Decolonization Debacle: The Bane of Sustainable Development Attainment in Nigeria

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Abstract

Colonization, an imperial conquest of native lands by European countries, became an epoch-making, monumental highlight in the historical development of third-world countries. There is no gainsaying that the colonial exercise did more evil than good for the colonized world. The decolonization of Africa and other colonized areas of the world was a slow process that was triggered by the First and Second World Wars. The devastating effects of the two wars on the economies of the West, coupled with the native resistance from the colonies, made colonialism impracticable. Hence, the European imperialist states were faced with no other choice than to relinquish their dominance in their colonies. Nigeria, which finally, attained independence in 1960, tailored its national development policy along the welfarist paradigm. In 1987, Nigeria joined the rest of the world in subscribing to the ideology of sustainable development by partaking in the World Commission on Environment and Development summit. The realization of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) became entrenched in national developmental planning after Nigeria attended the Sustainable Development Conference held by the UN in 2012. However, following the years of decolonization, Nigeria has grappled with developmental challenges and appeared to be in reverse gear in the developmental process. The post-colonial upheavals and mismanagement of Nigeria became a glaring feature, thus having far-reaching consequences on her development strides. This begs the question as to what and how the decolonization exercise benefitted Nigeria. Therefore, this study examines the decolonization dilemma of Nigeria and how it has hampered Nigeria's chances of attaining sustainable development. The study employed a qualitative and expository analysis in examining the effect of the decolonization process on the attainment of the SDGs. The study builds on data from a range of published and unpublished sources. It was concluded in the study, that the climate that arose from the decolonization process had not enhanced the actualization of sustainable development in Nigeria. Among the suggestions in the study includes retracing the decolonization steps taken thus far and redefining how Nigeria can be rid of the legacies and traces of colonialism so as to set out on a steady drive toward attaining sustainable development.

Keywords: *Colonialism, Decolonization, Development, Sustainable Development, Sustainable Development Goals*

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Background to the Study

After centuries of invasions, many aboriginal societies and kingdoms across the world fell to the superior firepower of the colonizing European invaders (Pettit, 2021:1). These nations, which became known today, as Third World countries, consisted mainly of Africa, Asia, and Latin America and Oceania. The colonizers had argued that their imperialist intentions were for altruistic purposes, to expedite the advancement and development of the conquered territories (Mart and Toker, 2010: 362). In the end, it became apparent that European imperialism did more harm than good to the development of the colonized nations (Enaifoghe, 2019: 63).

By 1885/6, the colonization process was made official in the Berlin Conference, where leaders of the imperialist West gathered together to formally document the balkanization of the conquered territories into colonies (Gueye, 2018: 116). The ensuing decades of colonialism led to a series of outcomes for the colonized territories, in terms of development. On the one hand, it was argued that colonialism brought about some level of development to the colonies such as urbanization, industrialization, expanded markets, modernized economic and government structures, and so on (Adeyeri and Adejuwon 2012: 8). On the other hand, it was argued that colonialism led to the underdevelopment of the colonial societies whereby they were trapped in a vicious cycle of arrested development.

For the latter part of the 19th century where colonialism peaked, the world witnessed two devastating global wars namely, World Wars I and II. These epochal events shaped the international dynamics of politics in general and colonialism in particular. Arising from the ruins caused by the chaos and carnage of the First World War, the Western nations immediately established the League of Nations with the primary objective of forestalling another global conflict (Birmingham, 2009: 11). Moreover, the outbreak of World War II hinted on the failure of the League of Nations meet its target, hence its demise, and subsequent replacement by its successor, the United Nations (UN).

After the six-year-long Second World War had ended, the UN established new modalities and systems for modern international law and relations amongst its member nations (Beihami and Meifa, 2014: 16). The UN entrenched and advocated for the concept of self-determination which meant that every nation, colonized or not, could aspire to statehood and form its government (Lovelace, 2015: 74). This generally led to colonized societies across the world and particularly Africa in adopting clamorous nationalistic actions, thereby ushering in an era of decolonization (Birmingham, 2009: 4).

It is without gainsaying that the UN played a critical and useful role in decolonization in Africa. Birmingham (2009:19) noted that Ghana became the first African nation to decolonize, thus gaining sovereignty and independence from colonial rule in 1957, while Nigeria followed suit in 1960. Therefore, the decolonization process spawned new nations across Africa. And decades after, the African continent in general, and Nigeria in particular, has continued to grapple with developmental challenges. If it is argued that colonialism stifled the development of the colonized area known today as Nigeria, then this poses the question:

what did the decolonization process do to right the wrongs of colonial rule in terms of development? Therefore, the objective of the study is to examine the decolonization conundrum, its challenges, and its consequences for Nigeria's quest to attain sustainable development goals.

Conceptual and Literature Review

The concepts examined in this study are as follows:

Imperialism

Imperialism is said to be as old as human civilization, especially when mankind began to build larger kingdoms and empires. Therefore, the Roman Empire was perceived as the greatest imperial power of the Old World, ruling over regions that stretched "northern Britain to the Red Sea and the Arabian Gulf" until the time of its demise in 476 AD (Isa, Al-Aggad, Al-Quthami, and Wazna. 2022: 120).

Imperialism can be defined as "the practice, the theory, and attitudes of a dominating metropolitan center ruling a distant territory", (Said, 2007, in Gueye, 2018: 111).

There are four ways by which imperialism expresses itself as noted by (Okon and Ojakorotu, 2018: 229), namely:

1. A colony: This is a territorial area or settlement governed or administered by a foreign power.
2. A Protectorate: They are usually made up of colonies, consisting of territories with an internal government set in place and answerable and under the dominion of an external power.
3. Sphere of influence: This refers to a province or district where the foreign nation has earmarked for itself as a controlling investment and commercial point.
4. Economic imperialism: This refers to the overbearing dominance of underdeveloped independent territories by non-native commercial groups or consortiums, backed by their home government.

The fourth point of "economic imperialism" was triggered by the Industrial Age which saw many nations, of European origin, grow exponentially in their economic activities. And with this, more European nations began to venture into imperial conquest which led to inter-imperialist rivalry (Stathakis, 2009: 100). In other words, capitalism became a major driving force for the industrialized nations of Europe competing for economic control over rural territories and this further determined the trade relations of these imperial powers.

Economically induced imperialism was then perceived as a peaceful venture in that it enhanced the home industries of the industrialized world and promoted free trade which created wealth for the nations involved. As a result, (Stathakis, 2009: 101) opines that imperialism was not an ideology on the interrelationships between developed and underdeveloped countries, rather it was a struggle among the industrialized countries over economic reasons. Put differently, imperialism does not only indicate the political, military, and economic dominance of a developed nation on underdeveloped territories, rather it also includes the analysis of the rise of capitalism and industrialization.

The imperialist incursion into Africa has a long history, spanning centuries and stages, even dating back before the Industrial Era. From Greek occupation under Alexander the Great (356-323 BC) to the Rome Empire conquest to the domination of the Arab caliphate, the continent of Africa has been under constant imperialist invasion (John, 2014: 18). This persistent imperialism on the continent of Africa saw the continent experience a downturn in her development process as many powerful nations sought to exploit her for her resources. As noted by (Ozumba and John, 2013:50-51) imperialism led to a situation whereby the African continent was pieced apart into protectorates and economic spheres of influence by external forces just so that the people could be dominated, plundered, and enslaved.

By the turn of the 18th to the 19th century, a renewed wave of more deliberate imperialism saw the African continent coming under complete subjugation by the European powers, with the Europeans lording it over the natives of the continent. This ushered in a rebranded form of imperialism which became known as colonialism, whereby, Britain had a major empire, controlling scores of colonies and territories, followed by the French empire (Isa, Al-Aggad, Al-Quthami, and Wazna. 2022: 120).

Colonialism
Colonialism can be defined as "the direct and overall domination of one country by another based on state power being in the hands of a foreign power" (Ocheni and Nwankwo: 2012: 46).

As a phase of imperial domination, colonialism was perceived as a capitalist expansion strategy that involved sustained expropriation of the resources of native countries and regions of the world for the well-being of the colonizing power and is backed by a complex doctrinal apparatus as its justification (József, and Sarkar, 2012: 1).

Historically, the term "colony" is formerly coined from the Latin words "Colonus" or "colonia", which means a "farm settlement" or an "outpost" (József, and Sarkar, 2012: 1, and Isa, Al-Aggad, Al-Quthami, and Wazna., 2022: 118). The colonization process began around the 16th century and peaked in the 19th/20th century. By 1920, over 84 percent of the earth's surface had been colonized, while 83 countries in Africa and Asia, fell under colonial rule (Chung. 2010, in Umaru, 2019: 9; and Patrick Ziltener and Daniel Kunzler. 2013: 291).

The jostle over the resources of Africa had begun in 1880 when Belgium conceived of the need to launch an invasion into the continent for what it terms as her abundant riches (Ozumba and John, 2012:49). It was at this point that the colonial predicament of Africa began. Needless to say, this renewed imperial agenda was coming at the onset of the abolition of the slave trade which had decimated Africa's population of able-bodied men and women. What his implied was that, while the taking away of Africans as slaves to Europe was being put to an end, another plot was hatched to make Africans become slaves in their land.

In effect, colonialism was hatched as a continuation of European imperialism on Africa and thus became the history of the continent. However, the colonizers did not take over the whole

continent without meeting a couple of fierce resistances from some native tribes and kingdoms. However, by 1910, the entire continent had fallen under the complete imposition of colonial regimes (Gueye, 2018: 113). Belgium, led by King Leopold II, convinced six other European powers, namely: Britain, France, Spain Portugal, Germany, and Italy to divide, plunder, and exercise dominion over Africa among themselves (Ozumba and John, 2012:49). Therefore, these European nations were the primary nations that colonized Africa. In subjugating Africa, the colonizers used a series of strategies and techniques to force Africans to submit to their rule such as "conquest, forced labour, taxation, monetization of the economy, and payment of low wages" (Ocheni and Nwankwo: 2012, 48).

As Africans got more educated, and nationalism grew, the time for the end of colonialism on the continent became a constant discussion that could not be overlooked. By then, over eight decades had elapsed over which Africa had been under colonial control. While the colonial period set Africa back on many fronts, it can also be argued that it brought about the development of substantial infrastructure, and a fairly mechanized agricultural system, while reforming the "traditional standards of wealth and status" (Umaru, 2019: 10). These perceived benefits of colonialism did not abate the desire for the African emergent leadership class to clamour for the liberation of African nations and societies from the grip of colonial authorities. As a result, the decolonization of Africa with the total denunciation of capitalism and colonialism via any means and method (John, 2014. 23).

Decolonization
Decolonization can be defined as "the simultaneous dissolution of several intercontinental empires and the creation of new nation-state" (Jansen and Osterhammel, 2017, 2). The next section of the paper provides a detailed literature on the subject of decolonization.

Sustainable Development
Sustainability comes from the word "sustain" which simply means to maintain something, especially over a certain period. The idea of sustainability came from the agrarian societies as concern for the preservation of natural resources grew, with hunters being worried about their prey becoming extinct, and farmers being apprehensive about maintaining soil fertility (Kuhlman and Farrington, 2010: 3437). It can, therefore, be said that sustainability, as an idea, was initially concocted in forestry, which connotes "never harvesting more than what the forest yields in new growth" (Kuhlman and Farrington, 2010, 3437).

Additionally, sustainability could be examined within a business history perspective. Bergquist (2017: 2) pointed out that the idea of sustainability in business can be traced to the era of the Industrial Revolution. For centuries, business organizations have exploited natural resources to generate energy and supply raw materials for their production processes. The era between 1750 and 1900 saw the climax of the Industrial Revolution, which was a major contributor to the rise of the civilization of the West (Bergquist, 2017, 12). The period brought about the consolidation of the progress and development of scientific invention, with the notion that nature could be controlled and governed through science. By 1789, the unfortunate and negative consequences of the Industrial Revolution began to surface in the form of unemployment, poverty, and disease (Feil and Schreiber, 2017, 669).

The Brundtland Report of 1987 is said to be the conceptual origin of sustainability as a 21st century development policy. Kuhlman and Farrington (2010: 3437) stressed that "the Brundtland document was concerned with the tension between the aspirations of mankind towards a better life on the one hand, and the limitations imposed by nature on the other hand. Over time, the concept has been re-interpreted as encompassing three dimensions; namely: social, economic, and environmental.

Thus, the idea of sustainability transcends beyond environmental concerns to include sustainability in the social, technological, political, financial, and economic environment (Burns, 2013, 10). The main point of the concept of sustainability is to ensure that those resources which are deemed irreplaceable must be preserved at all costs. Sustainability drives mankind to not only answer the question of the extent of well-being should be bequeathed to future generations but also makes more inquiries into how the human race can survive over a long period of time as they relate with other species.

From the concept of sustainability came the concept of sustainable development. Brundtland (1987, in (Bellu, 2011: 5) defined sustainable development as development that "meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs".

The World Commission on Environment and Development popularized the usage of Sustainable development in its 1987 seminal report called "Our Common Future" (Ejumudo, 2015: 78). Afterwards, sustainable development became a critical standard upon which governments of the world formulated policies that were geared towards economic development with the involvement of private and non-governmental organizations. Ejumudo (2015, 79), however, stressed that though there is a general agreement that sustainable development connotes the progressive role of the government in efficiently and effectively managing natural and environmental resources, the applicability of sustainability as a criterion for development has been adversely affected by conceptual vagueness.

Klarin (2018: 68) noted that the concept of sustainable development evolved in the 70s and especially in the 80s of the last centuries. The notion that development should be sustainable became apparent when looking back at mankind's developmental strides even right before the Industrial Revolution, which has consequently led to retrogressive and mostly irreversible damages to the environment as well as environmental resources.

Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)
Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) as a concept was a "global call to action for people, planet, and prosperity, aiming to enhance economic, social, and environmental dimensions of social development", (Ogisi and Begho, 2021, 257). through the implementation of 17 sustainable goals The SDGs were framed out of the need to promote sustainable development through the "integrated, indivisible, and balance the three pillars of sustainable development, viz., the economic, social, and environment while also adopting the principles of people, planet, prosperity, peace, and partnership" (Cerf, 2018, 1).

The SDGs were formally introduced at the UN Conference on Sustainable Development (Rio+20) in 2012. Amongst the many resolutions of the conference was an international and intentional agreement to "negotiate a new set of global Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)" (Osborn, Cutter, and Ullah, 2015: 3) that would position the world on a steady path to sustainable development by 2015. It was a universal sustainable development agenda that was initiated by member nations of the United Nations (UN) to serve as a guide towards engendering rapid and even development across the world. On New Year's Day of 2016, the world officially kicked off a 15-year journey of addressing and confronting the urgent global challenges through the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development—which is the transformational action plan predicated on the 17 SDGs. The 17 SDGs are listed in a later section of this paper.

A Historical Perspective of Decolonization

Western expansionism spread across regions of the globe which were termed as the new worlds, namely Africa, the Americas, Asia, and Oceania. On the African front, there had been pushbacks against the invaders, with pockets of victories recorded. However, as years went by, African societies and kingdoms began to fall, one by one, to European conquest until the whole continent was under European occupation.

A myriad of reasons was given for the fall of Africa to imperial rule. They include the following:
  i.   The Europeans had superior firepower and were technologically advanced in the art and techniques of warfare,
  ii.   Another reason was the lack of unity among the kingdoms, societies, and peoples that made up Africa,
  iii. African kingdoms and communities were too embroiled in tribal conflicts and inter-ethnic in-fighting to devote time and effort to warding off the European invaders (Adeyeri, and Adejuwon 2012, 4).

These, coupled with other reasons, ensured that Africa was picked apart by the West, in a colonial episode of Western imperialism that spanned decades, from 1800 to 1960. Eventually, the African continent was swept away into a long period of colonization, within which two world wars in Europe threatened the very survival of mankind.

In both World War I and II, the European colonizers sought military manpower amongst Africans who were drafted to fight against German imperialism in Europe. The experiences and lessons from the two global wars served as a turning point for Africans to clamour for independence for the following reasons:
  i.   The fact that European countries were fighting for their "freedom" from the invading Germans, motivated African countries to fight for theirs.
  ii.   The wars exposed Europe as being as "uncivilized" as they claimed Africa was, as they were engaged in self-destructive tendencies as in-fighting within themselves.
  iii. The wars made Africans jettison the fabled beliefs that the Europeans were immortals or invincible, that could not be defeated on the battlefields.
  iv.   Africans acquired the necessary military techniques and leadership skills which

would become instrumental in fighting for their own independence (Collins, 2016, 3, Fraser, 2013: 4, and Ogba and Okpanachi, 2014, 11).

Therefore, the two devastating wars helped stimulate, strengthen, and drive Africans towards a mutual nationalistic outlook and objective to fight for their liberation. The Second World War, particularly, set the stage for and hastened the decolonization of Africa as it set Europe militarily and economically. Britain and France, being the main European colonizers, suffered severe military and economic losses which put them at a disadvantage in resisting African nationalist movements (Birmingham, 2009:11). Another outcome of the Second World War which enhanced the decolonization process was the establishment of the Atlantic Charter under the leadership of the then United States President Roosevelt and Britain's Prime Minister Churchill (Lovelace, 2015:76). Stated and outlined in the Charter is that Allied powers "respect the right of all peoples to choose the form of government under which they will live" (Nwaubani, 2003:507) after they came out victorious in the war.

The UN which replaced the League of Nations after World War II became a strong advocate for the decolonization of the remaining colonies (Lovelace, 2015: 76). It was a long and strenuous struggle for Africa's liberation from the shadow of European imperialism, nevertheless the fight was fruitful, hence, ushering in a series of decolonization efforts.

Developmental Efforts after the Decolonization Process in Nigeria
The post-war and post-colonial years were regarded as a period of development and welfarism as championed by the newly created nation-states. Like many post-colonial states in Africa, Nigeria adopted a welfarist model which was designed to combat the development challenges it inherited from the colonial masters. The decolonization experiment in Nigeria focused on intense state interventionist programmes to expedite and foster development, by providing social or public goods that benefit the generality of the people. As a result, the Nigerian government rolled out national developmental plans from one administration to another with the aim of using the public resources of the newfound nation-state of Nigeria to engender development.

According to Ojo (2012, 447), the colonial administration of pre-independence Nigeria had embarked on a series of national development planning, shortly after the Second World War had ended. These plans became known as the pre-national development plans which spanned the period from 1946 to 1956. However, these plans were neither coordinated nor related to the local developmental needs of the populace as they served to meet the supposed agenda of the colonial government of extracting and supplying raw agricultural and mineral resources to British factories (Ugwuanyi, 2014: 172, and Iheanacho, 2014, 51).

In 1954, after Nigeria adopted the federal system of government, the country saw a major paradigm shift in policy as the colonial government saw the need to direct and coordinate development efforts (Anyebe, 2014, 50). As a result, a 5-Year development plan was put into place, covering the period from 1955 to 1960, to focus solely on expenditure. Essentially, the plan involved the control, coordination, and administration of development and welfare

funds which were set aside for the developmental needs of the local populace by the colonial government (Ibietan and Ekhosuehi, 2013, 300). Actual national development planning that centered on improving the living standards of the Nigerian local populace commenced after the country attained independence in 1960. Nigeria generally has five national development planning epochs in Nigeria which spanned between 1962 and 1985 (Anyebe, 2014, 25; Oye, 2014, 55, and Anah, 2014, 37).

The First and Second National Development Plans were centered on addressing the developmental backwardness caused by colonialism and the civil war, respectively, by accelerating economic and infrastructural development through the exploitation of natural and human resources (Oye 2014: 55). While the Third National Development Plan sought to utilize surplus national revenue from the oil windfall to boost the productive capability of the economy, the Fourth National Development Plan emphasized on the need to balance the development of the various sectors of the economy amidst declining oil revenues (Anyebe, 2014: 25). However, the Fifth National Development Plan focused on putting an end to the dependency of Nigeria on oil by embarking on the diversification of the economy through strengthening the agricultural, manufacturing and industrial sectors (Ukah, 2009, 15). Other development plans include the Rolling Plan of 1990 to 1998 which was geared at providing the country the prospects and direction of adjusting its development strategies amidst rising economic, social and political upheavals (Ukah, 2009, 18). The Vision 2010 plan which was projected to cover the period of 1997 to 2010 stressed on total deregulation of the Nigerian economy as well as the implementation of short-range, intermediate and long-range developmental approaches (Ayodele, Obafemi and Ebong, 2013, 148).

Other developmental approaches and policies that successive Nigerian administrations adopted were the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) through the initialization and implementation of policies such as the National Poverty Eradication Programme (NAPEP), the National Economic Empowerment and Development Strategy (NEEDS), the New Partnership for African Development (NEPAD) and so on. Ejumudo (2013, 76) opined that the major thrust of these policies was to eradicate poverty thereby bringing about sustainable development.

Sustainable Development Goals Implementation in Nigeria
The SDGs was embraced as a global development policy at the UN meeting in September 2015 (Ighobor, 2015: 26). The UN adopted a comprehensive strategy to the issues faced by its member-nations by aggregating on their development challenges and promoting public-private collaborations in the implementation of the SDGs. The SDGs comprised of 169 targets which when aggregated culminated into the 17 goals of the SDGs (Idowu, Olaniran, and Peruma, 2020: 258). These goals include:
1. End poverty in all its forms everywhere.
2. End hunger, achieve food security and improved nutrition, and promote sustainable agriculture.
3. Ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all at all ages.
4. Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote life-long learning

opportunities for all.

5. Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls.
6. Ensure availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation for all.
7. Ensure access to affordable, reliable, sustainable, and modern energy for all.
8. Promote sustained, inclusive, and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment, and decent work for all.
9. Build resilient infrastructure, promote inclusive and sustainable industrialization, and foster innovation.
10. Reduce inequality within and among countries.
11. Make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient, and sustainable.
12. Ensure sustainable consumption and production patterns.
13. Take urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts.
14. Conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas, and marine resources for sustainable development.
15. Protect, restore, and promote sustainable use of terrestrial ecosystems, sustainably manage forests, combat desertification, and halt and reverse land degradation and halt biodiversity loss.
16. Promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all, and build effective, accountable, and inclusive institutions at all levels; and
17. Strengthen the means of implementation and revitalize the global partnership for sustainable development (Loewe and Rippin, 2015: 7).

The timing of the adoption and implementation of the SDGs in Nigeria came with the emergence of the Buhari administration in 2015. As Nigeria transformed from the MDGs to the SDGs, the administration saw the need to infuse the institutional framework of the MDGs into the SDGs (OSSAP-SDGS, 2020: 1). With this, the government converted the office Senior Special Assistant to the President on Millennium Development Goals (OSSAP-MDGs) to the Office of the Senior Special Assistant to the President on Sustainable Development Goals (OSSAP-SDGs) to fit in with the programme.

The government focused on the implementation of some critical but specific SDGs with the hope that the gains on their implementation would have a spillover effect on the overall SDGs implementation. These specific SDGs as pointed out by (OSSAP-SDGS, 2020: 3) include: SDG 1, SDG 3, SDG 4, SDG 5, SDG 8, SDG 16 and SDG 17.

The Nigerian government announced in 2020 that it had adopted an indigenous integrated SDG Model in its bid towards the implementation of the SDGs. The strategies of the integrated SDG model, according to Agbakwuru (2020), include amongst others:
   i. The adoption of the members of the National Youth Service Corps (NYSC) to serve as ambassadors in promoting the implementation of SDGs at the local communities.
   ii. The involvement and consultation of strategic stakeholders in the implementation of the SDGs by establishing an SDGs advisory group as well as a donors' forum from the private sector; and

iii. The improvement on the efficiency and effectiveness of the National Statistical System on its annual role of overseeing and recording the implementation of the SDGs by completely overhauling the organization.

In executing its SDGs plans, the administration proposed to establish the following initiatives:
a. The establishment of the Nigeria Integrated SDG Simulation Model to aid in the naturalization of the model of planning across the 36 states.
b. The creation of the Integrated National Financing Frameworks for SDGs.
c. The expansion of the National Social Investment Programme to have a wider coverage of the economically disadvantaged groups in Nigeria as part of the administration's resolve to fulfill its 10-year plan to elevate 100 million Nigerians out of poverty; and
d. The engagement of all sectors of the society for the successful implementation of the SDGs (Agbakwuru, 2020).

In 2022, during a presentation at the 77th United Nations General Assembly (UNGA77) in New York, the Nigerian government unveiled what it called the Integrated National Financing Framework (INFF) for Sustainable Development (Ailemen, 2022). The government stated that the INFF was a means of financial planning and management to implement sustainable development at the national level. All of these are the efforts put in place by the administration to ensure the effective and successful implementation of the SDGs over the last seven years (since 2016).

Theoretical Perspective: The Dependency Approach to Development
The study adopted the dependency development theory to explain the complexities surrounding the decolonization phase of development in African countries in general and Nigeria in particular. Colonial rule, according to the dependency theorists was geared at systematically impoverishing and under-developing the colonized worlds (Willis, 2011: 77).

According to Reyes (2001: 5), the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC) embarked on research which gave rise to the theory of dependency originated in the 1950s. Through the 1950s to the mid-1960s, the dependency model was furnished and elaborated with contributions from theorists such as Andre Gunder Frank, Edelberto Torres-Rivas, Enrique Cardozo, Immanuel Wallerstein, Raul Prebisch, Ruy Mauro Marinin, Samir Amin, Theotonio Dos Santos and so on (Shareia, 2015: 79, and Reyes, 2001: 5).

According to the dependency school, the following are the major hypotheses as they concern the development and underdevelopment of the colonized worlds:
i. The development status of the peripheral nations was not self-reliant, rather it was dependent on the core nations,
ii. Greatest economic advancement was recorded by peripheral nations whenever they cut ties with the core or whenever the core nations were embroiled in economic or political crisis.

iii. The apparent fact that the peripheral regions which were most underdeveloped and operated under primordial political settings were heavily linked to the core nations (Reyes, 2001, 6-7).

The foremost contention of dependency theorists is that the underdevelopment of the former colonial territories is being perpetuated by the socio-economic system that neo-colonialism creates through globalization. With the international economic structure of globalization firmly in place, terms of trade, as well as the balance of political and economic power, are determined by the centres in their own favour (Abuiyada, 2018: 116). Therefore, to reverse this situation, the dependency proponents surmised the following strategies: central planning, state interventionism, import-substitution industrialization, and regional integration (Abuiyada, 2018: 116).

The dependency theory is not without criticisms which Shareia (2015, 81) and Willis (2011: 79) provide as follows:
   i. The conclusions of dependency theory are not supported by sufficient and comprehensive empirical evidence.
   ii. There is an enormous usage of vague analysis in its theoretical disposition.
   iii. Also, the dependency movement's proposition of severing ties with core nations may as well deny them the benefit of technological transfer.

On the positive side of the dependency theory, Shareia (2015, 81) notes the following:
   i. The theory identifies and places higher emphasis on the nation-states as the primary organ to be evaluated in the process of development.
   ii. Also, the theory highlights a two-part theoretical analysis, whereby one part examines modern-traditional relations, while the other analyzes the interdependence that exists between the core and the peripherals.

The dependency theory is vital in explaining the Nigerian decolonization situation in that it points out how the country is caught up in the center-periphery web which has perpetuated its underdeveloped state. The dependency theory depicted the world system as being capitalist in nature through an inherent "core-periphery" duality which affects the developmental possibilities of Nigeria (Nhema and Zinyama, 2016, 154).

This is why African leaders particularly Nigerian leaders generally are considered as inferiors to their Western counterparts. For instance, during the burial of the late Queen Elizabeth, while leaders of the West were ferried in their specialized motorcades to the venue of Queen Elizabeth's state burial at Westminster Abbey in London., African leaders were conveyed to the same location in a bus. The incident sparked negative reactions from the media, especially from Africa, with some observers calling it a disrespect to Africa and a carryover of the neocolonial tendencies of the West to treat Africans as inferior (Rédaction Africanews and Adu-Gyamfi, 2022).

The Bretton Woods institutions of the World Bank and the International Monetary Funds (IMF) were established after the Second World War to aid in the development of the economically backward nation-states of the world. Unfortunately, the development model handed down by these institutions to African countries does not fit with their developmental trajectories. This shows that the Breton Woods concept of development has itself become a problem to the development of Africa as a result of "the contradictions between the latent and the manifest functions" (Onyishi and Amoke, 2018, 111).

Methodology
This study adopted a qualitative research design in order to gain insight into the decolonization process in Nigeria and how it has affected the attainment of sustainable development goals in Nigeria. It draws on secondary data from various published and unpublished related literature which were germane principally journals, books, web materials and newspapers.

The Challenges and Consequences of Decolonization on Sustainable Development in Nigeria
After the end of World War II in 1945, there were only four independent countries on the African continent namely: Egypt, Ethiopia, Liberia, and the Union of South Africa (Beihami and Meifa, 2014: 16). The rest of Africa was under colonial rule until the late 1950s when mass decolonization efforts began in the continent. Nigeria became decolonized in 1960, with its former colonial masters, handing over the reins of state and government powers to the indigenous people of the newly created independent state (Birmingham, 2009: 4, and Nwaubani, 2003: 530).

While the new administrations of Nigeria's nascent state embarked on widespread developmental efforts to turn around the high level of underdevelopment of the local people through state interventionist policies, it struggled with the consequences of decolonization. These consequences are as follows:
1. An indigenous elite mainly comprised tribal aristocracies. This created a situation of conflicts and tussles for the control of state powers amongst the various tribes and ethnic groups that make up Nigeria.
2. Another negative impact of the decolonization process was the rapid population explosions in the urban areas, as people migrated from the rural areas to replace the departing colonialists in government and administrative jobs. This gave rise to the proliferation of slums and ghettos with their attendant social vices like housing problems, overpopulation, pollution, unemployment, and high crime wave.
3. Related to the issue of overpopulation was the pressure it posed on critical infrastructures in the country. Infrastructural development which is instrumental in delivering the policies of sustainable development was heavily strained and inadequate to cater to the rising populations in the urban areas.
4. Another significant consequence of decolonization in Nigeria was a complete change in the administrative composition of the Nigerian civil service as well as the private sector. Like most African countries, Nigeria faced the problem of a lack of/ or

insufficient qualified personnel to fill in the vacant positions left behind by the departing colonizers.

5. Due to the ethnic infighting for the control of the resources of the state in the postcolonial period of Nigeria, there were a number of ethnic and religious conflicts, which culminated into the wanton destruction of lives and properties and truncated the few gains that Nigeria had attained in its developmental efforts.

6. More so in the decolonization process of Nigeria was the inheritance of weak state institutions. This led to practices that were antithetical to the use of the state to pursue sustainable development such as corruption, abuse of power, political instability, and frequent change of governments. These issues have had resultant effects on economic and political instability in the decolonized African countries (Beihami and Meifa, 2014: 18, Ogba and Okpanachi, 2014, 17). These factors have persisted over the decades and have remained unabated since Nigeria's independence, threatening her chances of meeting the deadline for the implementation of the SDGs.

Adapting Decolonization Needs Around Sustainable Development: Lessons from Botswana and India
Botswana
Being prompted by the decolonization tidal wave that swept across Africa, Botswana pressed for and attained flag independence from Britain, in October 1966, though it had earlier propped itself for self-rule by conducting elections a year before (Poteete, 2017, 2). And as it was the governments of the many newly created African states, the Botswana government was confronted with the enormous challenges of engendering national development through its limited resources. This precarious scenario threatened the very survival of Botswana as an independent state as it had to rely heavily on aid and grants from its former colonizers for its economic sustenance.

Poteete (2017, 2) opined that the ensuing decades of post-colonial Botswana posed a challenge to her statehood, as the government continued to depend on foreign administrators and expatriates to manage its productive sectors and public service, especially as the majority of its citizens had not attained secondary school education. However, Botswana adopted some concrete steps to ease the transition to her post-colonial era while repositioning her future towards a sustainable path to development. They include:
1. The investment of funds from non-renewable natural resources into profitable infrastructural assets, resulting in a highly concentrated system of schools, roads, health facilities, and administrative complexes. These brought about observable upgrade in the living standards of the people.
2. There was a concerted effort to pursue monetary policies that restricted currency appreciation by jettisoning the Rand region and ushering in her monetary unit, the Pula, which was linked to a group of currencies from Botswana's most prized commodity trading partners.
3. The containment of the flow of revenues into the economy of Botswana was also pursued so as to restrict wage inflation, which would in turn lead to a savings culture and promote investments in non-mineral sectors of the economy.

4. Post-colonial Botswana adopted a strategy towards protecting its economy against the instability in global commodity markets. Successive governments promoted economic diversification by investing in research and development in mining activities, agricultural production, and their fledging public sector.
5. Additionally, Botswana imposed stringent checks and control over foreign direct investments by teaming with its southern African neighbours to discourage foreign investors from establishing industrial layouts in neighbouring countries.
6. Furthermore, Botswana had a deliberate policy of fiercely protecting its middle class by ensuring that potential investors did not have easy access to a large pool of cheap labour (Poteete, 2017, 4-5).

With all these measures in place, Botswana was able to build a bulwark against the fluctuations in global commodity prices from the 1970s to 1990s, while expanding its revenues, stabilizing its economy, and growing its public sector. This invariably culminated in improved socio-economic conditions for the generality of the people of Botswana. Botswana attained independence in 1966 and has gone ahead to achieve remarkable socio-economic progress since then. Its long-term development strategy of sustainable development recognizes decentralization as a veritable tool for encouraging bottom-up participatory development by local-level institutions (Musekiwa and Mandiyanike, 2017, 136). Thus, the fulcrum of planning and implementing the SDGs in Botswana was community-driven development.

India
The decolonization process of British India was severely marred by the religious crisis that tore the former colony into two countries, out of which the Indian nation-state emerged. However, upon the attainment of independence in 1947, India sought to forge ahead by refining the concept of development and ensuring the means by which it was delivered and achieved. Zachariah (2016, 201) noted that India's agenda for national development stressed adopting national discipline and indigenous values in pursuing modern social, economic, and political goals through the use of science, technology, and technical expertise.

India's developmental strategy involved state interventionism with a passion-driven, patriotic, persistently determined populace that was intentional to pilot and push the state towards its developmental journey (Roy, 2007: 105–132). Conscious national efforts were put in place to discourage political activities and protests that had religious, regional, or other related motives as they were perceived as inimical to India's developmental strides (Sengupta, 2019, 4). Sharma and Chaturvedi (2020: 1498) noted that the National Institution for Transforming India was established ahead of 2015 to be the main body in charge of India's implementation of the SDGs. The Development Planning Commission adopted bottom-down approach schemes to ensure the progress of India in the SDGs implementation over the years.

Fig 2: SDGs Index Scores for Nigeria, Botswana and India (2016 - 2022)
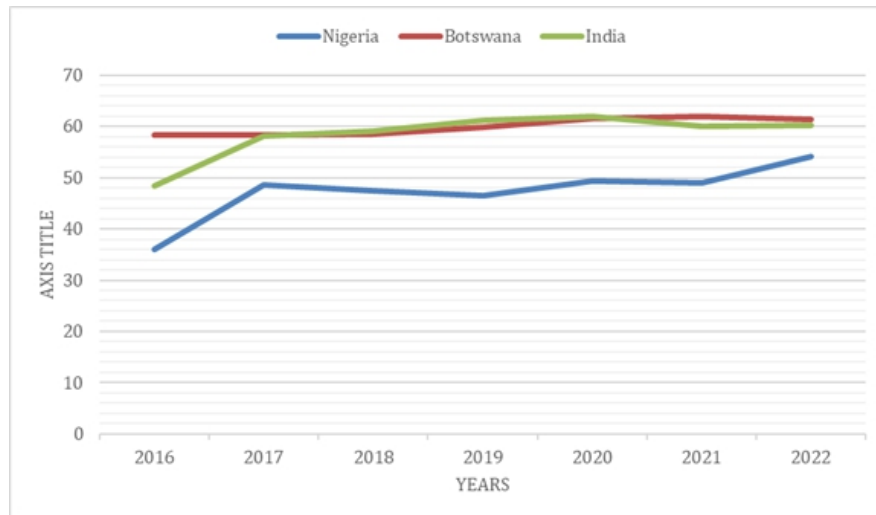
Source: Sachs, et al., 2016 to 2022

Above is a diagrammatic display of SDGs index scores amongst Nigeria, Botswana, and India. The graph clearly shows Botswana and India are soaring high over the years in their implementation of the SDGs as compared to Nigeria. From the onset, both countries were determined to pursue development initiatives that promoted sustainability, thus, providing the foundational basis for the easy transition into the SDGs era.

Conclusion and Suggestions
It has been more than 60 years since Nigeria joined the bandwagon of decolonization to liberate itself from the shackles of imperialism. Over the period, quite a lot of phases of transformation had elapsed in the world. From each nation pursuing their national development individually, the world had moved to a unified approach to tackling the worldwide developmental challenges especially that of the global south. The aim of the study was to examine the decolonization dilemma of Nigeria and how it affected Nigeria's chances of attaining sustainable development.

The perceived failures of decolonization to deliver socio-economic equality and sustainable development in the lives of the indigenous people of the former colonies led to the coining of the term "Neo-colonialism" which the Ghanaian nationalist Kwame Nkrumah called "the last stage of imperialism" (Ziai, 2020, 129).

The continued economic and socio-political control of former colonial powers on the decolonized nation-states, albeit, directly or indirectly, was apparently stunting the development of the new nation-states as encapsulated in the dependency theory. It has been posited that the reason why Africa generally and Nigeria particularly has not realized its full developmental potential is because it experienced an incomplete decolonization process.

What this implies is that the decolonization process required more than just a change or transfer of power or government from imperial control to indigenous control. Rather, it meant that there should be an internal decolonization process.

As a result, drawing from the experiences of Botswana and India, the following are the suggestions on how to retrace the missteps in the decolonization process and tailor it towards self-sustaining values, institutions, attitudes and structures that will guarantee Nigeria's path towards the attainment of sustainable development:

1. The investment of oil revenues to critical and strategic infrastructural assets such as transportation, bridges, schools, medical facilities, and so on. The sustainability of these investments should be guaranteed to ensure real improvements in the living standards of the people over time.

2. The volatility of the Nigerian currency, the Naira, should be regarded as a matter of national urgency. Well-thought-out and planned monetary policies should be pursued to stabilize the Naira, by linking it to the currencies of countries that trade with her.

3. The entrenchment of a savings culture and encouraging investments in non-oil economic activities. This would ensure the promotion of much-politicized economic diversification and a move towards a future without the dependence on oil revenue.

4. The middle class in Nigeria is almost non-existent while the poverty gap keeps expanding amongst the working class, causing a gap between the haves and the have-nots, Hence, the Nigerian government should initiate policies to revamp and strengthen the middle class by fighting against workers' exploitation and ensuring their socioeconomic wellbeing.

5. Also, a national development policy that infuses into the SDGs should be established which should carry the people along by giving them a sense of belonging and responsibility to see that sustainable development becomes the national culture. This will require a total overhaul of the mindset of Nigerians and inspire a more committed and nationalistic attitude towards nation-building.

6. Finally, there is a need for the political class to demonstrate political will as shown by the leadership of Botswana and India over the years by instilling the needed political discipline, values, and motivation to put the general good above their personal selfish ambitions. This would require shunning acts that sabotage and set back efforts made to ensure that Nigeria successfully implements the global goals of sustainable development ahead of the 2030 deadline.

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