Trends. The Inside and Outside of Boundaries: The Aftermath of European Colonialism in Africa

Editor

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Today it is quite common to largely attribute political and economic dysfunction in many African nation-states to European colonialism. An especially insidious impact is attributed to the decisions leading to the present boundaries between these nation-states. As the story goes, an almost total ignorance of or imperviousness to already-existing tribal, cultural, social, ethnic, and linguistic groupings led to boundary-making that reflected mostly the balance of power amongst the colonizers and to a lesser degree some geographical factors. If a more sophisticated analysis of the above groupings had been effected, not only would today's African nation-states differ in number and boundaries, but the frequency and severity of political violence and economic disaster would be drastically reduced.