depended on the people of every country. If Africans discourage ethnic identification and promote the unity between all ethnic groups, the unfair distribution of resources will not occur, because the chosen leaders will not continue to allocate more resources to their ethnic group out of their desire to maintain their power in the government and getting reelected. Then and only then will there be a fair distribution of resources to all ethnicities, regardless of which ethnic group or political parties are now in control of the government.

References

Presbey, Gail M. " Unfair Distribution of Resources in Africa: What should be done about the Ethnicity Factor?" Human Studies 26: 21-40, 2003.