

COLONIAL HERITAGE AND NIGERIA'S STRUGGLE FOR NATIONHOOD

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ABSTRACT

The complexity of the Nigerian state in the structure inherited from colonial adventure has constituted a serious source of concern in her quest and struggle for nationhood. While some of the current struggles may be traced to and blamed on colonial heritage, some others even though propelled by colonialism should have been properly addressed and taken care of in Nigeria's fifty-five years of independence. The culture of blaming every lapse and every hurdle on Nigeria's road to nationhood on the colonial phenomenon is default. The recent resuscitation of the struggle and agitation for the sovereign state of Biafra after Fifty-Five years of independence and Forty-Five years of the end of Nigeria's civil war is a clear indication of Nigeria's very long road to nationhood. This agitation is compounded by the raging onslaught of the Boko Haram terror group which has not only threatened the security of the nation but has also decimated her sovereignty and punctuated her drive into nationhood. The strategies and struggles to weld over 250 ethnic groups into nationhood has been an uphill task handed down by the colonial masters. Every successive indigenous government's efforts to inoculate the nation against disunity and despondency with corresponding strategies to foster the spirit of unity and oneness in nation building have had minimal impact on the overall efforts at nationhood and nation building. The tree to keep Nigeria "One" has been watered by the blood of hundreds of thousands of innocent people and if necessary strategies of nationhood are not adequately deployed, and necessary care is not taken, "many more will have to suffer". Nationhood begins with the promotion of national integration among the numerous constituent tribes before advancement into other strategies of development and industrialization aimed at transforming the nation into a functional society with equal opportunities for all. This paper submits that though the Colonial heritage of the nation Nigeria has had tremendous impact on the struggles for nationhood, some of these challenges should have been adequately addressed in fifty-five years of independence. These struggles which range from sovereignty, to geography, to identity and the struggle for power and resources among others should have been reduced drastically by successive administrations since independence. This paper presents unity and cohesion as a fundamental requirement as well as an integral part of nation building and nationhood. Indeed, the unity of a (any) nation despite her heterogeneity and diversity is a critical underlying principle and foundation for a lasting and progressive journey into nationhood. It undertakes a historical examination and analysis of the colonial legacies in the various aspects of Nigerians lives and as well as the efforts and strategies engaged or adopted by the various governments and leaders to extricate the colonial legacy challenge from the nation's desperate march into nationhood. It analyses the Legacies of Identity and Geography, Political, Domestic, Military, Socio-Cultural, Economic and Commonwealth Legacy while analysing the limitations and hurdles in the process of the transforming the different components of the nation into a formidable, cohesive and progressive entity where every citizen will be proud of the corporate identity.

Key Words:

Nationhood, Nation Building, Biafra, Boko Haram, Colonial Heritage, Heterogeneity

*Nigeria is the only Federation discussed in the book whose future is uncertain*¹

“The physical formation of a country is the key to the history of its early settlement”²
Imperialism had existed in the world history since most people can recall. Prof. Arnold Tonybee, for instance has mentioned an Egyptian empire as old as the 18th century BC and Hammurabis Babylonian empire of approximately the same period. Similarly, he had made references to the Mauryan Empire of the 3rd Century BC and the Guptan and Kushan empires of the Indian sub continent both of the 6th century AD, all these go to show that imperialism is not a new phenomenon in the world’s history. There was also the Roman Empire, the Russian Empire and the Austro-Hungarian Empire.

The history of the European colonization of the Third world began with Renaissance Europe, but more specifically when the defeat of eight centuries of Moorish domination on the Iberian Peninsula left the new kingdoms of Portugal and Spain a free hand for adventurous voyages over the Atlantic Ocean. Christopher Columbus is popularly believed to have discovered the West Indian Islands of Cuba and Hispaniola (Now Haiti) and the Dominican Republic, on behalf of the Spanish monarchy by the end of the 15th century (1493) thus opening up new vistas of unimaginable wealth in natural resources and further inflaming the geographical curiosity and the rapacious passion for fabulous wealth which had hitherto been stirring in European breast.

Prior to 1492, there had been widespread stories of the fabulous orient, notably as a result of the voyages of Marco Polo to the Chinese Court more than two centuries earlier. From Columbus to the 19th century through the scramble for and partition of Africa, as solemnly consecrated at the Berlin Conference where no African nation was present in 1885. Thus by 1885 the acquisition of most colonial possessions by European nations had been concluded. Notably, these included enormous territorial expansion in the South and Central America, and in the Caribbean by Portugal and Spain; in North America by Great Britain and France and in

Asia and South Pacific by Great Britain and Holland. (Indian sub continent, Burma, Ceylon, Australia, New Zealand and Indonesia) although China resisted European colonialism as best as she could, she still had to bow to superior war technology from Europe by significant territorial concessions: Granting 100 year lease of Hong Kong to Great Britain consequent upon the opium war of the late 19th century. France made an equally insignificant impression on the enormous Chinese land mass but acquired territories in Indo-China.

In Africa, the major contestants were Britain, France, Belgium, Germany, the Dutch, and ultimately the Italians. The British in the course of the scramble for territorial conquests secured the area now called Nigeria. This encounter has left the nation with indelible marks cutting across all aspects of national life with unending struggles to attain nationhood.

The Evolution of British Colonial Rule in Nigeria

Aside from the Sokoto Jihad and the Yoruba wars, Colonialism ranks as one of the most important historical events of the Nineteenth century in Nigeria³. It undermined traditional society, culture and economic activities. The evolution of British colonial rule in Nigeria is traceable to 1861 when the British established the Colony of Lagos⁴. This process which had started in the early 1850s was concluded with Britain's 1900 declaration of the Protectorates of Northern and Southern Nigeria.⁵ These two Protectorates and the Colony of Lagos were amalgamated in 1914. The seed of a nation so disunited, so complex and so difficult to harmonize had been sown. One would have expected that the vision of the colonial masters would have been to bequeath a united, functional, working nation to the upcoming Nigerian politicians and leaders. From then till 1954 Nigeria was formally governed as a unitary state.⁶ The introduction of a unitary system of governance on the newly acquired territories was a major attempt to weld the "*comity of nations*" in the various parts of Nigeria into a formidable, united, functional, state where nationhood could be attained on the path of consistent growth and sustainable development.

Identity and Nationhood

Modern Nigeria came into existence as a State in 1914 through the amalgamation of the Northern and Southern protectorates⁷. Prior to that time, there were several separate cultural, ethnic and linguistic groups, such as Oyo, Benin, Nupe, Jukun, Kanem-Bornu and Hausa-Fulani. These categories of peoples lived in Kingdoms, Chiefdoms and Emirates with traditional but sophisticated systems of government. There were also relatively small but strong and indeed resistant ethnic groups like the Igbo, Ibibio, Jukun, Ijaw, Tiv and many others. Such was the diversities that shaped the entity called Nigeria.

These diversities characterized the landscape of the pre colonial Nigeria and regrettably, there was no conference, no organized meetings or plebiscite where the sub group constituents of Nigeria were invited to participate in the nomenclature process or "Naming Ceremony" of the emerging nation. It was basically, wholly a colonial affair. The mono-vision was the easiest and cheapest administrative structure with the maximum exploits of the colonial territories.

The name *Nigeria* was taken from the Niger River running through the country. This name was believed to have been coined by Lady Flora Shaw; who later married Baron Lugard, a British colonial administrator, in the late 19th century.⁸ However, recent discoveries and evidences point to the fact that the word "Nigeria" had indeed existed as early as July 3, 1899⁹ before it was popularized by Flora Shaw in her Newspaper in England.

The British colonized Nigeria in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century; setting up administrative structures and law while recognizing traditional chiefs. Nigeria became independent in 1960. The country thus had about a century of colonialism in absolute terms, which had left indelible marks on the history, culture, politics and economy of the nation.

Even though there have not been a direct agitation for the change in the name "**Nigeria**", the continuous reference and recourse to the ethnic identities and indeed the unalloyed loyalty to ethnicity of the Igbo, the Hausa and the Yoruba among others are clear enough an indication that the identity "**Nigeria**" has not essentially passed the test of common corporate acceptance as Nigerians, thus an Igbo man for example will first see himself as an Igbo before any other consideration as a Nigerian. An American is an American before other considerations. This phenomenon cuts across the various ethnic nationalities in the country thus constituting the abysmal failure of the first fundamental test of nationhood.

It is either the various ethnic nationalities don't care what Nigeria is actually called (although a few elites have called for the change of Nigeria to Wazobia) as long as they have Biafra, Oduduwa, Arewa among others or they have no sense of belonging, sense of ownership and therefore treat the nomenclature as an esoteric phenomenon of no consequence to their future.

The identity question should no longer be blamed on the colonial powers as fifty-five years of independence and abrogation of colonial rule was enough for the different components of the country to have come together to adopt an alternative name for the nation.

The notion of a nation connotes a common identity, language, government. The word **Nation** is derived from the Latin word: *natio*, "people, tribe, kin, genus, class, flock". It is a social concept with no uncontroversial definition,¹⁰ but which is most commonly used to designate larger groups or collectives of people with common characteristics attributed to them - including language, traditions, customs, habits and ethnicity. A nation, by comparison, is more impersonal, abstract, and overtly political than an ethnic group. It is a cultural-political community that has become conscious of its autonomy, its unity, its sovereignty and its particular interests which must not only be protected at all times, but form the core pillars of its foreign policies.

According to Ford's *National Question*: "a nation is not a racial or tribal, but a historically constituted community of people;" "a nation is not a casual or ephemeral conglomeration, but a stable community of people"; "a nation is formed only as a result of lengthy and systematic intercourse, as a result of people living together generation after generation"; and, in its entirety: "a nation is a historically constituted, stable community of people, formed on the basis of a common language, territory, economic life, and psychological make-up manifested in a common culture."

Nations were a people sharing a common immutable ethnicity, which dated to the mists of time and could be seen by their shared language, history, bloodline, culture, character, habits, and manners. It was not necessary that these national peoples had an independent existence as a state, but there was a growing assumption that the nation was the people, the people were ultimately sovereign, and therefore nations *should* have their own state—a vision which had a certain efflorescence in the late 18th century in the Americas and Europe, a perspective that dominated the transformations of Europe after World War I, and an agenda that gave succour to numerous anti-imperial movements throughout the world in the 20th century.

In the late 20th century, many social scientists argued that there were two types of nations, the civic nation of which France was the principal example and the ethnic nation exemplified by the German peoples. The German tradition was conceptualized as originating with early 19th-century philosophers, like Johann Gottlieb Fichte, and referred to people sharing a common language, religion, culture, history, and ethnic origins, that differentiate them from people of other nations.¹¹ On the other hand, the civic nation was traced to the French Revolution and ideas deriving from 18th-century French philosophers. It was understood as being cantered in a willingness to "live together", this producing a nation that results from an act of affirmation. This is the vision, among others, of Ernest Renan.¹²

The process of Nationhood which is also hinged on Nationalism reflects the desire of “nations” for a system of government that secures their interests and fundamental character. Nationalism has also come to mean an expression of identity that glorifies, or at least invokes, a deep and abiding connection between individuals of the “nation” that informs, complements, and often transcends other identities rooted in religious belief and affiliation, class imperatives, gender roles, and regional affinities. The real sticking point in much of the literature relates to how one defines a “nation” and how early “true” nationalism can be said to exist.

Originally nations were assumed to be self-evident. Nations were a people sharing a common immutable ethnicity, which dated to the mists of time and could be seen by their shared language, history, bloodline, culture, character, habits, and manners. It was not necessary that these national peoples had an independent existence as a state, but there was a growing assumption that the nation was the people, the people were ultimately sovereign, and therefore nations *should* have their own state—a vision which had a certain efflorescence in the late 18th century in the Americas and Europe, a perspective that dominated the transformations of Europe after World War I, and an agenda that gave succour to numerous anti-imperial movements throughout the world in the 20th century.

More recently, as the study of nationalism has exploded—it is a concept seriously studied by sociologists, anthropologists, political scientists, historians, philosophers, and critical theorists—most theorists of nationalism have argued for the manufactured and “modern” quality of all national identity, that nations are “constructed” and “imagined” out of a very diverse collection of polities and that nationalism is a fairly recent phenomenon that dates to the late 18th and early 19th centuries, although debate continues on this historical narrative. While nationalism remains a major concern of contemporary politics in the world, and thus

spawns a massive scholarly literature, this bibliography will confine itself (with the exception of some major theoretical approaches) to studies of nationalism in the history of the Atlantic world before the mid-19th century.

Nigeria, sometimes addressed as "the Giant of Africa" is the most populous country in Africa, the seventh most populous country in the world and the most populous Black country.¹³ The country is roughly divided in half between Muslims, concentrated mostly in the north and Christians, who mostly live in the South and central parts of the country. A minority practice traditional religions, especially among the Yoruba race. Its oil reserves have brought great revenues to the country. Although currently the 37th largest economy with an aspiration to become the 20th economy by the year 2020, it is listed among the "Next Eleven" economies, and is a member of the Commonwealth of Nations¹⁴ These prospects and affiliations have not been able to annihilate the challenges on the nation's journey to nationhood. The inability to foster a common identity is still a major setback on the journey to nationhood.

The Constitutional Development and the Democratization Process

Taking for granted that the newly conquered territories have been welded into a nation, the colonial powers began the process of constitutional development and democratization of the administrative process to give the new elites an opportunity to participate in the administration of their country. It was also aimed at providing a platform for the political, educated elites to interact in such a way as to sustain the unity of the nation.

The Clifford Constitution marked the beginning of the formation of political parties in Nigeria.¹⁵ It is noteworthy that it was the constitutional provisions inherent in the Clifford Constitution that enabled the formation of the first set of political party in Nigeria in 1923: the Nigerian National Democratic Party (NNDP). The Clifford Constitution was succeeded in 1946 by the Richard's Constitution that gave Nigerians the opportunity to deliberate with the

British on issues that affected Nigeria.¹⁶ The duo of Macpherson and Lyttleton Constitutions of 1951 and 1954 respectively marked significant departures from the decades of British colonial rule that followed the formal amalgamation of the Northern and Southern Protectorates of Nigeria into a single state in 1914.

The highpoint of the Lyttleton Constitution was that it turned Nigeria into a federation of three regions.¹⁷ These are the Northern, Eastern and Western regions. Each of the regions had a dominant ethnic group: the Hausa-Fulani dominated in the Northern region; the Yoruba dominated in the Western Region; while the Igbo dominated in the Eastern region. The remaining 250-350 ethnic groups, especially the Tivs and Nupe in the North, the Ijaw and Ibibio in the East and Benin in the West, were squeezed in between these powerful ethnics.

As a direct consequence of the political configuration therefore, in the run-up to Nigeria's independence, three major political parties consolidated their regional bases¹⁸: In the north, Alhaji Sir Ahmadu Bello led the government, this is a logical consequence of his firm control of the Northern People's Congress (NPC) formed in 1949.¹⁹ The party was an political offshoot of Jam' Iyyar Mutanen Arewa, a predominantly Hausa-Fulani organization.

In the West, Obafemi Awolowo ascended to the Premiership of the Western region on the platform of the Action Group (AG), a party that was formed in 1951. The AG was the offshoot of the pan-Yoruba cultural organization, Egbe Omo Oduduwa, formed in London in 1945.²⁰ In the East, Dr. Nnamdi Azikiwe became the leader of the Igbo dominated National Council of Nigeria and the Cameroons (NCNC) which was formed in 1944.¹⁹ Nigeria achieved Independence in 1960 under this political and ethnic situation.

The British bequeathed to Nigeria what has been popularly described as a "Federal Trinity"²¹ This trinity comprised the three dominant ethnic groups in Nigeria – The Hausa, Yoruba and the Igbo. The remaining ethnic groups, such as the Tiv, Urhobo, Ijaw, Ibibio, Kanuri, Nupe

and Edo, had their identities submerged into these three mighty stock. Thus, it was the desire of the British colonialist to create a political system that would neutralize the inherent latent threats posed by Nigeria's heterogeneity that informed the strategic decision to adopt the Federal System. Federalism is usually recommended for ethnically diverse countries in the hope that it will foster greater socio-political integration among populations.²² The British needed a political system that could turn the country's heterogeneous mixture into a formidable, cohesive and functional entity which every citizen would be proud of. Thus, Nigeria's federalism was originally intended to be a strategic mechanism for the attainment of nationhood.

However, these ethnic colours which have dotted every sphere of the nation's life have aggravated the division among the various components thus not only widening the gap between the citizens but also inhibiting the process of nationhood. Loyalties to ethnic and regional bases far supersede the concern for the nation at large.

The nineteenth century brought great changes to the states in the Nigerian region. Although, social formations within the various geographical regions remained diverse, several relatively large centralized states came to dominate geopolitical and economic dynamics during this time. In the northern savanna zones, the Islamic Jihad of Othman dan Fodio led to the establishment of the Sokoto Caliphate. The Caliphate brought under one government all the Hausa states, as well as some former provinces of Borno and lands in the south and southeast respectively.⁹ Othman Dan Fodio and his successors reconfigured the political and cultural landscape of the northern savannah towards a primary identification with Islam by 1903. This later created important political and religious implications for Nigeria at independence in 1960. To put it succinctly, Othman dan Fodio and his successors succeeded in making Islam a state religion for the northern part of the future geographical polity called Nigeria. This created extensive socio-religious and political challenges for post independent Nigeria in

1960. Between 1960 and 2010, the north's "state" religion conflicted with Nigeria's secularism. By the time the British colonial forces sacked Sokoto in 1903, the caliphate that Othman Fodio established had succeeded in wielding such Hausa city-states as Gobir, Zamfara, Kebbi, Kano, Katsina and Zazzau into a monolithic theocracy.¹⁰

In the southern regions, the nineteenth century was a period of great socio-political and economic transformations. By this period, Oyo was an acknowledged military power in the region. Oyo was a major supplier of slaves to the coastal ports of Porto Novo and Lagos.¹¹ However, internal conflicts in the early nineteenth century resulted in Oyo's collapse by the 1830s. Oyo, being a unifying factor in the region and a force for stability, her collapse led to a century of wars in the region. Yoruba states previously held in check by the might of Oyo fought to fill the power vacuum created by Oyo's decline. To the east of the Yoruba are the Edo-speaking peoples. The Edos are historically famous because of the kingdom of Bini and their bronze work. The Ijaw constitute the majority group in the Eastern Delta in the present Bayelsa state. These were followed by the Ibibio who constitute the largest group in the basin of the Cross River.¹² The Igbo are concentrated in present-day Imo, Abia, Anambra, Enugu, Ebonyi, Rivers (the southern Igbo) and Delta states (the western Igbo).¹³ The largest Igbo towns include Onitsha, Enugu, Owerri, Aba, Umuahia, Abakaliki, Afikpo and Orlu.¹⁴

The Grassland zone is divided into the Middle Belt and Far North. The Middle Belt has the largest concentration of Nigeria's ethnic groups. Uzoigwe has estimated the number to be around one hundred and eighty.¹⁵ The two prominent groups are the Nupe of the Middle Niger River valley in the west and the Tiv of the Benue valley in the east. The Belt crosses Nigeria from west to east and from south to north. Today, it includes the following areas: Kwara, Kogi, Niger, Plateau, Adamawa and Taraba states. The Hausa-speaking peoples are found throughout

the grassland zone of West Africa. In Nigeria, they are dominant in Kebbi, Sokoto, Katsina, Kano and Jigawa states. The Hausa founded a number of city-states that were independent of one another until the Fulani conquerors from the north subjugated them early in the 19th century. The Fulani are an interesting group. They have no territory or state that they can call their own¹⁶ yet, since the beginning of the 19th century, they have been central to Nigerian politics. Indeed, at some point in Nigeria's post independence history, they had been at the helms of the country's affairs. Alhaji Shehu Shagari, 1979-1983 and Major-General Muhammadu Buhari, 1983-1985 are two good examples. In Nigeria, having conquered the Hausa among whom they had settled, the Fulani imposed their political and religious system. Today, the Fulani are divided into two: the Cattle Fulani and the Settled or Town Fulani. They are devout Muslims.

This introduction has established the different ethnic groups' resident in the geographical entity known as Nigeria. By showing the different ethnic groups, the study has identified that there was no ethno-cultural homogeneity among the different groups. In addition to this, the study has shown that there was no single supranational authority that controlled the different ethnic groups resident within the geographical entity later to be called Nigeria. Each of the ethnic groups evolved specific institutions that were designed to guarantee their sovereignty and independence from external aggression; and at the same time preserve their unique socio-cultural meme. For example, the highest decision making authority in Oyo Empire was the Alaafin. The Yoruba evolved the monarchical system of government to regulate their day-to-day existence. On the other hand, the Hausas evolved what one can call a theocracy. This was particularly evident during the period of the Sokoto caliphate in the 19th century. Nigeria's ethno-cultural heterogeneity and sovereignty was to be a recurring theme in the nation-building process of the country in the post-independent era.

The British Conquest of Nigeria, 1861

British conquest of Nigeria by the close of the 19th century was the culmination of a long process that started with the slave trade and its suppression. This culminated in the occupation of Lagos in 1851 and by 1861, Lagos was formally declared a British colony.¹⁷ The expansion of the Lagos colony initiated the conquest of Nigeria. Interference in local politics eventually led to direct British control of the coastal states between 1861 and 1885.¹⁸ From Lagos, the British made their way inland, slowly bringing Yoruba land under colonial rule. In 1886, the British used her intervention in the Ekitiparapo war, which was fought between Ibadan and the alliance of Ekiti, Ijesa, Egba, Ijebu and Ife forces, to subjugate the major Yoruba kingdoms. Unknown to the Yoruba kingdoms then, theirs was to form the crucible of the nascent southern protectorate. A key provision of the treaty the British used in ending the war made it compulsory for all the signatory combatants to direct future disputes with each other to the British governor in Lagos for resolution. In 1892, the British subjugated and occupied Ijebuland. And by 1894, the newly reconstituted New Oyo, which initially offered stiff resistance to British penetration of the Yoruba hinterland, was bombarded and forcefully brought under British colonial rule.

In the port cities of the Bight of Biafra, as in Yoruba land, the British used the promotion of anti-slavery and British trading interests as key aspect of the rhetoric that led to colonization. Between 1849 and 1856, Britain had succeeded in subjugating such port cities as Creek Town, Duke Town and Calabar.¹⁹ Between 1853 and 1897, the British had succeeded in subjugating and colonizing states in the Delta such as Opobo, Bonny and Elam Kalabari. By 1897, the kingdom of Benin was forcibly brought into the protectorate, expanding its western boundary to reach the eastern limits of the Lagos protectorate.²⁰ Sir George Goldie's Chartered Royal Niger Company (RNC) was instrumental in gaining control of the Niger and Benue for the British. In 1886, the British gave the National African Company, later renamed the Royal Niger Company,

the power to control the political administration and trade policies in the Rivers Benue and Niger regions.²¹ The charter established a British sphere of influence over the Niger and Benue. In 1899, the British government revoked the charter it gave to the RNC and took direct control of the administration of the Niger and Benue. On January 1, 1900, the RNC ceased to be the governing authority of the Niger and Benue.²² RNC's southern territories in the palm oil zone near the Niger Delta were amalgamated into the Niger coast protectorate, forming the new protectorate of Southern Nigeria.

The company's northern territories became the protectorate of Northern Nigeria. Frederick Lugard was then named the first high commissioner of the northern protectorate. By 1900, the British turned her military might towards the emirates of the Sokoto caliphate. In a series of military offensives led by Fredrick Lugard, Britain finally brought down the caliphate in July 1903. The caliphate's territories were incorporated into the protectorate of Northern Nigeria under emirs willing to accept British colonial rule. In 1904, Borno, which had fiercely resisted British occupation, was eventually conquered by British forces and brought into the protectorate.²³ Thus, bringing under British imperial control the lands that were later to make up the amalgamated Nigerian protectorates in 1914.

The Amalgamation of 1914

The protectorates of Northern and Southern Nigeria and the Colony of Lagos were amalgamated under a single British administration in 1914.²⁹ Thus, Nigeria was created not by a voluntary union of previously existing and closely related political units but by the imposition of union by an imperial power on an artificially demarcated territory containing a heterogeneous population of strangers. Although, these diverse groups had established many economic, social and political links among themselves long before British rule, they did not recognize themselves as one people.³⁰ In the context of the emergence of the Nigerian federation, the absence of an enabling

environment for a credible negotiation of federal-state relations in part accounts for why Nigeria's federal system tilts in favor of the Federal Government.³¹ This forced union, which was carried out without any referendum and without consideration for the complex socio-cultural make-up of the different groups that made-up the union, constituted huge obstacle to the nation-building process in Nigeria between 1960 to 2007. Two crucial nation-building challenges that arise because of this are those of federalism and aggressive ethno-regionalism.

The amalgamation of 1914 meant the bringing together of the three distinct regional administrations into which Nigeria was subdivided. Each was put under a lieutenant governor and provided independent government services.³² In the Northern Region, the colonial government ensured that the Islamic system and the social-cultural affinity of the people was never disrupted. The colonial authorities maintained the status-quo, especially on religious matters. Foreign influence was severely restricted from interfering with the indigenous socio-political system met on the ground. In the south and the east by contrast, the British tried as much as possible to alter the status-quo. External influences, especially Christian missionaries, were allowed relative freedom to interfere in indigenous socio-political and religious activities. This meant in essence that the south became much more exposed to western education and socio-political system; while in the north, the British policy ensured limited contact of the region with western influences. This also had important implication for the nation-building process in Nigeria between 1960 and 2007. It created an important schism in the pace of socio-political development in the regions. The exposure in the south allowed for the creation of a progressive society, open to innovations and ideas. While the north, due to its sheltered existence, became conservative and closed to western influence and by extension, western education.

It is pertinent to point out here that the major reason for the amalgamation of 1914 was economic.³³ In spite of Lugard and his successors' efforts, the economy and finances of northern Nigeria had floundered under indirect rule. British colonial policy then was for each colony to be self-sufficient and self-financing. To make the northern protectorate economically viable during the early stage of colonial rule, the British government had to rely on annual subsidies from southern Nigeria and an imperial grant from the home government.³⁴ Thus, in order to surmount this crippling economic challenge being experienced in the northern part of the protectorate, the British government had to centralize the protectorates under a single administration. Amalgamation allowed the colonial authorities to streamline existing expenses and allowed the central administration to divert resources as it saw fit. To put it succinctly, this allowed the colonial authorities the leeway to divert revenue from the other regions to service the needs of the north. This was to later have important ramification for the nation-building process in Nigeria in the post-independence period. The idea of using the resources of a particular region to develop natural resource-scarce region in the federation in the post-independence period was a holdover from the colonial period. Because of its potentiality to breed regional discontent and ethnic tension, the state had used different mechanisms such as principles of fiscal federalism and derivative formula to overcome the challenge this has created for the Nigerian nation-building process. This challenge is what this researcher has called the challenge of distribution. Besides, the amalgamation allowed for the centralization of infrastructural and development schemes and brought about the integration of the southern and northern economics on a much greater scale. Thus, the emergence of the modern Nigeria state as well as the drive for the creation of a cohesive, functional and politically viable Nigeria can now be traceable to the year 1914.

The amalgamation of different ethnic and religious groups into one federation created internal tension which persists in Nigeria to the present day²³

Nigerian Political Development to 1960

British colonialism created Nigeria. Colonial rule joined diverse peoples and regions in an artificial political entity. While colonial rule brought some material benefits to a few European-educated intellectuals, it alienated and frustrated most Nigerians who believed that it eroded traditional cultures and institutions.³⁵ Colonial rule exploited Nigerian labour in a way that profited European firms far more than Nigerians themselves. It also limited Nigerians' political participation in issues that concerned the governing of the country. These perceived shortcomings of colonial rule gave rise to Nigerian nationalism. Nigerian nationalism had at its core two important aims. The first was the desire of the Nigerians to govern their country. That is, to wrest political and economic control from the British. The second was the desire of the nationalist to ensure that the contraption they inherited from the British in 1914 is turned into a viable, cohesive and functional political entity. This second aim is what is referred to in this study as nation-building.

From 1914 until Nigeria achieved independence in 1960, a succession of four colonial constitutions were put in place by the colonial government. The constitutions provided some range of governing institutions that performed legislative, executive, administrative and judicial functions. These constitutions are the Clifford constitutions of 1923, the Richards constitution of 1946, the Macpherson constitution of 1951 and the Lyttleton constitution of 1954. The Clifford constitution created the avenue for Nigerians to participate in the political process. It acted as the catalyst to the formation of the first political party in Nigeria in 1923, the Nigerian National Democratic Party (NNDP).³⁶ The Clifford constitution was followed by the Richards constitution. This Constitution was the brainchild of Sir Bernard Bourdillon, the then Governor of Nigeria.³⁷ The constitution established the rudimentary basis for Nigerian unity.³⁸ It

streamlined administrative, legislative and judicial activities in the northern and southern protectorates.

The Macpherson constitution not only divided Nigeria into three regions, it also stimulated the growth of more political parties in Nigeria. It was the liberal environment created by the constitution that led to the formation of such regional political parties as the AG in 1951 and NPC in 1949.³⁹ The main minorities' parties formed in the period were the United Middle Belt Congress (UMBC), Bornu Youth Movement (BYM), the United National Independents Party (UNIP), the Niger Delta Congress in the East, Benin Delta People's Party (BDPP) and Otu-Edo-NCNC in the west.⁴⁰ Furthermore, the Lyttleton constitution turned Nigeria into a federation of three regions.⁴¹ These are the Northern, Eastern and Western regions. It should be remarked here that the British tried to use the different pre-independence constitutions as a nation-building mechanism. They saw in the constitutions an effective mechanism through which a viable, functional and cohesive Nigeria could be created. This was what informed the creation of the four aforementioned constitutions. It also ensured the adoption of federalism by the British in creating a workable Nigeria.

From the 1930s, ethnicity came to feature prominently among Nigerian nationalists due to the centrifugal pull exerted on them by their regional bases and the mutual distrusts the elites shared towards one another. Starting with the destruction of Nigerian Youth Movement (NYM), whose membership included Ernest Nkoli, Nnamdi Azikiwe, Samuel Akinsanya and Obafemi Awolowo, all foremost Nigerian nationalists in 1941

Nigerian political development then assumed an ethnic dimension. Between 1938 and 1941, the NYM was not only an important nationalist movement but the first Pan-Nigerian nationalist

movement.³⁶ The explicit aim of the movement was to unite across ethnic boundaries in order to create a common voice with which to achieve Nigeria's nationalism aspirations.

However, the interplay of ethnic and regional nationalism destroyed the important Pan-Nigerian nationalist movement in 1941. The major ethnic leaders in the NYM then left the organization to form regional associations and political parties that were designed to champion regional dominance and specific regional causes. This, for example, provided the background to the formation of NCNC for the east by Nnamdi Azikiwe in 1944, the NPC for the north by Ahmadu Bello in 1949; and as a response to these two, Obafemi Awolowo formed the AG for the west in 1951. It is remarkable to note that this marked the incipient beginning of the challenge of aggressive ethno-regionalism that confronted Nigeria between 1967 and 2007. This early intrusion of ethnic considerations in the formation of political parties became a leitmotiv in Nigeria's political development between 1967 and 2007. For instance, in the Fourth Republic, between 1999 and 2007, the AC was seen as a western political outfit while the PDP's base was ostensibly rooted in the northern part of the country.

From 1951, the political parties in the Western and Eastern Regions in southern Nigeria began to push the colonial government to extend full internal self-governance to the regional assemblies. The Northern Region opposed this move stating that it was not ready for self-government. Self-government would eventually have led to a centralization of government. And when and if this should happen, the North feared that the South will have an edge in the governance of Nigeria due to her earlier and wider exposure and acceptance of western values. In order to reconcile these differences, the colonial government then created the Lyttleton constitution of 1954. The constitution established Nigeria as three regions, Northern, Western and Eastern. Lagos became a Federal Territory administered by the central government. A unicameral legislature of one-

hundred-and-eighty members of which ninety-two came from the north, forty-two each from the west and the east, six from the British Cameroons, and two from the Federal Territory of Lagos, was created.⁴³ It should be pointed out here that the origin of Nigeria's flawed federalism at independence could be located in the preponderance the Lyttleton constitution gave to the northern part of the federation. This is what later transmogrified into the challenge of federalism that confronted Nigeria between 1967 and 2007.

Under the Lyttleton constitution, both the Eastern and western regions opted for autonomy in 1957; while, the Northern Region waited until 1959 to claim self-governance. General elections in 1954, 1956 and 1959 cemented the regionalization of political consciousness in Nigeria as the AG, NCNC and NPC continued to dominate their respective regions in both the regional and central legislatures.⁴⁴ The preparation of a new federal constitution for an independent Nigeria was carried out at conferences held at Lancaster House in London in 1957 and 1958. Nigerian delegates consisted of representatives from each regions. It was led by Balewa of the NPC and included other party and regional leaders like Awolowo of the AG, Azikiwe of the NCNC and Bello of the NPC. These three were also the premiers of the Western, Eastern and Northern regions, respectively. A final election was held in 1959 to determine the make-up of Nigeria's first independent government. The results gave the NPC the largest number of seats – 174 out of 312 seats; and a majority government was formed through an NPC – NCNC coalition.⁴⁵ The AG subsequently became the opposition party. Alhaji Tafawa Balewa became the prime minister, and Nnamdi Azikiwe became Nigeria's first indigenous governor general. On October 1, 1960, Nigeria became an independent state within the British Commonwealth.

Broadly, the influence and the lasting effects of colonialism on the colonized nations may be considered from two perspectives both of which unfortunately are both subjective: while the

Europeans tagged it “Civilizing Mission” to bring fruits of Christian civilization to the infidel natives, at other times such writers have spoken about “natural overflow of nationality”

The debit side of the effects of colonialism the permanent distortion of cultural values, perpetuation of equally regrettable inferiority/superiority complex between the races but by far the most profound demerits of colonialism were the insensitive exploitation of colonial human and material economic resources. African slave trade emerged at the wake of colonialism, because indigenous natives of South America, Central America, the Caribbean and the southern colonies of the United States were inadequate for the supply of cheap and efficient labour to work the sugarcane and cotton plantations of European land owners estimated 100m Africans were shipped across the Atlantic as firearms, alcohol and morally degrading drugs were introduced to induce African warriors to capture and deliver their own kith and kin as cargoes of the slave ship for a pittance.

African died by their hundreds of thousands in the in the theatres of Europe’s first and second world wars *page 103 of Oladele Akadiri*

Before the final departure of the colonial masters and official A cursory survey of the colonial legacy bequeathed to Nigeria at independence will indicate that the British left behind several legacies which shaped the administrative and foreign service operations of the new independent country. Some of the legacies which would be discussed in further details subsequently include: a Westminster parliamentary form of government; English language as the lingua franca; and administrative, economic, legal and military systems similar to those operating in the United Kingdom and other former British colonies in Africa and Asia ³.

Page 431 of Opeibi’s PhD English Thesis submitted in March 2004 submits that English Language will continue to play a very vital role in Nigeria for a long time to come considering the various socio-political and linguistic implications that have continued to underlie the difficulty in finding suitable substitute or alternative that will be acceptable,

accessible, intelligible and easily understood by the large, diverse population of Nigerians with a high illiteracy level, he has even suggested that efforts should be made to develop and codify Nigerian varieties of English that will be more intelligible, more accessible to more Nigerians and can serve as lingua franca.

Although New “Englishes” have emerged from Nigerian perspective, from microlinguistic structures, perspective of discourse patterns, and pragmatic implications, there is a nativisation process through which the English Language is still going. It is a demonstration of English usage patterns that reflects Nigerian socio-cultural realities. *Page 3, Opeibi*

English Language has remained the official language, the language of Politics, the language of business, the language of worship except in Islam and Catholic where Arabic and Latin remain dominant means of communication. Language of Wider Communication (LWC) it has become the national instrument of persuasion, political mobilization, empowerment of the civil society,

A number of historical records confirm that English Language came to Nigeria around the 15th Century. Some of the factors that influenced its emergence development and stabilization of English in Nigeria are: the early trade contact between European and West African sub regions, slave trade missionary activities, and colonialism among others. Spenser 1971, Bamgbose 1982, Akere 2000, it has been said that one of the major factors that contributed to the domestication of English in Nigeria has been the functional load which the language is made to carry. From the pre colonial period when it merely served as the language of trade and commerce contract to the colonial period and beyond when it actually became Nigeria’s official language English has continued to perform numerous roles in the country.

As far back as 1947, Richards Constitution declared it as legislative language. The 1954 constitution was the first to declare the status of English as Nigeria’s official language. Several scholars have written copiously on the functions of English in Nigeria, some of these

include: language of formal education, trade and commerce, language of governmental administration, as lingua franca, in a multi ethnic, multilingual Nigerian nation. English has also been the dominant language of the mass media, of legal documentations, proceedings in most of Nigeria's courts up to Supreme Court. Besides it is the language of written literature, and more importantly it serves as the language of political activities among other functions. The dominant role of English language in these areas does not suggest that there were no written literatures in Nigerian languages. Bamgbose, Atere

Adegbija 2002 argued that the domestication of English language is natural response to yawning linguistic and socio-cultural needs; thus the pervading influence of English usage in virtually all spheres of life in the Nigerian environment and this puts the language in a continuous process of development.

One very notable consequence of this is that Nigerians have become competent in the use of this exogenous language to prosecute every form of linguistic interaction. New vocabularies, lexical and semantic items are being created in their day-to-day interactions. Moreover, Nigerians have been able to encode their experiences through the language.

Okoro Okoro's Characterizing the Lects of Nigerian English: A Descriptive Analysis of their Syntax and Lexis. A PhD Dissertation submitted to the Dept. of English, SPGS University of Lagos in 1992:

When a language is used for a prolonged period outside its native speaker environment, certain socio-cultural and linguistic constraints operate to give rise to varieties of the language which differ from its native form in several significant respects: phonological, syntactic, lexical, and semantic. On the syntactic and lexical levels these differences range from outright errors of usage resulting from imperfect competence to perfectly grammatical and intelligible forms expressing varying shades of the cultural nuances of the users. This is the case with Nigerian English. Over the years, a form of English language has gradually

emerged called “Nigerian English” However, it appears that the emergence of the Nigerian English was never taken for granted. Despite the fact that the Nigerian socio-linguistic environment provided a fertile ground for the emergence of a distinct variety of English, several of those who first focused attention on the English Language in Nigeria were quite reluctant to acknowledge a legitimate variety of the language, preferring instead to characterize usage in terms of errors and sub standard forms on the one hand or on the other hand refuting the notion of a Nigerian English on the ground that adequate criteria had not yet been established for its identification

Apart from the above, the Colonial legacy include the indoctrination of the Nigerians with the idea that “Nigeria is the most important country in Africa” this allusion inflicted some injuries on the psyche of the elites of Nigeria who began to see the need to shoulder some responsibilities not only for Africa but the Black Man all over the world. It was indeed a burden that impacted on the resources of the nation even when it was only desirable but not profitable. As a matter of fact as it will be demonstrated later in Chapter Five of this work, Nigeria’s role in Africa as the “Big Brother” was neither appreciated nor reciprocated. Most of these African nations have treated Nigerians as “Invaders”, “Usurpers” and undesirable elements; while some African nations have been modest in the demonstration of this subtle hatred and disgust, some have thrown caution to the winds by physically attacking Nigerians. The xenophobic attacks in South Africa are a clear demonstration of this lack of reciprocity in the brotherly care Nigeria has extended to sister African nations. [

Prior to the official disengagement of the colonial masters Before the However, in an attempt to proffer a much more exhaustive analysis of the legacy, some of the domestic structures bequeathed to Nigeria at independence which have profoundly influenced the determination

and conduct of its foreign policy objectives and actions, such as the domestic, political, military, economic, judicial, social and cultural structure will be briefly examined.

The foundation of Nigeria's relations with Britain, laid during the colonial years, was strengthened during Nigeria's First Republic. A foreign policy paper had, on Britain's instruction, been prepared to guide Nigeria in her external relations after independence³. One of the significant aspects of the relations between the two countries during the First Republic was the smooth transfer of political power. The immediate pre and post- independence foreign policy statements made by Prime Minister Abubakar Tafawa Balewa were to the effect that Nigeria would pursue specific policies which reflected a pro- British bias. On 20 August 1960, when the Prime Minister outlined the fundamentals of the Nigerian foreign policy before the House of Representatives, he said (among other things) that "Nigeria shall do everything that is compatible" with her membership of the British Commonwealth. From then on, the Government continued to pursue a pro-western, particularly pro- British, foreign policy. This has derived both from the nature of Nigeria's external orientation and the domestic structure. Between 1960 and early January 1966, none of the major political parties in Nigeria was anti- British party. At least, it did not espouse an anti British foreign policy. Moreover, Nigeria's foreign policy could not have been anti- British any way because, as John Stremlau has noted, "throughout the 1960- 1965 period, Prime Minister Balewa dominated the foreign policy making, process. He was assisted, at first by his Hausa – speaking British secretary, Peter Stallard"⁴

A number of issues brought Nigeria and Britain together in their bilateral and external relations during this period which confirmed Nigeria's continued existence under British tutelage. One development that was particularly important at that stage of British – Nigeria relations was the Anglo- Nigerian Defence Pact agreed to at the 1958 Constitutional Conference organized by Britain for Nigerian leaders. It was Nigeria's first action as an

independent state and represented an initiative designed to foster greater Nigerian- British relations and cooperation.

The pact gave Britain military facilities in Nigeria and provided adequate cover for the former colony by providing training for her military personnel and security for the ruling elites. On the face of it, the reason for the pact was to ensure that in case of external aggression, Britain would readily come to the aid of Nigeria. In reality, however, it was to strengthen the tutelary basis of Britain's relations with Nigeria and guarantee economic benefits for her in Nigeria's military spending.

The pact was initiated at first rather reluctantly in 1958 by Nigerian leaders anxious for independence and was subsequently ratified in November 1960 shortly after formal independence. It would require concerted efforts to effect a change in such a major policy issue. Having been done in spite of the widespread protests against it, the rationale was to provide opportunities for Britain to assist in the defence of Nigeria in case of external aggression; to ensure British support in the domestic quest to fight any subversive activity by opposing political parties; and to provide cover for the ruling elites so as to shield them from being overthrown. The protest continued and the opposition party, led by Chief Obafemi Awolowo, was relentless in its efforts to get the pact abrogated. When a bill was proposed for the renewal of the pact, the opposition formally tabled a motion opposing it. This was followed by massive demonstrations and a march on the Federal Parliament in Lagos in 1961 by the University of Ibadan students and general public opposition to the renewal of the pact. The Defence Pact was eventually abrogated on 22nd January 1962, partly because of the widespread opposition to it and partly because Balewa thought that such action would end domestic opposition to some of his other conservative policies and perhaps, ensure the enlistment of the Action Group's support in running a coalition government ⁵. This development, however, had no impact on Britain's relations with Nigeria.

As noted earlier, the economic ties between Britain and Nigeria also dictated Nigeria's reactions to British initiatives. It was against the pound Sterling that the Nigerian pound was rated and Nigeria's monetary policies were made in consonance with the dictates of the sterling area. The Nigerian pound was denominated in gold and, for a long time, the exchange rate was £1 to 2.48 grammes of fine gold.

The presence of Nigeria within the sterling areas was to accord the country free or easy access to the London capital market and make Nigeria attractive to British Investors. At that time, Britain was still a major foreign investor in the technologically less- developed countries, particularly Nigeria. During the first two years of Nigeria's independence. 75 per cent of Nigeria's aid came from Britain and most of the private foreign investment in the country was by British interests. The loan offers that were made to Nigeria by Britain during these early years included the Commonwealth Assistance Loan, the Nigerian Railway Corporation Loan, the Telecommunication Loan, the Exchequer Loan, the Apapa Industrial Development Loan, and the Niger Dam Loan. And, in the area of investment, about 80 percent of the 200 million in foreign investments, in 1962 was British. Up to 1966, Britain's total foreign investment in Nigeria stood between 65 percent and 70 percent. There was a slight shift, especially during 1964- 1965, in Nigeria's external trade towards the European Economic Community (EEC) with which Nigeria was negotiating associate status and to which an Ambassador plenipotentiary was appointed in 1965. The bilateral economic aid from Britain to Nigeria during this period, however, amounted to over £20 million. Membership of the sterling area could be said to be responsible for this but it should be noted, however, that Britain's desire to have a country like Nigeria under her control was primarily responsible.

In the political realm, Nigeria's contacts were influenced by British preferences. Based on the special relationship maintained with Britain by Nigeria during the period, socialist- especially

Soviet – literature was banned from Nigeria, those educated in the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe were denied employment in the public sector and

“ It was largely under British direction that, for some two years after independence, Nigeria denied the USSR the facilities to open an embassy in Lagos, even though the USSR had expressed a desire to open diplomatic relations with Nigeria- when eventually the Government permitted the Soviet Union to establish an embassy staff would be restricted; it was claimed that was the advice of the British Government, the understanding being that since Nigeria did not have the personnel to keep Soviet representative under effective surveillance, the numbers to be allowed had to be such that the British High Commission could keep a check on them”⁶.

Before the merely symbolic establishment of relation with the Soviet Union in 1962, Nigeria’s interests were represented through the British embassy⁷. At a time when the western European countries and the United States were having a field day establishing their diplomatic presence in Nigeria, the Eastern European countries were restricted, as was the Soviet Union. In spite of the various attempts by such organizations as the Nigerian Youth Congress (NYC) and the Nigerian Socialist Workers and Farmers Party (NSWFP) to cause Nigeria to deal more meaningful and directly with the socialist countries, including pressure by the Nigerian Trade Union Congress (NTUC), Nigeria did not change or reduce her reliance on Britain, even in her search for external financial and technical support.

The almost total subservience of Nigeria to Britain in external relations notwithstanding; this period registered some discord in Nigeria’s relations with Britain as a result of certain developments at the domestic and international levels. From the domestic side, the alleged attempted overthrow of the Balewa government ruptured Nigeria’s political form. The opposition Action Group was accused of having planned the alleged attempted overthrow of the Government. Most of the key figures suspected to have been involved in the plan were

arrested and jailed while Chief Anthony Enahoro, a leading spokesman, became a fugitive in Britain, Britain's immediate reaction was at the same time sidestepping legalism, too legalistic and "diplomatic" for Nigeria leadership that found it unsatisfactory since the Federal Government wanted Chief Enahoro extradited at all costs and without any delay. After some legal and diplomatic dragging, Enahoro was brought to Nigeria, tried and jailed to the satisfaction of the Balewa regime.

External, Britain's decision to negotiate membership of the European Economic Community created some resentment in Lagos. It was expected by the Nigerian leadership that rather than join in the EEC, Britain should strengthen the Commonwealth politically and consolidate the organization economically so that it would be possible for the organization to provide the type of answer that Britain was seeking from the EEC. It was also thought that, because of the relationship between the British and the Nigerian Governments, Britain should be able to find for Nigeria as much economic leeway as possible so as to make up for whatever economic liabilities Nigeria might suffer from Britain's entry into the EEC. By 1965, Nigeria had become convinced of the need to map a new strategy in external economic relations rather than rely solely on Britain. As a first step, an Ambassador plenipotentiary was appointed to represent the country at the EEC.

The issue of apartheid also placed Britain and Nigerian on a collision course. When South Africa became a Republic in 1962 Britain did nothing to dissuade the racist regime regarding the policies of African oppression, exclusion and victimization being pursued.

She also was receptive to South Africa's membership of the Commonwealth. These positions were strongly opposed by Nigeria and the country's leaders, in fact, fought within the organization to deprive South Africa of Commonwealth Membership. The Significance of

this lies in the fact that it was this same country, Nigeria that opted to follow Britain's policy of limited economic sanctions against the white regime in Southern Rhodesia during the Unilateral Declaration of Independence (UDI) of 196. At that time, Tanzania (a smaller, younger Commonwealth country), for instance, favoured force of arms and/ or a break in diplomatic relations with Britain

As earlier indicated, Nigeria's colonial history under the British left it with many tangible and intangible links that have continued to be important in the Anglo-Nigerian relationship in particular and its policy towards the west in general. Within the structure of international power politics, this meant that Nigeria at independence remained virtually within the orbit of the Western economic and political system. In spite of the accelerated elevation of Nigeria's position in international politics, particularly in African affairs, most observers of Nigeria's foreign relations still see it as a nation that is "relatively internally developed and externally dependent"¹¹.

Some analysis have argued that for as long as Nigeria remains dependent on Britain for foreign capital needed for its national development, and Britain relies on the exploitation of the resources of Nigeria's raw materials, the colonial links between the two countries will be stronger than the rhetoric inherent in the political and diplomatic tangles that have persistently recurred in recent years.¹²

During the debate on the training of diplomats in the House of Representatives Aminu Kano, the Chief Whip, warned against the use of funds of American Foundations to train Nigerian diplomats as this would invariably lead to their being brain washed by the Americans.⁹ This did not however deter the government from sending the trainees overseas. All the officers received training in consular duties, commercial and students affairs as well as the higher levels of diplomatic practice and protocol.

A more important impact of the country's colonial legacy on its socio-political development was the 'alienation' it created between the citizen and the Nigerian state. The Nigerian state was a creation of the British both in 1914 and in 1960. Nigerians viewed the Nigerian state as an inorganic and foreign structure that was grafted and imposed by the British. This alienation persisted into the post-colonial period and became more pronounced between 1967 and 2007. It ensured that the Nigerian citizen had no affinity whatsoever to the Nigerian state. This has created an important schism between the rulers and the ruled in Nigeria. The ruled only saw the state as an instrument of oppression to be resisted and subverted. While, the ruler saw the state as the tool that it must use to mould the ruled into the image of the state. This disconnect between the two has led to great socio-political upheavals within the Nigerian state

Political Legacy

Domestic Legacy

Military Legacy

Educational Legacy

Socio-Cultural Legacy

Economic Legacy

Judicial structure

Commonwealth Legacy

Bolaji Akinyemi's book of 25 years

Colonial Domestic structures Bequeathed at Independence

A cursory survey of the colonial legacy bequeathed to Nigeria at independence will indicate that the British left behind a Westminster parliamentary form of government; English language as the lingua franca; and administrative, economic, legal and military systems similar to those operating in the United Kingdom and other former British colonies in Africa and Asia³.

However, in an attempt to proffer a much more exhaustive analysis of the legacy, some of the domestic structures bequeathed to Nigeria at independence which have profoundly influenced the determination and conduct of its foreign policy objectives and actions, such as the domestic, political, military, economic, judicial, social and cultural structure will be briefly examined.

The Political Structure

Like many African states, the Nigerian political entity was delimited by the policies and ambitions of the former colonial power rather than by actual regional and ethnic boundaries. As a consequence of the boundaries so arbitrarily drawn by imperial powers at the 1884/1885 Berlin Conference, the partition of Africa into different states did not take into account the ethnic, linguistic, religious, cultural or existing boundaries between the numerous communities so divided. The result was a disruption of interaction between members of the same community and the subsequent evolution of irredentism and border disputes between nations in the sub-region. The intermittent border crises between Nigeria and its neighbors are a direct result of this arbitrary delimitation of territorial boundaries⁴.

While the colonial boundaries continue to present problems in Nigeria's foreign policy, the federal structure which the British left behind also imposed some constraints on the nation's response to a variety of problems. It has indeed been argued in some quarters that since federalism is more or less evidence of some form of disunity and political weakness, the British deliberately wanted to keep the federating units as far apart as possible so that they

(the British) might continue to influence the internal affairs of their former colonies to their own economic and political advantage after independence ⁵. This led to the perpetuation of cultural separateness and ethnic rivalry, thus making a unitary system of government unworkable.

The unique clustering of groups on a majority basis within the regions in the federal structure, coupled with regional and inter-ethnic political tensions and animosities in post-independence Nigeria, distorted and bedeviled Nigerian politics with obvious implications for the nation's foreign policy.

The British bequeathed to Nigeria what has been called a "federal trinity".²⁰ This trinity comprised the three dominant ethnic groups in Nigeria – The Hausa, Yoruba and the Igbo. The remaining ethnic groups, such as the Tiv, Urhobo, Ijaw, Ibibio, Kanuri, Nupe and Edo, had their identities submerged into these three. Thus, it was the desire of the British colonialist to create a political system that would neutralize the latent threats posed by Nigeria's heterogeneity that made them to turn the country into a federal state. This is because federalism is often recommended for ethnically diverse countries in the hope that it will foster greater socio-political integration among populations.²¹ This explains, to some extent, why the British adopted the federal system for Nigeria at independence. The British needed a political system that could turn the country's heterogeneous mixture into a cohesive and functional entity. Thus, Nigeria's federalism was meant to be a nation-building mechanism for the country.

Although, the British adopted the federal system of government to make Nigeria governable in the short term, subsequent events showed that the "flawed federalism" so adopted was to be the beginning of Nigeria's challenges with nation-building.²² Among other things, colonial administration encouraged vertical relations

between colonial centres of power and periphery districts, divisions, provinces and regions.²³ It did not encourage horizontal integration and interaction among groups. At independence in 1960, Nigerian political elites copied and used this vertical administrative style to govern the country. This was particularly true for military regimes in Nigeria from 1966 to 1979 and 1983-1998; and for the civilian administration during the Fourth Republic, 1999-2007. Thus, the flawed political system the British created for Nigeria was the first nation-building hurdle that confronted the country at independence in 1960. Nigeria's federalism was flawed at independence because it gave a preponderance of the state to particular ethnic groups within the Nigerian federation. It was also flawed because it operated with utter disregard for Nigeria's distinct geo-political and social terrain.

The 1952 census was another factor that skewed Nigeria's federalism right from inception in 1960. Based on the census figure, the Northern Region had 53 percent of the whole federation.²⁴ The East, West and the minority Groups shared the remaining 57 percent. This translated into a dominant position in the National Assembly for the NPC. The 1957 constitutional settlement, which the British negotiated with Nigerian nationalists, allotted representation in the federal legislature based on regional population. This view of a dominant North vis-à-vis the rest of the federating units was subsequently enshrined in the 1960 Independence Constitution and the 1963 Republican Constitution of Nigeria.²⁵ By the same token, all the attempts aimed at ascertaining the total number of Nigerians in the post independence period has faltered because of mutual suspicion and ethnic distrust. The north was never ready to countenance any challenge to the prevailing view of its numerical superiority. While, the east, west and other minority groups were interested in altering this *status quo*.

The Military Structure

The Military has come to be a major feature of the modern state since Westphalia in 1648. Every emerging nation therefore establishes the military for territorial and protection of its sovereignty. The Colonial powers set up the Military until the attainment of independence, the defence and security services of Nigeria were inevitably agents of the British colonialists for the limitation of militant political activity and the prevention of insurgency. In effect, all military policies were oriented to British imperial strategic needs rather than to national development. The command and organizational structure, as well as the sources and type of equipment and ammunition were British, while the education and training of the officer corps were at British military institutions such as the Royal Military Academy at Sandhurst, the Camberley Staff College, the Mons Officer Cadet School in Aldershot and their equivalents, where a host of prospective Nigerian military commanders were imbued with the reactionary and conservative principles of British militarism. Indeed, the post-dependence Nigerian army emerged with an elitist doctrine and training structure⁶.

Infuriated with the drift and turmoil which beset the government of the First Republic and inspired by the perception of their role as the guardians of the nation, the repository of patriotism, efficiency, discipline, dynamism etc the elite in the Nigerian armed forces began the process of persistent intervention in government⁷. This inevitably resulted in the shaping of Nigeria's domestic and foreign policies to suit the various military regimes' perception of their "corrective" role in government. However, the unified command structure in the armed forces has given the nation's foreign policy a single and coherent voice.

The Economic Structure

The origin of colonialism is wrapped in economic quest for cheap raw materials. Roads and Railways that were constructed were undertaken to facilitate the effective exploitation of the raw materials that were produced for industries in the United Kingdom and Europe. Those infrastructures thus became the unintended consequences of colonial exploitation. From its origin to the present, British economic relations with Nigeria have been motivated by interrelated requirements for cheap sources of raw materials and outlets for mass – produced manufactures, both of which strengthen the British international position, enhance the international value of its currency and secure a source of collective enrichment through the transfer of economic surpluses from Nigeria⁸.

The financial infrastructure thus bequeathed at independence was really an extension of the British financial system. Nigeria's currency, which was formerly tied to the Sterling Exchange Market, meant that Nigeria's external reserves were not only largely in Sterling but the exchange rates were also determined in London.

Similarly, the neo- classical Keynesian economic philosophy which held sway in Britain in the 1940s had formed the basis of the first Economic Plan for Nigeria as introduced in the 1946- 56 Plan and subsequent plans. In this way, the planning philosophy was meant to achieve the intended effect of preserving British monopoly of the Nigerian economy through its multinationals⁹.

With both the economy and elite thus completely oriented towards the West it was mostly with Western countries that Nigeria expanded its trade and economic relations when critics called for an end to the dependence on the United Kingdom. While the trade figures show a gradual reduction in the volume of imports and exports with the United Kingdom they also show a corresponding increase with the E.E.C. countries and the United States. In 1956, 63 percent of Nigeria exports went to the United Kingdom while imports stood at 44 percent. By 1966 these figures had dwindled to 38 and 30 percent respectively. From 22 percent in 1961

Nigeria's imports from the E.E.C. rose to 27.7 percent in 1968 while exports for the same years rose from 34.8 percent to 36.5 percent. Similarly Nigeria's imports from the United States rose from 5.4 percent in 1961 to 12.4 percent in 1968 while exports increased from 11.2 to 13.1 percent. By comparison Nigeria's imports from all other areas including the Soviet Union decreased from 27.4 percent in 1963 to 23.0 in 1968. Exports for the corresponding period showed an increase of 9.5 percent.³⁴ These figures clearly demonstrate that Nigeria's major trading partners were countries in the west, especially the United States, the EEC and Britain. It was therefore only natural and logical that Nigeria concentrate on develop its diplomatic relations-ing with these countries. Consequently, the expansion of the foreign service, taking into cognizance the economic needs of the country, was first and foremost with the capitalist countries.

Similarly, because of the near absolute dependence of the Nigerian economy on foreign trade and finance systematic efforts were made towards providing commercial attaches in all overseas missions. Indeed, commercial representation proceeded the exercise of the right of legation.⁴² The Trade Commissioner in the Nigerian House in London was the fore-runner of the present commercial attached. This post was held by a Briton until 1958 when a Nigerian was appointed to the post. After independence the post was absorbed into the Nigerian High Commission as a commercial section. Subsequently, the section became an integral part of Nigeria's diplomatic missions especially in those countries in the west which were the nation's principal trading partners. Because of the inadequacy of trained External Affairs specialists in economic and commercial matters Ministry of Trade Officials were seconded to the Ministry of External Affairs and attached to overseas missions. The postings of these officers were cleared with the Ministry of External Affairs to which they reported directly.⁴³

The Social and Cultural Structures

The socio- cultural ethos inherited at independence was also bound to the foregoing economic structures which sought to perpetuate a world view that was consistent with the aims of British imperialism. For instance, the colonial education policy was designed not only to accord with the needs of Christianity but also to propagate the spread of the English language and enhance British cultural colonization of Nigeria. The result was that by 1960, the few educated Nigerians who studied abroad and in the two universities then in existence in Nigeria became the principal adviser on policy. Out of these few, some bore the vivid marks of British indoctrination while the others nursed a deep – seated aversion to the ills of colonialism. This latter group remained the vanguard of Nigeria's struggle for independence and the decolonization of Africa ¹⁰.

By independence in 1960, all these structure had secured the perpetuation of the colonial legacy in Nigeria's domestic environment. The assertion of unalloyed independence from that legacy of the past was the greatest challenge for Nigeria's foreign policy.

COMMONWEALTH

As the formal organization bequeathed to Nigeria and all former colonies of the British realm to perpetuate the cultural links between them and Britain, the Commonwealth of Nations has, since Nigeria's independence, grown to include over 50 countries which now engage themselves in informal political consultation, sports, technical assistance and the coordination of a common position on international economic and technical matters. Nigeria has consistently used this forum to pursue some of its foreign policy objectives such as the expulsion of South Africa from the association in 1961 and the boycott of the Thirteenth Commonwealth Games as an instrument of pressure against Britain to impose comprehensive and mandatory sanctions against South Africa.

However, despite its use as an instrument for furthering Nigeria's multilateral diplomacy, the Federal Government certain critical moments in Nigeria's history, has had cause to reflect on the value or otherwise of Nigeria's continued membership of the association. Critics have indeed called on the Government to withdraw Nigeria from the Commonwealth on account of its significance as the linchpin between Nigeria and its grim colonial past as well as its inconsistency with Nigeria's foreign policy attitude. // have argued that:

“while conceding that the Commonwealth tie constitutes no danger to Nigeria's immediate interest, it is, however, damaging to the objective of getting other African countries to break their own links which I believe are still more of a constraint on them and I think it would help our argument to make it more rational if we get out of the Commonwealth. Then we can claim that we don't belong to any organization apart from the OAU and the UN and its agencies”³².

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aired on Channels Television station

End Notes

¹ Ayo Olukotun in The Punch Newspaper, Back page "Friday Musings with Ayo Olukotun" on Friday Nov. 27, 2015, Quoting from *Comparative Federalism* Edited by An American Scientist Prof. Robert Joseph.

² G. M. Trevelyan, *A Short History of England*, (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1969), p.21

³ Rivers State of Nigeria, Information Book, 2011

⁴ Mervyns Hiskett, *The Development of Islam in West Africa* (London: Longman, 1984), 2, 12-14.

⁵ Toyin Falola and Matthew Heaton, *A History of Nigeria* (Cambridge, New York: Cambridge University Press, 2008), 1.

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