The Impact of Imperialism and Colonialism on Politics and Governance in Post-Colonial Africa: Legacies and Consequences

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Abstract - This paper explores the enduring influence of imperialism and colonialism on the political development and governance structures of post-colonial African states. It argues that the colonial experience represents a critical turning point in African political history, with long-lasting implications for the continent's governance systems, institutional structures, and development outcomes. Using qualitative research method, the paper relied on secondary source – books, journals and other publications – and qualitative descriptive analysis method. Drawing on both colonial-authoritarianism and precolonial-authoritarianism perspectives, the paper analyzes how colonial rule either reshaped or preserved pre-existing authoritarian institutions, thereby contributing to the persistence of authoritarianism, weak state institutions, and governance deficits after independence. Using Nigeria and other African countries as reference points, the study highlights how colonial powers imposed centralized and patriarchal political models, empowered despotic local rulers, and ruled with minimal metropolitan presence—all of which shaped contemporary governance challenges. The paper utilizes secondary data sources and is organized to include conceptual clarifications, historical context, colonial policies, and an analysis of the political legacies of colonialism. Ultimately, it concludes with recommendations for addressing the deep-rooted governance issues inherited from the colonial era in order to foster inclusive and democratic governance in Africa.

I. INTRODUCTION

African political development had intricately passed through various stages and dynamics. Perhaps the most important turning point in most of the African countries' political history or an event that marked a unique and significant historical change of course, one on which their important political developments depend, is the imperial and colonial experience they have had. This raised an interesting question of whether or not the Africa's economic volatility and relative poverty since independence which is attributed to poor governance and in particular, the long-standing prevalence of authoritarian institutions is caused by its colonial experience (Bolt, Gardner, Kohler, Paine, and Robinson, 2022).

In most of the African countries, Imperialism and colonialism spanned for a century or more. For instance, colonization of Nigeria by the British Empire began with the formal annexation of Lagos in 1861 and ended in 1960 when the country was granted political independence. This long period of colonization must have left some undeniable impacts and consequences that help in shaping the African post-colonial politics in terms of its composition, structures and institutions.

Basically, some scholars attributes great importance to the colonialism in understanding the authoritarian nature of most of the post-colonial African governments and linked it directly to the colonial authoritarian practices. In colonial-authoritarianism accounts, colonizers created authoritarian structures by transforming local institutions, which formed the basis of large and decentralized colonial states experience (Bolt, Gardner, Kohler, Paine, and Robinson, 2022). The colonial powers worked with a single model of customary authority in precolonial Africa. That model was monarchical, patriarchal, and authoritarian. It presumed a king at the center of every polity, a chief on every piece of administrative ground, and a patriarch in every homestead or kraal (Mamdani 1996). Thus, the colonialist routinely empowered despotic chiefs by eliminating checks on their authority that were pervasive in the precolonial period (Ranger 2012, Baldwin 2015, and Stasavage 2020).

In another perspective on the precolonial-authoritarianism accounts, others de-emphasize colonialism. It is believed that colonial rule simply

preserved existing local institutions, which were authoritarian in nature. Most of precolonial Africa had low population densities, and the relative absence of written languages and heavy agricultural technologies prevented the development of strong states (Goody 1971; Diamond 1997; Herbst 2000). Consequently, the political and social dynamics that elsewhere empowered civil society organizations and made governments representative and accountable were never initiated (Levi 1989). Despite possessing more advanced technologies, Europeans also struggled to broadcast power over large, sparsely populated territories (Herbst, 2000). Seeking to minimize colonial expenditures (Berry 1992), European colonizers governed Africa with only a "thin white line" of metropolitan officials (Kirk-Greene 1980). Therefore, colonial rule did not reverse the historical trends that promoted authoritarian governments.

Against this backdrop this paper attempt to understand and explain in what ways have imperialism and colonialism impacted politics and governance, and with what consequences in post-colonial Africa. The paper, therefore, analyzed the colonial legacy in the post-colonial Africa. More importantly, the paper outlined the political legacy of colonialism in terms of impacts and consequences in the contemporary Africa. To this end, secondary sources such as books, journal articles, and website source were utilized. For the sake of convenience, the paper is organized in the following manner. After this introduction it secondly provides a conceptual clarification of the terms colonialism and imperialism. Thirdly it discusses the factors that led to the colonization of African continent, the scramble of Africa as well as the colonial policies in Africa. Fourthly the impact and consequences of colonialism on post-colonial African politics were identified and discussed. Finally, the paper presents conclusion and recommendations.

II. CONCEPTUAL CLARIFICATION

Colonialism is the direct and overall domination of one country by another on the basis of state power being in the hands of a foreign power (Ocheni and Nwankwo, 2012). In a more precise term, colonialism entails exploiting resources of the conquered nations for the benefit of the conqueror. It is described as an act of establishing and maintaining satellites in another country. It is believed that the traits of the conqueror would be acquired by the conquered. It is also defined as a period when the

colonial powers regarded their West African territories as their possession, existing mainly for the economic, social and political welfare of the mother country (Onwubiko,1973). The main motive behind colonialism is a political domination that allow for the colonizers to exploit the colonized country.

Imperialism on the other hand, is the idea or policy of gaining political and economic control over another country or region, often through military force or other indirect strategies. (www.study.com).Though, imperialism and colonialism are two different concepts but they are closely related as the latter is part and parcel of the former. In fact, colonialism is a direct form of imperialism. This is why it is believed that all colonialism is imperialism, but not all imperialism is colonialism (Ocheni and Nwankwo, 2012). For the purpose of this paper therefore, the two terms were appropriately used variably but closely related.

III. FACTORS THAT LED TO THE COLONIZATION OF AFRICA

Majority of African territories were under European colonial rule since early twentieth century (Asante, 2014). The division and subsequent colonization of the African territories were efforts of European nations to intensify European imperialism. European countries engaged in antagonistic expansion policy because of essentials that were created by Industrial Revolution (Uwechue, 1991). In other words, the primary objective for European colonization of the African continent is economic gain; Africa to serve as a source of raw materials for their industries in Europe and as well market place for their finished products. There were other factors that motivated European expansion into African territories. Such factors include; political reason which is akin to empire building and national prestige; and socio religious reasons which came with the idea of civilizing benighted Africans. By the early twentieth century, African territories except Liberia had been partitioned among European nations (Chukwu and Nelson, 2023). Apologist for colonialism and imperialism holds that colonization of Africa was a necessary evil that must be executed to enlighten the backward continent. They argued that colonization of Africa would bring new economic system (capitalist economy) and civilization (western education), which would ultimately provide higher standard of living for Africans and good government that is better than the eroded African traditional provided (Livingston, 1868 in Chukwu and Nelson, 2023).

However, several factors that prompted European colonization of Africa could be suggested as follows;

Political factors

Political factors that triggered colonization of Africa were largely due to the nature of the nineteenth century international system. The international system which was dominated by the European powers was characterized with the problem of the balance of power. There was the need to establish a balance of power in Europe as a result of unification of Germany and Italy. This meant that any additional territorial gaining or struggle for power would have to take place outside Europe (Uwechue, 1991). The nineteenth century saw the increase of extreme nationalism in Europe which was further worsened by the unification of Germany and Italy, especially by the defeat of France by Germany in 1871(Chukwu and Nelson, 2023). Thus, German bid for colonies was a major fillip to colonialism in Africa (Ani, 2013). Nationalism was born in Europe and as a result, the need to ensure the security, power and, prestige of each nation-state became essential. Africa fall a victim of this new development in the sense that, one of the accepted criteria for measuring the power and prestige of European nations during the period under review was the numbers of colonies or territories a particular nation possessed (Uwechue, 1991). Moreover, the need to ensure the security of each nation-state and safeguard its vital routes partly account for the occupation of many of the African and Pacific Ocean Island. The possession of colonies overseas became a matter of prestige for European powers and of great honor to their nationals who helped in acquiring such colonies.

Economic factor

Economy forms the major factor that propelled the European colonization of Africa (Ocheni and Nwankwo, 2012). The need for raw materials prompted by the Industrial Revolution that occurred in England in the eighteenth century and spread all over Europe compelled the Europeans to search outward. This outward searching was not only for the much-needed raw materials to feed their industries but also the new market to sale their products. Each country in Europe began to produce more goods than it needed locally. Thus, the need for the market arouse to solve the export need of manufacturing countries and promote the dumping of the surplus production. The owners of African colonies became the best solution to the challenges (Uwechue, 1991).

Also, the struggle for raw materials to feed their industries increased the quest by the European nations to get territories in Africa to serve as sources of raw materials. The Industrial Revolution also prompted the struggle to have territories in Africa and increase their returns from oversea investments. It is noted that, the goal of colonial expansion is commercial profit. As the Revolution caused an increase in profit, the European nations have to look for new areas where they can invest their surplus capital for more profit to be made (Hobson, 1938 in Chukwu and Nelson, 2023).

Africa was the best option for achieving economic colonial objective. This is because the colonialist wanted to explore where there is abundant resources to be tapped with little or no cost. Of course, Africa was their best option which was rich in oil, ivory, rubber cotton, cocoa, cooper, gold, iron, cobalt, diamonds, etc., hence the conquest and colonization of Africa (Chukwu and Nelson, 2023)

Social Factors

The social condition in Europe resulted from the emergence of the industrial revolution also partly enthused colonialism. The Industrial Revolution has created the multiple challenge of managing labour relations especially bearing in mind that many of those that were engaged in direct labour hitherto lost their jobs and many problems of unemployment were created. This is because, Industrial Revolution came with the use of machine for widespread production, which reduced the quantity of human labour requirement. It is noted that, by the 1870s, there were over a million paupers in Britain alone (Hanna, 1961). It was partly to solve the problem of mass unemployment that the acquisition of colonies for settling the surplus population was embarked upon. Such settlement was found in South, Central, East and North Africa by various European powers (Hanna, 1961).

Moreover, there is also their ideological and belief system that the European states have the mission to civilize and transform the African ways of life. Although, this ideology is apparently ridiculous as all human societies develops their civilization. However, it arouses the zeal of many European colonizers and businessmen who wanted to engage in empire-building within Africa. There were many people in Europe who supported the scramble and partition of Africa mainly for humanitarian reasons. Different humanitarian agencies as well as

individuals opined that their government should colonize Africa so as to stop internal slave trade and other dehumanizing cultural practices that was found among the African people. This they believed would lead to the spread of European culture and civilization to the African people (Uwechue, 1991).

The Scramble of Africa

European Nations clashed and fought among themselves for the main purpose of acquiring territories in Africa. Their struggles at some time became chaotic, unhealthy and out of control. This made Otto Von Bismarck (the then Chancellor of Germany) to convene Berlin Colonial Conference of 1884–1885. Purpose of the conference was to lay down the framework and conditions by which the scramble for African territories and resources were to be enforced. The Berlin West African Conference which lasted from November 1884 to January 1885 (Eluwa et al., 1996).

The scramble and partition of Africa was first carried out by signing a treaty of trade and friendship or annexation or protection between the European powers and African rulers, and such treaties were signed between 1880 and 1900. The second phase was the conclusion of treaties between two or among the European participants usually based on the first treaties which defined the spheres of influence of each power and delimited the boundaries of their new acquisition. The result was the creation of new political boundaries across old tribal and political boundaries without regard to ethnic groupings (Uwechue, 1991). The attraction of West Africa as potential market for British manufacturers was undoubtedly great, and it was this consideration which led much more important and powerful groups than the West African merchants to look with favor on political expansion in these regions.

Through military might, economic spheres of influence, and annexation, European nations subjugated the continents of Africa. The division of Africa was more or less an accidental by-product of the diplomatic conflicts among the European powers; especially between Britain and France. According to this view, the partition was triggered by the British occupation of Egypt in 1882. By 1914, Great Britain controlled the largest number of colonies, and the phrase "the sun never sets up on the British Empire" described its vast holdings (Uwechue, 1991).

Colonial Policies in Africa

By 1900, in British West Africa, most of Britain's sphere of influence had been conquered. Because financial status of the colonial rulers was such that Britain was not ready to spend on its colonies rather exploitation of the resources of her colonies, the shortage of manpower, language berries, and large size their territories, Britain opted to adopt indirect rule system to govern their territories in Africa (Ajayi and Espie, 1965). Just as Britain and France differed in the way in which they set about acquiring colonies in Africa, so they differed in their administrative policies. Both colonial powers developed policies to smoothen the process of colonial rule in their different colonies. Palmer and Perkins (2007) noted that "while certain similarities were present in the policies of the European powers which controlled most of Africa, there were also striking objectives. Moreover, the territories of a single power were often in various stages of economic, social and political development; and therefore the colonial power would follow a variety of practices in administering its territories". Both British and French embarked upon certain practices which represented their strategies and plan of action to achieve a smooth colonial project.

For instance, Britain adopted policy of "indirect rule", which was first introduced in a large scale by Lord Lugard in Northern Nigeria and the official objective of British policy in Africa was "to guide the colonial territories to responsible self-government within the Commonwealth" (Palmer and Perkins, 2007). To achieve such policy, Lugard had two schemes: "to rule Africa through its natural rulers, the native administrations and to educate and develop the native administration into efficient organs of modern local government" (Ajayi and Espie, 1965).

Afigbo (1972) argued it was the lack of sufficient staff, poor communications and the desire for economy in administration, rather than any other reason that accounted for the adoption of the indirect rule policy. Nkrumah (1963) in his book "Africa Must Unite" noted that the imperialists (Europeans) express no solidarity over Africa's plight and this explains why even Sir George Taubman Goldie never over-bothered about the welfare of Africans, but strongly advocated also for the adoption of the policy of indirect rule. Thus, since the British were nonchalant towards Africa's welfare, it however, made the job much easier for them since indirect rule was cheap. It was this cheapness that paved way for

the gradual distortion of African cultures even though it claimed to protect their traditional institutions. Indirect rule emphasized slow and gradual change that would not disturb the customs, traditions, institutions, mores and rural lifestyles of Africans (Kamalu, 2019). Arguing further, Afigbo noted that the culture of any people, most especially in Africa is an "organic whole" and as such even though the indirect rule was a system of ruling an African through their traditional institutions, certain features or practices which were offensive to the British were "eradicated". In practice, indirect rule became the system through which the British used African traditional rulers to subjugate the mass African populations (Kamalu, 2019).

IV. IMPACT AND CONSEQUENCES OF COLONIALISM AND IMPERIALISM IN POST-COLONIAL AFRICA

Imperialism and colonialism have had profound and continuing impacts on the politics and governance of post-colonial African countries, shaping both the structure and functioning of their political systems in complex ways. The legacies of colonial rule, combined with the political, economic, and social disruptions it caused, continue to affect African nations to this day. Below are some of the most significant ways imperialism and colonialism impacted politics and governance in post-colonial Africa, along with their consequences:

1. Artificial Borders and Ethnic Divisions

Colonialism and imperialism impacted African politics and governance by powers drawing artificial borders that often split people who share the same culture, believes, ethnicity and history or forced diverse a

nd sometimes rival groups into the same territory. This disregard for indigenous African political and social boundaries has led to long-standing tribal and ethno-religious tensions and conflicts that perpetuates challenges in nation-building in most of the African Countries.

Consequentially, in post-colonial Africa, many African nations struggled with internal divisions in form of regional politics that often led to a full-scale war and conflicts. In Nigeria for instance, the Biafran Civil War rooted from the intense unhealthy competitive regional politics characterized with suspicion and distrust among the major ethic groups. Thus, these artificial borders and the manipulation of ethnic identities by colonial powers promoted disunity, violence and instability.

2. Centralized, Authoritarian Governance

By imposing centralized administrative system, the colonialist established or consolidated authoritarian systems of governance, which concentrated power in the hands of colonial authorities and minimized the role of local governance or traditional leadership structures. At independence, African countries inherited these centralized systems post where power was often concentrated in the executive branch or in a small elite group.

It is argue that, some African communities had had democratic culture in the pre-colonial era which later dismantled through the influence of slavery, colonialism, and neo-colonialism (Farah and Mazongo, 2011). It is interestingly noted that the contemporary state in Africa is a remnant of a colonially imposed system. African states adopt the colonialists' centralized state system which produced ethnic and authoritarian based political culture (Wyk, 2007). Colonialists neither interested to flourish democratic system in Africa nor prepared African states to administer themselves effectively in the post-independence era (Bayeh, 2015), instead, they used and threw them. Besides, it is clearly noted that the colonial state in Africa was an authoritarian bureaucratic apparatus of control and not intended to be a school of democracy (Copson, 2001). This shows the fact that state was used as instrument of exploitation throughout the colonial era. During the colonial era, there was no such concept of African popular participation (Bayeh, 2015). This malpractice inherited by the post-independence African leaders. It is due to this fact that Africa has suffered from, inter alia, evils of corruption and authoritarianism since the time of independence.

Nonetheless, their different perspectives, there is a general contention among scholars of colonialism and imperialism that the colonial period contributed to authoritarian rule in Africa after independence (Bolt, Gardner, Kohler, Paine, and Robinson, 2022). Colonial rule set bad precedents of mass coercion (Young 1994), favoring resource extraction over public good provision (Cooper 2002), and reifying ethnic identities (Mamdani 1996; Pengl, Roessler and Rueda 2022). Artificially constructed colonial states were too large to enable traditional constraints to "scale up" and prevent authoritarian rule. In this view, the problem was that colonialism enabled

centralized, rather than decentralized, authoritarian regimes (Bolt, Gardner, Kohler, Paine, and Robinson, 2022).

As a result, authoritarian governance prevails and persists in post-colonial Africa and led to weak democratic institutions, political instability, and a tendency for military coups. In many African countries, the post-colonial period saw the rise of strongman rule, corruption, and repression. The lack of experience with democratic governance in many post-colonial states hindered the development of accountable and participatory political systems. Even with the return to democracy in a country like Nigeria, where it lasted for more than two decades, the authoritarian elements persisted and continue to undermine popular participation and good governance. This is inform by the lack of credibility in the electoral process due to the prevalence of godfatherism, massive rigging and election violence.

3. Economic Exploitation and Dependency

During the colonial period, African economies were restructured to serve the needs of European powers, primarily focused on the extraction of resources (such as minerals, rubber, and agricultural products) with little investment in local industries or infrastructure. Colonial economic policies also created dependency on global markets and discouraged diversification at the periphery. Colonialism distorted African pattern of economic development in many different ways. There was disarticulation in production of goods, markets, traders, transport, provision of social amenities and pattern of urbanization etc. the colonialists introduced a pattern of international division of labour which was to the disadvantage of Africans. They assigned to Africa the role of production of raw materials and primary products for use by their industries at home. Africans were not allowed nor encouraged to go into manufacturing. The only industries Africans were encouraged to build were those that would facilitate in the processing of the raw materials for export. The African raw materials were bought at a very low price while manufactured goods from abroad were sold at expensive price. This situation accounted for the impoverishment of most Africans. This trend continues even after independence initially in form of neocolonialism and later globalization. The imperial powers maintain the control of African economy through international financial institutions such as IMF and World Bank that offer high interest loans to African countries attached with conditions that more often than not undermines the power of the states to regulate their economies.

In consequence, many post-colonial African states fails to perform their primary functions and responsibilities regarding the economy. This is because they struggled with underdeveloped economies, lack of industrialization, and dependence on commodity exports. This economic vulnerability often led to debt, dependence on foreign aid, and economic instability. Furthermore, colonial policies of land dispossession and exploitation left many countries with deeply unequal economic systems, contributing to high levels of poverty and inequality.

4. Institutionalization of Classes and Class Struggle

Another important impact of colonialism in Africa was the emergence and institutionalization of classes and class struggle in the socio-economic and political life of the people. Colonialism aided a clear emergence and development of classes in Africa. These classes include comprador bourgeoisie, petty bourgeoisie and proletariat. The African comprador bourgeoisie serve as the conveyor belt through which the colonialists exploited and siphoned the economy of African countries. There is a great harmony of interest between the African comprador bourgeoisie and the European bourgeois. This was why during the period of political independence, it was the African comprador bourgeoisie that got the mantle of leadership.

Basically, the African comprador bourgeoisie maintained the same relationship with the erstwhile colonial masters and this is why they run the economy and political administration of their states in the same manner as the colonialists did. Most of the African leaders or comprador bourgeoisie maintain strong link with their erstwhile colonial masters as well as the long exploitation of the proletariat and the peasant classes. The rampant and complex nature of political instability and socio-economic malaise being experienced in most African states today has recourse to the nature and character of classes introduced in Africa by colonialism. The economic and other resources of Africa are shared between the comprador bourgeoisie and their European/colonial counterparts, even in this contemporary time. The nature of political power struggle and distribution of wealth as well as economic resources in the contemporary African state are a reflection of the understanding and harmony of interest between the African comprador

bourgeoisie and their colonial partners/friends. The severe impoverishment of most Africans by their petty bourgeois leaders and marginalization as well as oppression of the masses by those who have access to state power are offshoot of colonialism or colonial hang-over among African states.

5. The Legacy of Corruption

Colonial powers often fostered corruption by creating systems where local elites were rewarded for collaborating with the colonizers. Colonial administrators often used patronage networks to maintain control, and these practices became ingrained in post-colonial governance.

The post-colonial African rulers are known to be highly corrupted, which could be traced back to the legacy of colonialism. Colonial powers' exploitative socio-political culture produced the habit of corruption in public service of the contemporary Africa (Njoku, 2005). From this, therefore, one can deduce that the existing corrupt behavior of the contemporary leaders of Africa is the continuation of the policies and administration of imperialists. It is obvious that corruption is one of the most attributing factors for poverty and poverty in turn leads for corruption creating vicious cycle. This situation is true in Africa and it is attributed to the far reaching effect of colonialism. In many of African countries leaders enjoy political power as a means of accumulating wealth (Wyk, 2007).

Consequently, post-colonial African leaders in their various nations inherited these corrupt practices, often exacerbating them. Corruption became entrenched in political systems of African states, undermining the rule of law and good governance. Many African leaders today were and are found wanting of being notorious for corruption and mismanagement, which eroded trust in government institutions and hindered development.

6. Defective Political Parties

Colonialism has also its own contribution in the present Africa's political party system. The colonial administrators and political elites made decisions on behalf of the indigenous population without taking into account their idea or consulting them. Inheriting from this monopolized system, African political parties become a top-down organizational structure and therefore tend to be autocratic. It is argued that African political parties originated in the non-democratic setting of colonial rule which was neither

democratic nor legitimate (Salih, 2007). This shows that African party system has inherited the undemocratic colonial tradition. Even though multi-party system is introduced in Africa it is not genuinely exercised. Though parties are allowed to emerge, the environment has not been conducive to compete and hold the power of the government. Even it is common to see many oppositions political parties in Africa banned, criminalized their activities or undermined their contribution to national policy. Most post-independent governments perverted into one-party states or military dictatorships characterized by corruption and inefficiency (Gordon, 2013: Mazrui, 1994). Any form of opposition to the state faces ruthless oppression and imprisonment (Gordon, 2013). Hence, democratizing Africa becomes very challenging in this contemporary era.

7. Educational Systems

Colonial powers imposed Western educational systems that was often at odds with traditional African systems. Western-style education prioritized European languages, cultures, and values, while neglecting indigenous knowledge systems.

Moreover, the poor technological base of most of the present-day African states, which has been responsible for their underdevelopment stems from their poor foundation of education laid by the colonialists. Colonial education essentially aimed at training clerks, interpreters, produce inspectors, artisans, etc., which would help them in the exploitation of the Africa's rich resources. Colonial education did not aim at industrialization of African territories or at stimulating technological development within the African environment. This system brought about distortion and disarticulation in African indigenous pattern of education which was rooted in African technology. Before fully embracing colonial education, Africans were good technologists, advancing at their own rates with the resources within their environment. For example, Africans were good sculptors, carvers, cloth weavers, miners, blacksmiths, etc. They were able to provide and satisfy the technological need of the various African societies. The introduction of colonial education made Africans to abandon their indigenous technological skills and education in preference to one which mainly emphasizes reading and writing. This was the prelude or foundation for the present poor technological base of African states which has perpetuated their underdevelopment. It should be

noted that, education that is not deeply rooted in a people's culture and environment cannot bring about any meaningful technological advancement. This has aptly been shown in the unsuccessful attempt at the so-called technological transfer, which is more of a myth than reality.

Consequentially, after independence, many African countries inherited educational framework that was ill-suited to their own needs and realities. In many cases, the education system failed to meet the needs of the majority of the population, contributing to high illiteracy rates and lack of access to opportunities.

8. Cold War Influence on Foreign Policy

During the Cold War, the newly independent African states became battlegrounds for ideological influence between the United States and the Soviet Union. Both superpowers sought to align African governments with their respective blocs, often supporting dictatorial regimes in exchange for strategic advantages.

As a result, this external influence, combined with economic dependency on foreign aid, led to a form of neo-colonialism where African countries' political and economic sovereignty was compromised by external powers. The legacy of Cold War-era interventions continues to shape African politics, as many nations remain reliant on foreign assistance and face challenges in asserting full independence in their foreign policies.

9. Undermining Nationalism and Pan-Africanism

The colonial experience also gave rise to nationalist and Pan-African movements that sought to unite African people against colonial oppression and for the pursuit of independence and self-determination. Leaders such as Kwame Nkrumah, Julius Nyerere, and Patrice Lumumba promoted the idea of a united, self-reliant Africa.

While Pan-Africanism led to the creation of the Organization of African Unity (OAU) in 1963 (now the African Union), the ideal of continental unity has been difficult to achieve. Post-colonial African states have often been more focused on their own national interests than on regional cooperation, and divisions between countries, compounded by differing political systems and economic priorities, have undermined Pan-African goals.

CONCLUSION

In summary, the reasons for colonization of Africa by the European colonialists in economic sense include: the need for raw materials to feed their industries; the search for new market for the metropolitan industries where their surplus manufactured products as a result of the industrial revolution could be sold; the need to provide more food for the growing urban industrial population; and the need to find a place where the surplus accumulated profit from the industrial revolution could be invested to make more profit. In political sense, the reasons include: the need to establish a balance of power in Europe as a result of unification of Germany and Italy; the increase of extreme nationalism in Europe that arose the need to ensure the security, power and, prestige of each nation-state; and the fact that one of the accepted criteria for measuring the power and prestige of European nations during that period was the numbers of colonies or territories a particular nation possessed.

The political and governance systems in post-colonial Africa have been deeply shaped by the legacy of imperialism and colonialism. The artificial borders, authoritarian governance structures, economic dependency, and cultural disruption caused by colonial rule created challenges that many African nations continue to grapple with. However, these nations also made significant strides in asserting their independence, developing new forms of governance, and seeking to reclaim cultural and political autonomy. The post-colonial experience remains a complex and ongoing process of negotiation, adaptation, and resistance to external and internal pressures.

Contemporary African states are western models and their political institutions are also inherited from the colonial states. This inform the nature of post-colonial African states, which is characterize by authoritarianism, political instability, corruption and exclusion to other opposition groups. This is made democratization process in Africa hitherto difficult. Generally, the historical foundation laid by colonialism should be taken into consideration to understand the present and forecast the future political and economic condition of African states.

V. RECOMMENDATIOS

The paper recommend as follows;

1. Critical Reform of the Political Institutions: There is need to critically reform the colonially inherited political structures of the postcolonial African states. This reform should focus on building more inclusive, participatory, and indigenous governance systems. It should device a way through which a political system that reflect local realities, cultures, and historical experiences will replace a colonially fashioned one. African democracy needs to be domesticated to reflect African values.

2. Promote Inclusive Governance and Political Pluralism: To reduce political exclusion and strengthen democratic values, governments across Africa. should create institutional frameworks that ensure the inclusion of opposition groups, civil society, and marginalized communities in political processes

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