

# WHY NATIONS FAIL?

## Outline

### 1) Introduction

1a) Thesis Statement: Nation often fail due extractive institutions that concentrate power and wealth within small elite, poor governance, geographical challenges and cultural or historical factors that stifle progress.

### 2) The Role of Institutions in National Success or Failure

2a) Institutions as foundation of rule of law, policies governing and socio-economic and political life.

2b) Inclusive institutions promote equality and provide same ground to everyone for polishing their skills.

i) Post-war South Korea reformation of its institutions.

2c) Extractive institutions are designed to serve the elite.

i) In Latin American - Spanish focused on resources extraction

### 3) Political factor leading to the failure

3a) Lack of accountability fractured the whole system.

i) Nigerian oil extraction case

3b) Authoritarianism and central power restrict freedom of citizens and prioritize the elite interest

i) Zimbabwe under Robert Mugabe

3c) Absence of rule of law make citizens insecure.

i) Third world countries.

### 4) Economic factors leading to the failure

4a) Lack of focusing on natural resources and dependency on core countries.

i) Case study of Venezuela

4b) Inefficient policies can lead to resources misallocation and limit the economic growth.

i) Soviet union rigid economic policies.

4c) Inequality and poverty creates a cycle of limited education, health care and economic opportunity.

i) Case study of Brazil

5) Geographical factors leading to the failure

a) Geographical impact on economic development.

i) case study of Switzerland

b) Climate and diseases also contribute as factors of failure of nations.

i) American nation setback because of certain diseases.

## 6) Cultural and Social leading to the failure

6a) Cultural attitudes towards innovation and education build a nation or destiny nation.

i) Japan focus on cultural and education innovation

6b) Social fragmentation and conflict leading to civil unrest and weakened national unity

i) Yugoslav wars in 1990

## 7) Possible Solutions for Failing Nations.

7a) Building inclusive institutions

7b) Promoting governance

7c) Investing in human capital and education

7d) Encouraging economic diversification and innovation

## 8) Conclusion

The question why nations thrive while others struggle with poverty, instability and economic stagnation has long intrigued scholars, policymakers and global citizens alike. While the success or failure of a nation may appear to be influenced by luck or resources, a closer examination reveals that deeper factors are at play, including the strength of political and economic institutions, governance, geographical advantages or limitations, and cultural values. Nations with inclusive institutions that promote equal opportunity and protect citizens' rights are more likely to experience economic prosperity and social stability, whereas countries burdened by extractive institutions - those that concentrate power and wealth within a small elite - often face a cycle of poverty and stagnation. Moreover, factors such as geography, social cohesion further influence a nation's ability to succeed. By exploring these interwoven elements, we can build a better understanding to help nations take towards prosperity or failure and identify strategies to foster sustainable development and stability.

Institutions work as cornerstone to the

prosperity of a nation. Institutions - rules, laws and policies governing social, economic and political life - are critical for setting up a conducive environment for growth. Effective institutions provide stability and protect citizens' right encouraging them to invest and innovate. Mean inefficiency of institution decline the effectiveness of every domains and lead to towards the destruction or make a nation fail. This institution foundation commonly have two type inclusive institution and extractive institutions.

Inclusive institutions promote equal access to resources, uphold property rights and encourage political and economic participation for all citizens. They foster an environment where individual can leverage their skills and create wealth without fear of expropriation or discrimination. Such institutions enable economic growth by incentivizing entrepreneurship and innovation. For instance, Post-war South Korea reformed its institutions, promoting industrialization, education and merit-based advancement. This inclusivity drove South Korea from poverty to becoming

one of the world's leading economies.

On the other hand, extractive institutions are designed to serve the elite, often by concentrating political power and economic wealth among a small group. These institutions limit economic opportunities, restrict competitions and discourage innovation by monopolizing resources and denying citizens' property rights. Such as; In colonial Latin American, Spanish colonial institutions focused on resource extraction, primarily benefiting Spanish elite. This resulted in long-term underdevelopment as the structure discouraged local entrepreneurship and economic diversification.

However, the political factor plays a leading role in to nation failure. Lack of accountability, leaders often engage in corruption, siphoning off resources for personal gain while neglecting public welfare. This lack of transparency can lead to widespread poverty, poor infrastructure, and inadequate social services, which in turn, fuel discontent and instability. Nigerian oil wealth mismanagement exemplifies this point in better way, where funds

directed to elites while the broader population suffers from poverty and inadequate infrastructure.

Not just lack of transparency but authoritarianism and centralized power also give shape to a nation. Authoritarian regimes maintain control through centralized power structures, prioritizing elite interests and restricting citizens' freedoms. This concentration of power stifles economic potential, as dissent is suppressed and economic policies benefit only a select few. Such as the Zimbabwe under Robert Mugabe saw collapse of its economy due to policies focused on political survival rather than national development, such as hyperinflationary monetary policies and land redistribution without compensation.

Another factor is absence of rule of law, without reliable legal system, property rights are insecure, contracts are unenforceable, and citizens cannot rely on fair treatment under the law. This discourages investments as individuals and business are reluctant to commit resources in an environment of legal uncer-



fainty. For instance in third world countries like Pakistan, weak judicial system, individuals are discouraged from starting business due to the risk that property or profits could be confiscated or undermined by political factors.

Other than political factors, the legal domain also contributed to failure of a nation. Firstly the resource curse countries with abundant natural resources often focus narrowly on resource extraction, which lead to corruption, economic dependency, and neglect of other sectors. known as the "resource curse" this phenomenon can lead to economic instability and lack of sustainable growth. For example Venezuela's dependency on oil made it vulnerable to price fluctuation and mismanagement of oil revenue led to inflation, shortages and economic crisis when oil prices fell.

Secondly, poor economic policies. Economies that are centrally controlled, overly regulated or protectionist often stifle innovation and efficiency. Inefficient policies can lead to resources misallocation and limited economic growth, as the state cannot adequately respond to changing global market dynamics.

The Soviet Union's rigid economic policies discourage private initiatives exemplifies this above discussion. The USSR's rigid policies contributed to its eventual collapse due to economic inefficiencies and stagnant growth.

Last fact in economic domain is inequality and poverty. High level of inequality concentrate wealth within elites, leaving the majority impoverished and unable to contribute fully to the economy. This creates a cycle of poverty that limits access to education, health care, and economic opportunity for general population. A study shows that, in Brazil, extreme inequality has contributed to high crime rates, political instability and economic challenges, as many are unable to access the resources necessary for advancement.

After the economic, the geographical factors also contributed in the failure of nation. Geography plays a critical role in nation's economic development. Countries with access to navigable rivers or coastal port tend to have more robust trade opportunities. Conversely, landlocked or isolated countries

have higher transportation costs, reducing trade competitiveness and access to global markets such as Switzerland, though landlocked, leverage high quality institutions and infrastructure to overcome trade limitations, while nations like Chad struggle due to geographic isolation and limited infrastructure.

Moreover, tropical climates are often associated with higher burdens of infectious diseases. Countries which located coastal areas may highly impacted from it. The infectious diseases impact health and workforce productivity. High disease prevalence leads to increased health care costs, reducing funds for other developmental needs and impacting labor force productivity. Recently, African Association of Health and Development published an report, according to this report Malaria and other diseases prevalent in Sub-Saharan Africa reduce productivity and strain health care resources, creating significant economic barriers.

Lastly, cultural and social cohesion also influenced on a nation's growth and stability. Cultural attitudes towards innovation

Education, scientific advancement and social norms tend to support economic progress and adaptability. Nations that value human capital are more likely to build a skilled workforce capable of sustaining economic growth. For instance Japan's strong cultural focus on education and innovation has contributed to its rapid industrialization and economic growth despite its lack of natural resources.

While, countries with significant ethnic, religious or class divides may face internal tensions leading to civil unrest and weakened national unity. Divisive societies struggle with cohesive policy implementation and development as resources are often diverted to managing conflicts. The case study of Yugoslav war in 1990s illustrate how ethnic tension can lead to devastating civil conflict, which stunted the economic potential of the newly formed Balkan states.

However, there are some ways to counter above mentioned threat. Firstly, establishing laws that protect individual rights, property, and entrepreneurship is key to fostering economic growth and societal growth and trust.

Government should prioritize fairness and equal opportunity to promote productivity.

Secondly, Promoting good governance and accountability reduce corruption, implementation transparent governance, and ensuring that leaders are held accountable can improve citizens' trust in their government which is essential for long-term development.

Thirdly, Investing in human capital and education make a nation successful. Building educated and healthy workforce is crucial for economic growth. Nations that invest in health care and education see higher productivity, innovation and social stability.

Lastly, Encouraging economic diversification and innovations are foster the success. Nation dependent on single industries are vulnerable to external shocks. Diversification into various sectors, particularly knowledge based ones, can help a country become more resilient.

In conclusion, the reasons for nation's success or failure are complex, shaped by a combination of institutions, political, economic and social factors. It ultimately the quality of institutions, whether inclusive or extractive that determines a nation's fate. Through a commitment to building inclusive institutions, prioritizing good governance, investing in human capital and embracing economic diversification, struggling nations can rewrite their futures. Ultimately, the journey towards prosperity requires deliberate choices that empower citizens, foster stability, and build resilience against the forces that have historically held nations back.