

DISCOURSE ON THE EFFECTS OF COLONIALITY AND TRANSCOLONIALITY IN AFRICAN POLITICS: CASE STUDY OF NIGERIA DEMOCRATIC GOVERNANCE SINCE INDEPENDENCE

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ABSTRACT

This study examines the enduring effects of coloniality and transcoloniality on African politics, with a specific focus on Nigeria's democratic governance since independence on 1st October, 1960. Coloniality, as a legacy of colonialism, persists in shaping political structures, socio-economic systems, and cultural identities across Africa as a nation. Transcoloniality, referring to the ongoing influence of global power dynamics, further entrenches external control over the domestic affairs. In the Nigerian context, these frameworks profoundly influenced the evolution of democratic governance, manifesting in weak institutions, ethnic polarization, corruption, and dependency on external actors. Despite the formal independence, Nigeria's political trajectory, still remains entangled in the residual effects of colonial systems and contemporary global pressures which still complicates the efforts to build a resilient democracy. Having employs the dialectical method of philosophical inquiry to examine the interplay between colonial legacies and modern transcolonial forces, and highlighting their implications on achieving political stability, governance reforms, and the sustainable development in Nigeria, the findings underscore necessity of decolonizing the European governance structure and fostering indigenous political solutions to achieve authentic democratic progress.

Keywords: Colonialism, Decolonality, Coloniality, African Politics, Nigeria Democratic Governance

INTRODUCTION

Colonialism has left an indelible mark on African societies, shaping the social- political, and economic structures in ways that continues to influence African governance and development. The discourse on the influence of colonialism delves into the enduring legacies of this historical period, particularly its impact on modern political systems. In Africa, the concepts decoloniality, coloniality, and transcoloniality provide critical lenses for examining how colonial practices have persisted, transformed, or have been resisted in this post-independence governance. The framework has challenged the conventional narratives by highlighting the complexities of power,

identity, and systemic inequalities that remain deeply embedded in African political structures. Using Nigeria's democratic governance as an example, the discourse explores multifaceted effects of the European colonialism and its aftermaths on the country's political trajectory. Being the most Africa's populous and influential nation, Nigeria faces the challenges and contradictions inherent in navigating a postcolonial political landscape. The discussions in this context, focuses on how colonial legacies have shaped democratic practices, institutionalized frameworks and power dynamics, and as well examining the efforts channeled towards decolonization and transcolonial cooperation in addressing these historical inequities. Interrogating these themes, the work shall provide also a nuanced understanding of the intersections of European colonial history on the contemporary Nigeria/African politics. It shall proffer insights into the possibility of building a more inclusive and equitable governance system in the face of enduring colonial influences.

CONCEPTUAL ANALYSIS OF THE FRAMEWORK OF THE DISCOURSE

Colonialism

Colonialism means the domination and exploitation of one nation or people by another, through the establishment of political and economic control. Colonialism according to Rodney, W (1972:29) is, "the process that imposed foreign governance, disrupted the indigenous system and restructured economies to serve the colonial powers." In Africa, Mamdani (1996) explains, "colonialism fragmented societies, imposed arbitrary borders, and creates the governing systems designed to entrench the dependency, and inequality. The Legacy being a significant influence on the contemporary African political systems, manifested in weak institutions and divided societies."

Decoloniality

Decolonility goes beyond the political independence of the formerly colonized states to address the epistemological and cultural dominance established during colonial rule. This, Mignolo (2011) says, "involves reclaiming of the indigenous knowledge systems, and the challenging of the Eurocentric frameworks." Ndlovu-Gatsheni (2013) argued that decoloniality is, "a process of "epistemic disobedience" aimed at dismantling the colonial masters' power structures, knowledge, and being that persists in postcolonial societies." In African governance, decoloniality calls for the integration of the traditional political practices and the rejection of all those systems that perpetuate inequality and exclusion.

Coloniality

Coloniality refers to the lasting systems of power, knowledge, and cultural domination established during colonialism that continues to shape societies even after the formal end of that colonial rule. This concept is widely discussed in the decolonial studies and focuses on how the colonial way of thinking, hierarchies, and structures persist in the contemporary social-political, and economic systems. The concept cololniality could be reflected on as follows:

1. The Coloniality of Power: This refers to the global system of economic and political hierarchies created during colonialism, which privileged the Euro-Western nations and marginalized others.

2. The Coloniality of Knowledge: This refers to the dominance of Western ways of thinking, science, and education, while devaluing and erasing knowledge systems of colonized peoples.
3. The Coloniality of Being: This refers to the dehumanization and marginalization of the colonized people. It includes the perpetuation of racial, cultural, and gender-based inequalities.

Coloniality, as conceptualized by Quijano (2000), reflects "the long-standing patterns of powers and dominations that originated during colonial rule and continues to shape both the local, and global socio-political structures. These however, include economic dependency, racial hierarchies, and marginalization of non-Western epistemologies. In African politics Membe (2002) says, "coloniality manifests in adoption of authoritarian governance models and the replication of exploitative economic systems." Coloniality highlights the persistence of colonial logics in contemporary governance and the need to address these structures to achieve genuine political and economic transformation. In essence, coloniality highlights how the structures and mindsets of colonialism still shape the modern world, requiring critical efforts to decolonize society, education, and culture.

Transcoloniality

This according to Bhabra (2014), "examines the shared and interconnected legacies of colonialism across different regions, it emphasizes on the need for solidarity among the formerly colonized states." Transcoloniality highlights how colonial experiences and its aftermaths transcends national borders to influence the global power dynamics and interactions. In the African context, according to Abrahamsen (2023), "transcoloniality underscores the importance of the regional cooperations and exchange of strategies for addressing common challenges rooted in the colonial histories." Transcoloniality promotes the idea that decolonization is not just a local process but a global endeavor requiring collaborative efforts.

African Politics

The discourse on African politics, necessitates first, a brief discussion on the meaning of politics. The concept "politics" originates from the Greek word "politikos" meaning - "of, for, or relating to citizens." This derives from the word "polis", which refers to a city-state in ancient Greece as the central political unit of the time. Politics etymologically could mean "affairs of the city" or the activities related to governance, organization, and the collective life of a community. Politics originally, is centered on how citizens engage in decision-making and governance within the society. This Heywood (2013:4) said is, "the process whereby some group of people are voted to make collective decisions, on how to exercise powers, and distribute justice and resources in a giiving state." Easton (1965:123) defined politics as, "the art and science of government which involves the management of public affairs, policy-making, and the exercise of authority and influence in societal contexts."

African politics generally, is the study of political systems, processes, and institutions of the continent, shaped by a combination of the indigenous traditions, colonial legacies, and the modern global influences. According to Ake (1996), "African politics is often marked by the struggles to reconcile both the traditional governance practices with the modern state structures that were introduced during colonialism." This duality creates tensions that are exacerbated by issues such

as ethnic diversity, corruption, and weak institutions. Discoursing African politics involves analyzing how these historical and contemporary factors interact to shape governance outcomes.

Democratic Governance

Democratic governance, Hyden (2013) depicts, "refers to the system of governance that prioritized the rules of laws, accountability, participation, and transparency." In Nigeria democratic context, Osaghae (1998) upholds that, "governance has been shaped by the legacies of colonialism that introduced the authoritarian administrative structures and ethnic divisions." While Nigeria has made progress in democratization, Subaru (2001) says, "challenges such as electoral violence, corruption, and weak institutions remain the barriers to her political development. Addressing these issues he stressed requires an understanding of both the colonial origins of these challenges and the strategies for fostering more inclusive and participatory governance.

AFRICAN EXPERIENCES UNDER COLONIALISM

Colonialization in Africa is characterized by a profound economic exploitation, political domination, social restructuring, and cultural suppression. The colonization of African territories by the European powers during the 19th and 20th centuries, re-shaped the continent's historical trajectory, leaving the enduring impacts that continued to shape its political and socio-economics landscapes. Here is how:

1. Economic Exploitation

Colonial powers exploited Africa's vast natural resources to develop industrialization in Europe. Agricultural systems are restructured to prioritize cash crops like cocoa, cotton, rubber, etc at the expense of food production. Forced labor systems, taxation, and land expropriation displaced African communities, creating legacy of economic dependency and underdevelopment.

2. Political Domination

Colonial authorities dismantled indigenous leadership systems, and replaced them with centralized structures designed to enforce colonial rules. The imposition of arbitrary power borders, disregarded ethnic and cultural boundaries through sowing the seeds of post-independence political instability. African leaders were marginalized, and political decision-making was concentrated in the hands of colonial administrators.

3. Social and Cultural Restructuring

African societies encountered profound changes under colonial rule. Traditional norms and practices for example are suppressed and undermined. Missionary-led education system introduced Africans to the Europeans' languages and values, marginalizes our indigenous system of knowledge, and promoted cultural alienations. The introduction of Christianity and Euro-Western life styles further eroded traditional African religions and customs.

4. Resistance and Nationalism

Despite the hardships of colonial rule, African peoples resisted in various ways, starting from armed uprisings to intellectual movements. Leaders like Nigeria's Nnamdi Azikiwe, Kwame Nkrumah of Ghana (then Gold Coast), and Kenya's Jomo Kenyatta, galvanized the nationalist movements that ultimately led to independence across the continent in the mid-20th century.

5. Long-Term Impacts

The effects of colonialism endured in the Africa's contemporary challenges namely; economic underdevelopment, political instability, and social inequalities. The arbitrary borders created during colonization have fueled ethnic conflicts, while the introduction of the Western governance models often clashed with the indigenous traditions. African experiences under the colonialism in essence, was multifaceted, it's not marked alone by exploitation and suppression, but by resilience and resistance. Understanding this history is very crucial in addressing its legacies and fostering inclusive development and governance in this postcolonial era.

CALL FOR THE DECOLONIALIZATION OF AFRICAN NATIONS BY THE POLITICAL JINGOISTS, THEIR NAMES, IDEOLOGIES AND OBJECTIVES

The call for decolonization of African nations, particularly by African political jingoists, was a key aspect of Africa's liberation struggle in the 20th century. These leaders and activists called for the end of colonial domination by European powers, advocating for political independence, cultural restoration, and social and economic empowerment of African nations. Below is an overview of some prominent African political figures, their ideologies, and objectives related to decolonization:

1. Kwame Nkrumah (Ghana)

Ideology: Pan-Africanism, Socialism

Nkrumah, the first president of Ghana (formerly the Gold Coast), was a strong proponent of Pan-Africanism and sought to unite the entire African continent against colonial and imperial forces. He advocated for the establishment of a united and socialist Africa, free from the influence of Western powers. Nkrumah's vision was to create a "Union of African States," where all African nations would work together to advance their political, economic, and social independence.

2. Julius Nyerere (Tanzania)

Ideology: African Socialism (Ujamaa), Pan-Africanism

Nyerere, who led Tanzania (formerly Tanganyika) to independence, was a staunch advocate of socialism based on African traditions. His goal was to create a self-reliant and egalitarian society, free from colonial influence. Through his "Ujamaa" policy, Nyerere aimed to strengthen the rural communities by promoting cooperative farming and collective development, alongside the broader goal of Pan-African unity.

3. Patrice Lumumba (Democratic Republic of Congo)

Ideology: Nationalism, Pan-Africanism, Anti-imperialism

Patrice Lumumba was the first Prime Minister of the Democratic Republic of Congo after its independence from Belgium in 1960. He strongly opposed colonial exploitation and foreign interference, particularly by Belgium and the United States. Lumumba called for a strong, independent, and united Congo, with an emphasis on the sovereignty of African nations and the fight against neocolonialism.

4. Frantz Fanon (Algeria)

Ideology: Anti-colonialism, Marxism, Existentialism

Although not a politician in the traditional sense, Frantz Fanon was a key intellectual figure in the anti-colonial movement, especially in Algeria. As a psychiatrist and revolutionary, Fanon's work, particularly in *The Wretched of the Earth*, critiqued colonialism's psychological effects on the colonized. He argued that the liberation of Africa required violent resistance to colonialism and the overthrow of imperial powers, as well as the creation of a new post-colonial identity based on African values and self-determination.

5. Amílcar Cabral (Guinea-Bissau and Cape Verde)

Ideology: Marxism-Leninism, Pan-Africanism, Nationalism

Cabral was the leader of the liberation movement in Guinea-Bissau, and Cape Verde. His ideology emphasized the need for revolutionary struggle against colonialism, and the importance of the peasantry in national liberation, as well as the construction of a new socialist society. He advocated for an African identity rooted in traditional culture and opposed the imposition of European norms on African societies.

6. Thomas Sankara (Burkina Faso)

Ideology: Pan-Africanism, Marxist-Leninism, Anti-imperialism

Thomas Sankara, the President of Burkina Faso from 1983 to 1987, was a revolutionary leader who sought to break the chains of colonialism and imperialism. He emphasized self-reliance, the need for land reform, and the importance of African unity. His democratic leadership promoted women's rights, education, and health care while focusing on rejecting foreign aid and fostering economic independence.

7. Nelson Mandela (South Africa)

Ideology: Nationalism, Pan-Africanism, Democratic Socialism

Although Mandela's role focused primarily on the liberation of South Africa from apartheid, his broader goals aligned with the Pan-African movement's fight for African independence. He sought not just the end of racial segregation in South Africa but also social justice and economic equity for all Africans, and he supported the idea of the continental solidarity to ensure that African nations collectively faced down imperialism and neocolonialism.

8. Robert Mugabe (Zimbabwe)

Ideology: African nationalism, Marxism-Leninism

As the leader of Zimbabwe's liberation movement, Mugabe sought the Zimbabwe's independence from British colonial rule and white minority rule. His initial aims focused on land redistribution and economic independence, although his later years were marked by controversy due to authoritarian governance. Nonetheless, his early ideological commitments to the decolonization and African liberation remained a central part of his rhetoric.

9. Sekou Touré (Guinea)

Ideology: African socialism, anti-imperialism

Sekou Touré was the first President of Guinea and one of the prominent advocates of African unity and independence. He led Guinea in rejecting French colonial rule, famously opting to stand alone rather than remain within the French community of nations. Touré's policies emphasized nationalization, collective ownership, and social welfare, grounded in an anti-colonial, anti-imperialist agenda.

10. Mahatma Gandhi (South Africa & India)

Ideology: Non-violence (Ahimsa), Anti-imperialism, Nationalism

Though primarily associated with India's independence struggle, Gandhi's time in South Africa also shaped his views on colonialism in Africa. He advocated for non-violent resistance to British colonial rule in both South Africa and India, believing in the power of peaceful protests to overthrow colonialists and empower native peoples.

Key Ideologies of the African Political Jingoists

1. **Pan-Africanism:** The ideology that advocates for unity among all African nations and the African diaspora, seeking to collectively end colonial and imperial control.
2. **Socialism/Marxism:** Many of African leaders embraced socialism, particularly Marxist and Leninist ideologies, viewing the liberation of African nations as part of a broader class struggles against imperialists' powers and their economic exploitation of African resources.
3. **Nationalism:** A focus on creation of independent African states with strong national identities free from foreign domination.
4. **Anti-imperialism:** Rejection of the economic and political dominance exerted by Euro-Western powers, to create self-sustaining economies and governance systems.

Objectives of the African Political Jingoists

The goals of the African political Jingoists who fought for the liberation of African nations from the colonial masters centered on the following:

1. **Political Independence:** The primary goal is to achieve full political independence from colonial powers.
2. **Economic Liberation:** Many leaders called for an end to economic exploitation, seeking to establish self-reliant economies.

3. **Cultural Restoration:** Reclaiming African cultures, languages, and traditions from the colonial legacy.
4. **Pan-African Unity:** The ultimate goal for many was to unite all African nations in a single political and economic block to confront the global power dynamics and promote self-determination.

These nationalists and their movements played a crucial role in decolonization of Africa, shaping both the political landscape and the broader Pan-African vision that continues to resonate across the continent today.

NIGERIAN POLITICS BEFORE, DURING, AND AFTER COLONIALISM

Before Colonialism

Before the colonial rule, Nigeria's political landscape was characterized by autonomous ethnic groups, each with its distinct system of governance. The Hausa-Fulani in the north practiced a centralized emirate system influenced by Islamism, the Yoruba in the southwest had a monarchical system led by kings (Obas), and the Igbo in the southeast operated on the decentralized, and communal system led by elders and chiefs. Other smaller ethnic groups had their governance structures rooted in traditions and cultures with significant emphasis on kinship and religion. There was no unified Nigerian state, hence political authority was localized.

During Colonialism

British colonial rule, starting from late 19th century, disrupted these traditional systems. The British amalgamated the northern and southern regions in 1914, creating Nigeria as a single entity for administrative convenience. They introduced indirect rule, which preserved traditional rulers but subordinated them to British colonial authorities. The system favored the north, where the centralized structures aligned with indirect rule, and which marginalized the decentralized systems in the south, leading to uneven political development and regional tensions.

After Colonialism

Following the independence in 1960, Nigeria adopted a parliamentary democracy but inherited a fragmented political landscape. Regional and ethnic divisions, exacerbated by colonial policies, dominated politics. Early post-independence politics was marked by ethnic rivalries, leading to instability, military coups, and the civil war that lasted from 1967–1970. Since then, Nigeria has alternated between military and civilian rules with democracy being reestablished on 29th May 1999. Presently, Nigeria operates a federal system of government, but its politics remains influenced by the ethnic, religious, and tribal interests encircled with challenges like corruption and weak institutions affecting governance.

EFFECTS OF COLONIALITY, AND TRANSCOLONIALITY ON NIGERIA'S DEMOCRATIC GOVERNANCE SINCE INDEPENDENCE IN 1960 TILL THE PRESENT TIME

The effects of coloniality and transcoloniality on the Nigeria democratic governance since independence, are significant, and multifaceted. These shed light on how the colonial structures, ideologies, and power dynamics shaped governance and socio-political realities, even in the post-independence era. Below are the detailed analysis:

1. Political Structures and Inherited Systems

Nigeria inherited the Western minister's parliamentary system of government and later transitioned to the presidential system modeled after the U.S democracy. Both systems were ill-suited to the country's diverse socio-political realities, which leads to instability and conflict.

Centralized governance: This is the colonial legacy that undermined local governance, marginalized, ethnic and regional interests.

2. Ethnic and Regional Divisions

Colonialism entrenched ethnic and regional divisions by promoting indirect rule and favoring certain groups. This created distrust among ethnic groups, which persists in Nigerian politics, undermining national unity and democratic consolidation. Thus the Post-independence politics have been characterized by ethnic rivalry, with governance often prioritizing patronage networks over national development.

3. Economic Dependence

The colonial economy was extractive and centered on the exploitation of the natural resources. Post-independence governments have maintained this structure, leading to economic inequalities and resource-based conflicts, particularly in the Niger Delta.

4. Authoritarian Tendencies

Colonial rule was inherently authoritarian, and this authoritarian legacy persisted in post-independence Nigeria through military coups, centralized decision-making, and limited accountability in democratic governance.

TRANSCOLONIALITY AND GLOBAL INFLUENCES

Transcoloniality centers on the interconnectedness of post-colonial nations and their relationships with the global powers. Transcoloniality in Nigeria for example, is evident on how external influences shape its governance such as:

a. Dependency on Global Powers

Nigeria is acclaimed to be independent, but remains dependent on foreign powers for financial aid, military supports, and economic partnerships. This dependency however, undermines sovereignty and shapes domestic policies to align with foreign interests. For example, the Structural Adjustment Programme (SAPs) imposed by the IMF and World Bank in the 1980s and 1990s, worsened inequality, weakened state capacity, and eroded trust in the democratic institutions.

b. Global Resource Exploitation

The transnational corporations in the oil sector have significant influence over Nigeria's economy and politics. Their activities exacerbate corruption, environmental degradation, and resource-based conflicts.

c. Democratic Conditionalities

The Western nations imposed democratic conditionalities tied to aids and investments, shapes the Nigeria's political landscape. These efforts sometimes promote superficial reforms rather than addressing systemic governance issues.

d. Cultural Hegemony

Western democratic ideals and government models are imposed on Nigeria without considering the country's indigenous political systems and traditions. This disconnect contributes to weak institutions and limited citizens engagements.

IMPACT ON DEMOCRATIC GOVERNANCE (1960–2023)

The combined effects of coloniality and transcoloniality on Nigeria's governance are profoundly relied on the following factors:

a. Instability and Military Interventions

Between 1966 and 1999, military regimes dominated Nigeria due to weak democratic institutions and political instability rooted in the colonial and post-colonial divisions.

b. Corruption and Weak Institutions

Both colonial and transcolonial influences entrenched corruption in Nigeria's governance. Hence the political elites prioritized their personal enrichments over the public service, and this nevertheless undermines the nation's democratic progress.

c. Conflict and Insecurity

The coloniality's ethnic divisions and transcolonial economic exploitation contributed to persistent insecurity, such as the Boko Haram insurgency, farmer-herder conflicts, and militancy in the Niger Delta.

d. Challenges to Electoral Integrity

Electoral processes often suffer from violence, fraud, and manipulations, reflecting the authoritarian legacies of the colonial governance and the influence of global actors who prioritize stability over genuine democracy.

e. Limited Citizens Participation

The disconnect between Nigeria's governance and grassroots communities, and the legacy of colonial centralized power, hampers citizen participation and engagement in democratic processes.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR OVERCOMING THE EFFECTS OF COLONIALITY AND TRANSCOLONIALITY 2023–2027

To address the effects of coloniality and transcoloniality on governance in this present republic and beyond, Nigeria must:

1. Strengthen Political Institutions: It must build accountable and transparent institutions to combat corruption and improve service delivery.
2. Promote Decentralization of Power: Nigeria must empower its local governments to address regional disparities and enhance citizens engagements.
3. Reform Electoral System: Nigeria must abide to the principles of free, fair, and credible elections through institutional reforms and technology.
4. Reclaim its Sovereignty: The country must reduce its dependency on foreign powers by diversifying the economy and fostering self-reliance.
5. Foster National Unity: Promote the inclusive governance that respects ethnic /cultural diversities while prioritizing national interests. Addressing these challenges therefore, Nigeria will overcome the lingering effects of coloniality and transcoloniality. This will pave ways for more stable and inclusive democracy.

CONCLUSION

The impacts of coloniality and transcoloniality in the Nigeria democratic governance underscores a complex interplay between the historical legacies of colonialism and the contemporary globalized dynamics. Colonial structure brought about ethnic diversities, centralized governance, and economic dependency that had shaped the Nigeria/African political landscape. The transcolonial influences manifested through globalization, neo-imperialism, and the external interventions that have further complicated the country's democratic development, and prioritized the external interests over national progress. Irrespective of the problems of corruption, electoral manipulation, and weak institutional frameworks, Nigeria has made remarkable strides in her Fourth Republic such as the peaceful transfer of power and an expanding democratic space. However, for Nigeria to achieve sustainable democratic governance, the leaders must be morally and mentally trained to confront the enduring legacies of coloniality, foster inclusive institutions, and strengthen up political accountability. As Nigeria moves forward, embraces innovations and youth participation, regional integration will be pivotal in tackling all these historical burdens and building a resilient democratic future.

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