THE INFLUENCE OF COLONIAL HERITAGE ON NATION BUILDING:
THE NIGERIAN CASE

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Abstract
This paper looked at the consequences of the contact between the people of what today is called Nigeria and mainly the Europeans. This contact which started in many ways ultimately ended in colonisation which left the colonised with many aspects of social life which were not original to the colonised and which at last left them without options than to continue with these new ways of life. The paper looked at such issues as effects on the languages of the people that today make up Nigeria and how this has affected them. It took a look at the cultural problems like ethnicity that the people are now trying to grapple with without any success in sight. The paper concluded that the presence of colonisation and its heritage on Nigeria can be said to be positive and negative but the negative impact on development outweigh its positive impact since the Nigerian contact with Europe has left Nigeria without any original development outcomes.

Introduction
The contact of the African continent with European people first resulted in a gruelling period of slave trading in which Africans in general were sold as commodities in markets and taken to Europe to work in farms and plantations under much inhuman conditions. This act lasted for about four hundred and fifty years, a period in which able bodied men and women were seized and sold in the slave markets created around African water shores. The activity of slave trading in African people was only stopped when the African sweat had helped in creating the industrial revolution and development in Europe. The end of slave trading ushered in another period of subjugation of Africans by Europeans. This time it was the colonisation process. During this period, African continent was partitioned and administered by Europeans. Part of the activities of the period was the European ‘benevolence’ of making Africa a raw material producing and a finished product consumer continent. All these have constituted problems to African development even after colonisation had apparently ended. Of note is that much of what the Europeans created and left behind after colonisation are now part of the obstacle we have in development today.

Colonial heritage
The first thing we will look at in this paper is to bring out the meaning of the key words we have which include Colonial Heritage and Nation Building. The first is the phrase colonial heritage which is created from colonial and heritage. A heritage is something that somebody is born to or has inherited from the past. A heritage is something that is passed from generation to generation. This is more or less an ascribed status since the person inheriting can do little or nothing to change such an inheritance. Such an inheritance has the ability of affecting the life and future of the inheritor since it now constitutes the way of life of such a people. Today in many respects, former African colonisers constitute parents to Africa. They have in many respects passed down to Africans many ‘traits.’ According to Adu Boahen (2004), ‘by 1935, colonialism had been fastened on Africa like a steel grid, and it looked as if it was going to remain there for ever.’ Whatever Africa has today are all European almost. From religion to politics, economy to education and in every other area Nigeria bears European mark. For instance, apart from forcing and indoctrinating European ways on Africa, we lost even those good things that were original to Africa. Nigeria bears the name that was given to her by colonial masters. This has diminished the images of the constituting former ‘nations’ of Igbo land, Hausa land and Yoruba land. This is the case of many other
nations of Africa which have actually been created as a result of European activities in Africa. South Africa has become the name of a nation in Africa as against such concepts as Swaziland, Tanganyika and other original African nomenclature. The change of names has resulted from the tampering of erstwhile African national boundaries. Nobody now remembers what would be the original name of the territory today occupied by Liberia. Sierra Lone does not sound African but French. Freetown is purely English and bears no African concept.

African system of politics is European unmodified. The type of democracy Nigeria practices is not the original African egalitarian system nor the monarchical type, but imported democracy. Though it looks good and okay, Africa in general and Nigeria in particular still lacks the knowledge and tools it requires to practice European type democracy. The knowledge needed to practice it is European knowledge and education which is not yet general to Africans. This can be an indication to why African leaders are always running to European experts for direction which does not yield anything except European profit. The old original traditional system of leadership which actually worked in the past was destroyed by colonisation. Before this time, Africans knew the importance of the sanctity of tradition and respected such. The traditional system of justice and social control was very effective in social organisation. Mechanical orderliness existed since spheres of coverage in leadership were small and manageable. Constituencies were small and the constituents known. Leadership positions were not in any way by rigging.

African traditional religious life that took so many years in development and adaptation has almost been totally destroyed with the type of morality it imparted on our people. Replaced by European type of religion, whatever heritages and benefits we would have had are today lost while of note is the fact that the strict traditional system of morality were not in any way inferior to any of the foreign religious teachings. On the effect of colonisation on religion, Roberts (2007) wrote on the psychological asset of Christianity in perpetrating colonisation. To him,

‘soon after the establishment of settlement this (attack on indigenous religion) found a vent in missionary enterprises, but it was always present as a cultural fact, assuring Europeans of their superiority to the peoples with whom they began to come into contact for the first time. In the next four centuries, it was often to have disastrous effects. Confident in the possession of the ‘true religion,’ Europeans were impatient and contemptuous of the values and achievements of the peoples and civilisations they disturbed. The result was always uncomfortable and often brutal.’

While describing why he and his colleagues went to the Indies, a Spanish historian had said that it was ‘to serve God and his majesty (Spanish King), to give light to those who sat in darkness and to grow rich as all men desire to do.’

Many writers would want to argue that colonialism did Africa good. To Boahen, The colonial powers provided the infrastructure on which progress in the 'independence' period has depended: a fairly efficient administrative machine, reaching down to villages in the most remote areas, a network of roads and railways, and basic services in health and education.” Others have contended that the beneficial effect of colonialism in Africa was virtually nil. The Black Guyanese historian, Walter Rodney, has taken a particularly extreme position: "The argument suggests that, on the one hand, there was exploitation and oppression, but, on the other hand, that colonial governments did much for the benefit of Africans and that they developed Africa. It is our contention that this is completely false. Colonialism had only one hand--it was a one-armed bandit."

National development

National development can be described as the overall development or a collective socio-economic, political as well as religious advancement of a country or nation. This is best achieved through development planning, which can be described as the country’s collection of strategies mapped out by the government. In this paper therefore it is our purpose to look at the influence Europe on Nigerian national development.

Influence of colonial heritage on Nigerian development

One thing to be noted here is that right from the beginning; Europe and Africa were different in many ways. The ways of life developed by the two continents were quite different. The reason is that these ways of life were developed in totally different environments. These ways of life were meant to operate in
different environments for different peoples solving different manners of problems. In the first place, important as the development of nationalism was, it was generated by a sense of anger, frustration and humiliation caused by some of the oppressive, discriminatory and exploitative measures introduced by the colonial rulers. With the overthrow of colonialism, that feeling was bound to lose some of its momentum and the problem that has faced the rulers of independent African States has been how to replace it with a positive and enduring feeling of nationalism. Secondly, while admitting that the geo-political set-up that emerged looked like an asset, even though an accidental one, it nevertheless created far more problems than it solved. Though the boundaries of the States that emerged were not as arbitrary as is generally believed, there is no doubt that many of the States that emerged were artificial creations made up of a medley of peoples with different cultures, traditions, origins and languages.

The problems of nation-building posed by such a medley of peoples have not proved to be easily soluble. Another outcome was that the States that emerged were of widely differing sizes with unequal natural resources and economic potentialities. Another important but negative political impact of colonialism was the weakening of the indigenous systems of government. The colonial officials on the spot became, in effect, dictators instead of advisers to the traditional rulers whom they used to enforce some of the measures deemed obnoxious by their subjects, such as forced labour, direct taxes and compulsory recruitment of men for the colonial armies. Moreover, the spread of the Christian religion further undermined the spiritual basis of the authority of the kings. A product of colonialism which is often ignored by historians but which has turned out to be of crucial importance was the creation of full-time, standing armies. These armies were originally created, most of them in the 1880s and 1890s, first for the conquest and occupation of Africa, then for the maintenance of colonial control, and, finally, for the prosecution of global wars and the suppression of independent movements in Africa. After the overthrow of the colonial rulers, these armies were not disbanded but were taken over by the new independent African rulers and they have turned out to be the most problematic of the products of colonialism. Military coups de tat at a time became synonymous with African life since those in the military found it as a way of getting power in Africa. Most of the coups were actually found to have been sponsored by Europeans who gave conditions to the coup plotters.

The final and probably the most important negative political impact of colonialism was the loss of African sovereignty and independence and the right to deal directly with the outside world. This meant above all, the loss of their right to control their own destiny, to plan their own development, manage their economy, and determine their own strategies and priorities. It deprived them of the ability to borrow freely from the world at large the latest and most appropriate technology, and generally manage, or even mismanage, if they so choose, their own affairs and derive inspiration and a sense of fulfilment from their successes and lessons and experience from their failures. Colonialism deprived Africans of one of the most fundamental and inalienable rights of a people—the right of liberty. The about seventy-year period of colonialism in Africa was the very period which witnessed tremendous and decisive developments and changes in both the capitalist and socialist countries of the developed world. It was the period, for instance, that saw the entry of Europe into the age of the aeroplane and the motor vehicle and the nuclear power. Had Africa been in control of her own destiny, she could have benefited from or even been part of these phenomenal changes. But colonialism completely insulated and isolated her from these changes and kept her in a position of dependency.

The impact in the economic field was equally important and equally mixed. The first and most obvious of the positive impacts was the provision of a basic infrastructure of roads, railways, telegraph, and telephone and, in some cases, even airports. Completed by the 1930s, this infrastructure facilitated the movement not only of goods, the new cash crops, and troops, but also of peoples from Africa. Equally important and significant was the impact of colonialism on the primary sector of the economy. It was during the colonial period that the full mineral potential of Africa was realized; the mining industry boomed while the cultivation of cash crops such as cocoa, coffee, tobacco, groundnuts, sisal and rubber spread grew. In West Africa these cash crops were produced by the Africans themselves, clear evidence of their willingness and ability to adapt and respond to the right incentives. This economic revolution had some far-reaching consequences. Before the colonial era huge tracts of land in many parts of Africa were not only un-populated but also under-utilized. The introduction and spread of cash crops and the mining industries put an end to all this.

Secondly, the economic revolution led to an increase in the purchasing power of some Africans and with it an increase in their demand for consumer goods. Thirdly, the growing of cash crops by Africans enabled individuals of whatever social status, especially in the rural areas, to acquire wealth. Another significant revolutionary impact was the introduction of the money economy. This led to the
emergence of a new class of wage earners and salaried groups. The introduction of the money economy also led to the commencement of banking activities in Africa, which became another significant feature of the economy of independent African States. By 1935, the economy of Africa had become inextricably tied to that of the world in general and of the capitalist economy of the colonial powers in particular. The years after 1935 merely deepened this link and not even independence has fundamentally altered this relationship. Was the colonial impact on Africa in the economic field then a desirable one? The answer is no. It was not. In the first place, the infrastructure that was provided by colonialism was not as adequate or as useful as it could have been. Most of the roads and railways were constructed not to open up the country but merely to connect the areas having mineral deposits and the potential for the production of cash crops with the sea, and there were hardly any feeder or branch roads. They were not meant to facilitate inter-African travel and communication. Again, such economic growth as occurred in the colonies was based on the natural resources of the area and this meant, therefore, that areas not naturally endowed were totally neglected. No infrastructures were provided for such areas. This accounted for the unequal nature of development in Nigeria for many years now.

A typical feature of the colonial economy was the total and deliberate neglect or discouragement of industrialization and the processing of locally-produced raw materials and agricultural products in most of the colonies. Simple and basic items such as matches, candles, edible oil, even lime and orange juice, all of which could easily have been produced in Africa, were imported even when the raw materials used in producing these goods were sourced from the colonies. All African States were therefore turned into markets for the consumption of manufactured goods from the metropolitan countries and producers of raw materials for export. This total neglect of industrialization by the colonial powers should be chalked up as one of the most evils of colonialism. Industries and crafts as had existed in Africa in pre-colonial times were almost destroyed as a result of the importation into Africa of cheap, mass-produced commodities. African technological development was thereby halted and was not resumed until after independence. No attempts were made to diversify the agricultural economies of Africa even though agricultural crops came to constitute the main source of income for most African States.

By 1935, the production of only single or, at best, two cash crops had become the rule--cocoa in the Gold Coast, groundnuts in Senegal and Gambia, cotton in Sudan, coffee and cotton in Uganda and coffee and sisal in Tanganyika. Most African States, on the attainment of independence, found themselves saddled with monoculture economies and were therefore highly sensitive to the prevailing international trade winds. Colonialism did indeed complete the integration of African economies into the world international economic order, but in a very disadvantageous and exploitative manner. Because of the concentration on the production of cash crops during the colonial era, Africans were compelled to ignore the production of food for their own consumption. It was this neglect of food production, coupled with forced labour, which caused so much malnutrition, severe famine and so many epidemics in some parts of Africa during the early colonial days. Thus, under the colonial system, Africans were in most cases made to produce what they did not produce, clear evidence of the lopsided and exploitative nature of the colonial economy.

The colonial presence in Africa also led to the appearance on the African scene of an increasing number of expatriate banking, shipping and trading firms, and from the 1910s onwards their amalgamation and consolidation into fewer and fewer oligopolies that gave Africans no chance of competition. Since it was these trading companies that controlled the export as well as the import trade and fixed the prices not only of imported commodities but also of the exports produced by Africans, the huge profits that accrued from these activities went to the companies and not to the Africans. Colonialism also virtually put a stop to the elimination of a new class of wage earners and salaried groups. The introduction of the money economy also led to the commencement of banking activities in Africa, which became another significant feature of the economy of independent African States. By 1935, the economy of Africa had become inextricably tied to that of the world in general and of the capitalist economy of the colonial powers in particular. The years after 1935 merely deepened this link and not even independence has fundamentally altered this relationship. Was the colonial impact on Africa in the economic field then a desirable one? The answer is no. It was not. In the first place, the infrastructure that was provided by colonialism was not as adequate or as useful as it could have been. Most of the roads and railways were constructed not to open up the country but merely to connect the areas having mineral deposits and the potential for the production of cash crops with the sea, and there were hardly any feeder or branch roads. They were not meant to facilitate inter-African travel and communication. Again, such economic growth as occurred in the colonies was based on the natural resources of the area and this meant, therefore, that areas not naturally endowed were totally neglected. No infrastructures were provided for such areas. This accounted for the unequal nature of development in Nigeria for many years now.

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Finally, whatever economic growth there was during the colonial period was achieved at a phenomenal and unjustifiable cost to the African. The period was filled with forced labour, migrant labour, compulsory cultivation of certain crops, compulsory seizure of land, forced movements of populations with the consequent dislocation of family life, the pass system, high mortality rates in the mines and on the plantations and brutal repression of the protest and resistance movements these measures generated. What is the record of colonialism in the social field? The first important beneficial social effect was the overall increase of the population of Africa during the colonial period of nearly forty per cent after an initial decline during the first two or three decades. This increase was due to the establishment of an economic base, the spread of roads and railways which ensured that food could be rushed to famine areas, and the campaigns launched against epidemic diseases such as sleeping sickness, bubonic plague and yellow fever.
Closely connected with this was the second social impact of colonialism—urbanization. The kingdoms and empires of Africa had such capitals or political centres as Kumbi Saleh, Benin, Ile-Ife, Kumasi, Gao and Zimbabwe, commercial centres such as Kano, Jenne, Sofala and Malindi, and such educational centres as Timbuktu, Cairo and Fez. But there is no doubt that, as a result of colonialism, the pace of urbanization was greatly accelerated and completely new towns came into existence. Moreover, the population of both the already existing towns and the new towns grew by leaps and bounds during the colonial era. The population of Nairobi, founded in 1896 as a transit depot for the construction of the Uganda railway, increased from a mere handful to 13,145 in 1927 and to over 25,000 in 1940, and that of Lagos from 74,000 in 1914 to 230,000 in 1950, that of Dakar from 19,800 in 1916 to 92,000 in 1936 and to 132,000 in 1945. There was also undoubtedly an improvement in the quality of life, particularly for those living in the urban centres. This was the result of the provision of hospitals, dispensaries, pipe-borne water, sanitary facilities, better housing and the abolition of such practices as domestic slavery by the colonial rulers as well as the increase in employment opportunities.

The spread of Christianity, Islam and Western education was another important impact of colonialism. It was during the colonial period that Christianity gained a firm foothold in eastern and central Africa, at times following and at times being followed by the flag and trade. Islam also spread rapidly in western and eastern Africa as a result of the general improvement in communications during the colonial period and the patronage of both the French and the British rulers. It should be emphasized that these gains were not made at the expense of traditional religion. What colonialism did, then, was to strengthen and perpetuate religious pluralism in Africa, thereby enriching its religious life.

Closely associated with the spread of Christianity was that of Western education. Certainly, by the end of the colonial regime, there were relatively few areas without at least elementary schools. The spread of Western education had far-reaching social effects, among which was an increase in the number of the westernized educated African elite, an elite which now constitutes the ruling oligarchy and the backbone of the civil service of African States. Another important colonial impact, a mixed blessing as we shall see, was the provision of a lingua franca for each colony or set of colonies. In all the colonies, the mother tongue of the colonial power, either in its pure or pidgin form, became the official and business language and, in many cases, the main means of communication between the numerous linguistic groups that constituted the population of each colony. It is significant that, except in North Africa, The United Republic of Tanzania, Kenya and Madagascar, these languages have remained the official languages to this very day.

The final beneficial social impact was the new social structure that colonialism introduced into some parts of Africa or whose development it accelerated in others. Although the traditional social structure allowed for social mobility, its class structure appeared to give undue weight to birth. The new colonial order, on the other hand, emphasized individual merit and achievement. All these changes radically altered the traditional social structure. Thus, by the 1930s, in place of the pre-colonial social classes of the traditional ruling aristocracy, the ordinary people, domestic slaves and a relatively small educated elite, a new society emerged that had become more sharply divided than before into urban and rural dwellers, each of which was differently stratified. Mobility within this new structure was based more on individual effort and attainment than on ascription.

On the negative side, however, the phenomenal growth of the population of the urban centres was not the result of the natural increase of the urban population but rather of the continuous pull of young men and women to the urban centres by the need for education and employment and the push from the rural areas by famine, epidemics, poverty and taxation. Moreover, since the Europeans tended to live in the urban centres, all those facilities that improved the quality of life were established only in those areas. The rural areas were therefore virtually neglected and this in turn accentuated the drift from one to the other.

A huge gap exists even today between urban and rural areas in Africa and there is no doubt that it was the colonial system that originated and widened this gap. Nor did the migrants find the urban centres the safe and rich haven they had expected. In no town were the Africans accepted as equals and fully integrated. Moreover, nowhere did a majority of them find jobs or decent accommodation. Most of them found themselves crowded into the suburbs and the shanty towns in which unemployment, juvenile delinquency, drunkenness, prostitution, crime and corruption became their lot. Colonialism did not only impoverish rural life, it also bastardized urban life. A second serious social legacy has been the European and Asian settler problem. What made their presence so inimical to Africans was that the Europeans came to occupy most of the fertile lands while the Asians monopolized the retail and wholesale trades. By 1935, this Asian and European problem had assumed very serious proportions for Africa and it has not been entirely resolved to this day.
Furthermore, though colonialism did introduce some social services as we have seen, it must be emphasized that not only were these services grossly inadequate and unevenly distributed in each colony, they were all, by and large, meant primarily for the benefit of the few white settlers and administrators, hence their concentration in the towns. In Nigeria in the 1930s, whereas there were 12 modern hospitals for 4,000 Europeans in the country, there were only 52 for Africans numbering over 40 million. In the field of education, what was provided during the colonial days was grossly inadequate, unevenly distributed and badly orientated and therefore not so beneficial as it could have been for Africa. Five different types of educational institutions were established under colonial rule: primary, secondary, teacher-training, technical and university. But while many primary schools had been established by 1860 in British West Africa, it was not until 1876 that the first secondary schools were established in the Gold Coast and Nigeria. It was not until after the Second World War that technical schools and university colleges were established in most parts of Africa. The curricula provided by all these institutions were determined by the colonial rulers and were closely modelled on, if not carbon copies of, those of the metropolitan countries and therefore irrelevant to the needs of the continent. They also struck at the very roots of African religious beliefs, sanctions and taboos and thereby shook the foundations of African societies, bringing in their trail a sense of uncertainty, frustration and insecurity. The impact of this inadequate, lopsided and wrongly orientated education on African societies has been profound and almost permanent. First, it left Africa with a huge illiteracy problem, a problem whose solution will take a long time. Secondly, the educated elite that were produced were, by and large, and alienated elite that adored European culture and civilization and looked down on African culture. However, since the elite included the wealthiest people and since they occupied the highest posts available both during and after the colonial era, they came to wield power and influence out of all proportion to their numbers. Beneficial as the lingua franca promoted through the educational systems were, they had the regrettable consequence of preventing the development of some of the indigenous languages into national languages. Twi, Hausa and Swahili could easily have been developed as the national languages of the Gold Coast, Nigeria and the three British East African colonies respectively. In fact, an attempt was made by the colonial administrators of British East Africa to develop Swahili as a lingua franca during the 1930s and 1940s, but this attempt was countermanded by the Colonial Office.

Another highly regrettable social impact of colonialism was the deterioration that it caused in the status of women in Africa. This is a new theme which needs further research, but there does not appear to be any doubt that women were inhibited from joining in most of the activities introduced or intensified by colonialism. The colonial world was indeed a man's world and women were not encouraged to play any meaningful role in it. Moreover, under colonialism Africans in general were looked down upon, humiliated and discriminated against both overtly and covertly. In his recent Reith lectures, Ali Mazrui emphasized this legacy of humiliation imposed by the African by the triple sins of the slave trade, apartheid and colonialism when he declared: "Africans are not necessarily the most brutalized peoples, but they are certainly the most humiliated in modern history." Some historians have concluded that "colonialism produced its own gravediggers", while Maugham has maintained that "On the tombstone of the British Empire may be written 'Lost by snobbery'." Worse still was the impact of colonialism in the cultural field. Throughout the colonial period, African art, music, dancing and even history were all not only ignored but positively discouraged or denied. As one speaker declared at the Second Congress of Negro Writers and Artists, in Rome, in 1959: "Among the sins of colonialism, one of the most pernicious, because it was for a long time accepted by the West, was the concept of people without culture." Nevertheless, in the cultural field, the impact of colonialism was relatively speaking neither profound nor permanent. Such changes as were introduced in the cultural field, such racial discrimination as was practised, and such condemnation of African culture as was preached, even in the heyday of colonialism, were all confined to the coastal areas and the urban centres and never penetrated into the rural areas where life ran gaily on very much as before. African dance, art, music and traditional religious systems held their own and any borrowings and adaptations were additions rather than substitutions. In the rural areas, and even to some extent in the urban centres, new beliefs, new gods, new utensils, new artefacts and new objects were added to the old ones. Certainly, in these areas many Christians did and still do retain their belief in their traditional gods. Indeed, in the field of religion, it was if anything the European religious that were Africanized, as is obvious from the rituals of some of the syncretic and millenarian churches, and not the other way round. What is more important, the ground that was lost in the field of culture, even in the urban centres, has virtually been regained. Today, African art, music and dance are not only taught in educational institutions of all kinds but are now booming in Africa and gaining recognition in Europe. Thus, as far as the cultural field is concerned, colonialism was certainly only a brief episode and its impact skin-deep and ephemeral. From
all the above it should be clear that it is an over-reaction to write off colonialism as an unmitigated disaster for Africa that caused nothing but underdevelopment and backwardness. Equally guilty of over-statement are those colonial apologists who see colonialism as an unqualified blessing for Africa. But whatever colonialism did for Africans in Africa, given its opportunities, its resources and the power and influence it wielded in Africa at the time, it could and should have done more. As P.C. Lloyd wrote: "So much more might perhaps have been done had the development of backward territories been seen by the industrial nations as a first priority." It is precisely because colonial rulers did not see the development of Africans as their first priority or even as a priority at all that they stand condemned. It is for these two reasons that the colonial era will go down in history as a period of growth without development, of the ruthless exploitation of the resources of Africa, and, on balance, of the pauperization and humiliation of the peoples of Africa. In the long history of Africa, colonialism was merely an episode or interlude in the many-faced and variegated experiences of its peoples. It was nonetheless an extremely important episode politically, economically and even socially. It marks a clear watershed in the history of Africa whose development has been and will continue to be very much influenced by the colonial impact. The most expedient course of action for Nigerian leaders to embark upon today, then, is not to write off colonialism, but rather to be conversant with its impact and to try to redress its shortcomings and its failures.

Conclusion
The presence of colonisation and its heritage on Nigeria can be said to be positive and negative but the negative impact on development outweigh its positive impact. The reason is that the Nigerian contact with Europe has left Nigeria without any original development outcomes.

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