

**COLONIAL INFRASTRUCTURAL DEVELOPMENT AND NATIONAL  
INTEGRATION: A STUDY OF RAILWAY TRANSPORTATION SYSTEM  
IN NIGERIA**

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***ABSTRACT***

Nigeria is a colonial creation. The foisting of the heterogenous groups together was never intended to build a united and economically viable country but to perpetual the economic exploitation of Nigeria. The railway one of the impacts of colonialism in Nigeria was established across the then existing regions (East, North, and West) to realize the economic mandate of the colonialists. It is the contention of this paper, that, although, this infrastructure was intended to exploit the economic resources of Nigeria and cart away to the coasts through the rails; this rail infrastructure by inadvertence became arteries of integration across creeds, ethnicities, and political affinities. Therefore, this study interrogates the integrative impact of the colonial railway infrastructure amidst the politics of division and insecurity in Nigeria. This paper adopts the internal colonial theory as a theoretical framework of analysis and the historical methodology. The study concludes that, among other things, a national rebirth is critical to national integration. Also, the Nigerian railway system should be overhauled to international best practices, and improvement in the security architecture, especially along rail lines.

**Keywords:** Colonialism, Colonial infrastructure, Railway transport, National integration.

**INTRODUCTION**

Development in practical or at any rate is always considered a desirable element and pursuit in any society. It could take any meaningful, viable, and tangible form or dimension including political, economic, social, and environmental, to mention a few. It can be viewed from the perspective of a rise in the level and quality of life, general welfare of the populations; creation of qualitative employment opportunities; increase in income of a people, and even an objective appropriation of available resources to create more sustainable public goods and services (Roads, Schools, etc) without compromising or damaging the environmental resources meant for the future. Indeed, the trajectory of the development process and level of most societies found in Less Developed countries of Africa, can best be meaningfully analyzed historically under the thematic matrix of the pre-colonial, colonial, and post-colonial epoch.

In specific terms, given the focus or scope of this paper the colonial infrastructural development and its impacts on the unity of several countries in Africa, be it the British, French, Spanish, German, Belgium, or Portuguese colonies have remained a source of controversy and academic debate for decades. Like other neighbours with relatively similar colonial experiences, the Nigerian situation somehow appears to be more emphatic and emotive given the glaring and undisputable fact that as the most populous black country in the entire African continent and perhaps, in the world, with nothing less than 250 identifiable diverse ethnic nationalities, (Erim, 1999, Imbua, Onor and Odey, 2017), the country is yet to find her feet after 62 years of political independence. However, the seemingly overbearing paradox is that rather than these natural and artificial, social, cultural, and socio-economic forces of unity in diversity and railway infrastructural system established in the main three regions by the colonialists (namely the Northern, Western, and Eastern regions) acting as a formidable bond, connection or centripetal forces promoting and fostering national unity in integration, the country remained visibly and sharply divided along ethnic and religious lines, lacking all forms of social, political cohesion and solidarity.

At the inception of colonial rule in Nigeria, the British administrators feasibly studied the terrain and came up with the sharp realisation that colonial policies cannot be effective and efficiently implemented in a vacuum; it certainly would require huge resources including personnel, material resources, and institutional capacities. These in fundamental terms, include a suitable costbenefit administrative system, effective but beneficial tax system, modern transport and communication systems, self-seeking market system, trading, banking, and currency (monetary) systems which annihilated the pre-colonial currencies (barter system), and which had represented a rudimentary monetisation (Ake, 1984, Nwachukwu and Abuoma, 2016; Nwankwo, 1998, Saleh, 2019).

In other words, the colonialists believed that achieving compliance to most of their obnoxious, repugnant, and repressive policies would not have been easy, hence the dire need for an effective but coercive and autocratic administrative mechanism was imperative to extract obedience from the resisting natives or local inhabitants of the colonies, and thereby also justifying the establishment of the colonial ill-equipped but ruthless army and policies systems to deal decisively and squarely with any up-rising, 'rebellious', 'uncooperative', 'recalcitrant' and 'opposing' natives, especially in the hinterland.

Nevertheless, this fact is rightly and aptly captured in the work of Lawal (1997) as cited in Obiakor and Agajulu (2016) thus: "Colonial economic policy sought to modernize local transport, the distributive system, money, and banking, distribution, and use of land and labour to expand export production and distribution of European manufactured goods" (Lawal, 1997:185-186). Moreover, transportation infrastructure during the colonial era is inevitable due to the economic mandate of the colonizing authority (Njoku, 2001; Obiakor and Agajulu, 2016).

Essentially, apart from sea transport which was established to also play a complementary role of exporting raw materials from the central colonial economic hub, the railway transport system stood out as the dependable means or vessel for

conveying the bulk of raw materials from the various hinterland to this central economic base before export to the metropolis. In other words, where the role of railway transportation stopped, represents where the sea transportation began.

Available works, Obiakor and Agajulu (2016); Saleh (2019); Okoye, Pongou, and Yokossi (2019), and several other historical evidence have revealed that the main reason for the establishment of few but strategic infrastructures such as the railway transport system in Nigeria during the colonial era, by the British, as elsewhere by other European colonialists in their respective territories, was largely to promote and facilitate their respective economic interests. In specific terms, the purpose was for evacuation of agricultural produce and other raw materials from the hinterland to the seaports or central economic hub for onward shipment to the metropolis.

However, going by development objectives worldwide, these few established kilometres outlines connecting the three major existing regions (The Northern, Eastern, and Western Regions) including the central colonial economic hub, ought to have created or acted as a major formidable platform and basis for the promotion of national unity and integration during the colonial era and beyond, apart from laying the foundation and serving as a catalyst for economic growth and development within the regions. Several developmentalists and integrationists have argued that beyond the obvious fact that the colonial government failed in many regards due to several well-crafted and self-seeking reasons including lack of genuine commitment to developing Nigeria sustainably, deliberate and systematic application or implementation of Divide and Rule policy and principle of regionalism, distortion in both administrative and infrastructural systems, the post-independence administrations were expected to tackle these glaring but surmountable challenges head-on by taking advantages of few existing rail lines linkages, reshape, revamp, build-upon and expand the capacity to promote social, political and economic integration and inclusiveness among the diverse heterogeneous settings of the country. Rather, the post-colonial successive administrations in Nigeria have continued to lead a systematic denigration of national hope, deliberately pursuing and implementing skewed policies in the rail transport sector that are further creating divisiveness, social isolation or alienation, ethnic chauvinism, and sectionalism. This study is aimed at examining the impact of colonial infrastructural development on national integration in Nigeria, with a focus on the railway transportation system.

## **HISTORY OF RAILWAY TRANSPORTATION**

The railway transportation system in Nigeria has a chequered history. Available records reveal that the first rail line in Nigeria constructed by British colonialists was between 1898 – 1901 (NRC, 2006, Osunbole, 1999), breaking a historical landmark, records of making the railway system, the oldest modern mode of transportation in Nigeria. According to Njoku (2001), the pioneering railway lines linked the existing commercial centers in the then Western region- from Ebute-Metta (Lagos) through the Ibadan-Ilaro corridors. The construction work on the

line started from Iddo, Lagos colony in 1898 but reached Ibadan in 1901 (Jaekel, 1997, Njoku, 2001). The operation began fully with the Lagos Government rail (then a department) and later to Jebba, Minna in the present-day Niger State in 1909. Between 1907 and 1911, the rail line was made to join the Baro-Kano railway station, specifically built by the government of Northern Nigeria (Carland, 1985). Still under Lugard's control as the governor of Northern Province, the construction of the Zungeru railway station (where the headquarters of the Northern Province was situated then) was started in 1896 and was extended to Kaduna in 1901. Subsequently in 1907, another rail line that spanned from Bora on the Niger to Kano connecting also Zungeni and Zaria; and in 1914, the Bauchi Light Railway which connected Bukuru in Jos, present-day Plateau State capital, was constructed to serve the tin mines, which was strongly part of the British Colonial interests.

On the Eastern Nigerian flank, the discovery of coal in Udi, in the presentday Enugu State in 1909 seemed to have changed the narrative of the region. The British colonialists constructed the eastern rail line because the coal mineral deposit was of strategic importance to them or their interests (Jaekel, 1997, Oluigbo, 2017). The colonialists began the construction in Port Harcourt in 1913 and stretched it to the coal mines at Udi at Enugu in 1916 and from there advanced northward past Makurdi to Kafanchan in 1927, thereby connecting the eastern Railway to the Lagos-Kano Railway (Chuku, 2015). Between the wake and end of World War II, new rail lines were constructed and linked to the skeletal national grid (i.e. the Eastern and Western Lines). These, among others, include Zaria-Kaura Namoda, Ifo-Idogo, and the extension of the main line northeastward to Nguru in 1930 (Oluigbo, 2017). It took about 21 years for the British colonialists to extend the railway to its northern terminus of Maiduguri between 1958 and 1964 (Yakubu et al 2005).

However, after independence, the successive post-colonial leadership failed in maintaining and investing more in railway transport until almost three decades. By early 2013, the only operational segment of Nigeria's rail network existing was between Lagos and Kano. Passenger trains took 31 hours to complete the journey at an average speed of 45 km/h. The Yar'Adua /Jonathan administration made a bold attempt in 2009 to restore Nigeria's railway system. The Eastern line from Port Harcourt to Maiduguri was restored for US\$427 million by Lingo Nigeria, Eser West Africa, and the China Gezhouba Group (Oierere, 2014). To effectively address the existing perennial challenges associated with poor condition, efficiency, and profitability of the country's railroads, the government in its wisdom, sought to privatize the Nigerian Railways Corporation (The Modern, public agency mandated with the power to run the railway transportation in Nigeria).

Oyefuga & Egbetokun (2006), aptly observed that one of the most interesting things to note about the British colonial railway system is that "there was consistent rail construction from 1898 to 1927, followed by a 31 years break". Consistent activity picked up again in 1958 – two years before the country's independence from colonialism and continued till 2022. It is also worthy of note that most of the nation's rail lines were constructed during the colonial period. The reason is not

farfetched. Oyefuga and Egbetokun (2006), pointed out that inspiration and motivation was the need to create a dependable linkage between Northern and Southern Nigeria for ease of movement of mineral and agricultural resources needed for the development of the metropole – Great Britain (Osunbole, 1999).

According to Njoku (2001), the lines did not only link the European firms at the coast to the hinterland but also, triggered the proliferation of trading firms along the railway lines. Furthermore, Njoku observed that “these locations become immediately the focal points of trade and new frontiers of economic opportunities, attracting local traders from the immediate and more urban centres which emerged during colonial times were to be found on the railways”. The railway equally dramatically stimulated export production, especially where it traversed areas far away from the waterways. In the Northern Province, for instance, groundnut export exploded from where it trickled into a flood. “In Kano, the export of groundnuts shot up from 955 tons in 1910 to 8,910 in 1915, and then 127,226 in 1925. By 1960, the export had exceeded half a million tons a year”. The same feat was replicated with cocoa in Yoruba land and Palm oil and Kernels in the East.

Up to the 1940s, the railway played a central role in passenger and freight traffic in Nigeria. In 1924 – 1925, the year reliable railway data began to appear, the tonnage of goods increased from 560,000 to 1002,000 in 1924 – 1925 from 1,923,000 in 1936 – 1937”. By Njoku, revenue generation estimation, “the annual receipts of the railway show a steady increase: £2,077,000 in 1924 – 1925; £2,178,000 in 1930 – 1931; and £2,854,000 in 1937 – 1938”. Today, the administration and operation of the railway infrastructural system are under the control and supervision of the Nigerian Railway Corporation (NRC). It is an autonomous public corporation established in 1985 with an Act of Parliament. It is unfortunate that after 62 years of independence, many colonial railway lines are still being neglected and the recently established gauges are yet to be constructed and linked to all the states in Nigeria to reflect national character and promote national integration.

## **COLONIALISM AND COLONIAL INFRASTRUCTURE DEVELOPMENT**

The word ‘colonial’ is a term related to or has characteristics of a colony or colonies. It is related to lands or territory previously “unsettled”. Colonialism, therefore, is a practice or policy of control by one people or power over other people or areas, often by establishing colonies and generally with the aim of economic domination (Kohn, 2017). According to Reinhard (1996), colonialism can be viewed as the control of one people by another, a culturally different one, an unequal relationship with exploits, and differences in economic, political, and ideological development between the two (Reinhard, 1996:1). It is a practice of domination which involves the subjugation of one people by another. HodderWilliams asserts that colonialism as a terminology is now normally used in a pejorative sense and is associated with crude exploitation. To him, a few would deny the reality of lines of oppression, economic exploitation, and unconcern for human and civil rights.

The colonial powers' primary interests were usually defined along selfish economic lines. Colonialism, according to Nnoli (2003), was a peculiar form of external relations because the search for resources did not take the usual form of bargaining among states. It is against this background that Nwankwo, (1998:1) asserts that colonialism is a phenomenon that is part and parcel of another phenomenon referred to as imperialism. He observed that colonialism is a direct form of imperialism. This explains why it is argued that "all colonialism is imperialism, but not all imperialism is colonialism" (Nwankwo 1998:1). Colonialism was an expression, in conquered and dominated societies of nineteenth-century imperialism (Nnoli, 2003). Furthermore, colonialism was the historical turning point in the emergence and development of the neo-colonial society. It presupposes that the foreign powerful ruling class conquered and subjugated the less developed and powerful population, exploiting and imposing her values. The British colonialists from their inception in Nigeria had their objective clearly and strategically defined. When the British colonialists amalgamated the Northern and Southern Protectorate in 1914, it certainly did not believe in nor harbour the objective of building a unified and sustainable society for future existence.

The British Colonial government in Nigeria between 1900 and 1960, Erim (1999) observed that the British built "Nigeria without Nigerians". He pointed out that these apostles admitted the fact that by the application of force of arms or threat, the desperate ethnic groups "created a British Nigeria". Indeed, the British came to the shores of the Nigerian region not as genuine developmentalists or developers but rather as exploiters, missionaries, and traders ostensibly to study the terrain for the selfish benefit of Europe. They came with well-defined missions as agents of imperialism, on espionage missions to study the environment, its resources, strength, and weaknesses. The school submits that irrespective of the kind of development that took place in Nigeria within the period, the event should be seen in the context of an investor working hard to maximize his profits (Erim, 1999:10).

In a similar vein, Hopkins (1980) contended that the infrastructural policy of the colonial administration was never intended to develop the colonies. These policies were deliberately conceived to realise the colonial mandate of economic exploration of the colonies. According to Igwe (2015), the dual colonial perception of Nigeria, at the beginning was- a source of agricultural raw materials and a market for finished goods. In other words, socioeconomic activities during the period were, greatly influenced and dictated by the development of modern transport infrastructure which the railway transport was part of. Such development is not without some consequences. For instance, the accelerated road development that followed the development of the Railway paved the way for the emergence of "group migrants" to the centres of wage employment. Although, the migrants from the rural areas to the urban centres benefitted individual migrants, economic activities in the rural areas like agricultural pursuits and rural handicrafts dwindled. Ultimately, social life in the rural area was equally affected (Igwe, 2015). Nwachukwu & Abuoma (2016) submit that transportation provided a major



instrument in the hands of the colonial government in Nigeria which enabled them to attain their well-crafted but strategic objective of making the colony an export-based economy. Saleh (2019) was quick in drawing our attention to the fact that the role transportation especially, the modern ones played during the colonial period has been a topical issue among scholars. He argues that several kinds of literature exist on the motives and effectiveness of transportation on the socio-economic development of the African colonial economy; while some serve as eulogies, others are more critical.

Transportation, at any rate, represents a very effective means of bringing socioeconomic development to communities and societies alike. Emezi & Ndoh's (1998); Ake's (1984) opinions are not different, the transport system including the railway, was disjointed and disarticulated in character. That is the colonialists distorted and disarticulated the development of a comprehensive transport system in Africa. In Nigeria as elsewhere in Africa, the transport network developed (established) was not to link different towns and rural areas for purposes of effective communication and development. Transport routes were built by the colonialists to facilitate and ease the evacuation of the raw materials from their main sources or economic bases (mostly in the hinterland) to the destination point where they could be effectively exported abroad. The transport network development was essentially rails and seaports. This was strategically, based on self-seeking interests.

The rail line transport was to convey goods from various linked commercial towns and hinterland to the central hub where the seaports or water transport begins its exportation services and journey (Emezi and Ndoh, 1998). There were no conscious, concrete, and genuine efforts to develop an organized road network that would help to improve the lives of the Nigerians and indeed, African people in a general situation which made it difficult for socio-economic interaction and relations in different parts of the territories. In other words, the development of transport infrastructure especially, the Railway was motivated to be the economic interests of the colonial masters. Nnoli pointed out that the precapitalist modes of production which existed in the pre-colonial era were partly destroyed by the British colonialists and what merely survived were subordinated by colonialism to the capitalist mode of production under the hegemony of the foreign ruling class – the British.

Realising the actualisation of the colonial economic mandate by the British government, the need for infrastructural development was imperative. Ironically, Nnoli (2003) argued that the British colonial administrators were motivated by the needs and aspirations of the ruling class rather than the internal economic needs and aspirations of Nigerians. Thus motivated, the British colonialist set about organizing economic ventures that were of interest to them. The new economic ventures were merely confined to enclave programmes to produce for the world market. Export crop production, mining of minerals for export, and the importation of manufactured goods from Europe predominated in the organisation of the new economic scheme of things created by the British. The colonial government also promoted the new colonial activities at the local expense. The colonial government

built an elaborate infrastructure to support colonial activities ranging from administrative, technical, and bureaucratic systems, to schools, banking systems, trading, and currency systems. Every kind of road was constructed to promote and facilitate both administrative communication and the movement of goods and services (Nnoli, 2003).

### **COLONIAL RAILWAY TRANSPORT SYSTEM AND NATIONAL INTEGRATION**

Transportation has been viewed to be a strategic instrument in the hands of the colonial government in Nigeria to attain their well-crafted objective. Unfortunately, the colonial rails system established by the British government was not evenly and equitably distributed or spread to cover all parts of the country. They were only designed to link a few parts of the three main regions where the colonialist economic interests lay; where raw materials and agricultural produce were to be sourced and conveyed to the central economic hub or seaport for export. This lopsided development pattern has far-reaching consequences as it constitutes, among others, a serious threat to the country's quest for national unity and integration. The disarticulation in the pre-existing pre-colonial social relations, production, distribution, and trading systems in those identifiable empires, kingdoms, and states which later constituted the Nigerian nation, was quite alarming.

In the words of Okobia (1984:7), national integration is a state of fusion or harmonious interaction and interrelation of people and groups (within a nation) to make them an identifiable single entity. The goal of national unity or integration is often considered desirable because otherwise, conflicts based on social distance between individuals, groups, and institutions would cause the ruling class to divert its attention and energy away from its major objectives and to control conflicts from imposing an unnecessarily exorbitant cost on government. This was one of the major strategies adopted by the British colonialist which greatly undermined the quest for national integration even in the face of few infrastructural developments like the railway system. National Integration in Nnoli's (2003) view is the process of bridging the social distances in a society such that harmony and cooperation rather than conflict and disagreement characterize the interactions between members of the society. Within the British colonial era, the disarticulation, distortion, unevenness, and inequality in the spread of the railway systems created more divisions, and unhealthy competition among the three major ethnic groups. Nnoli (2002) stresses that social distances between individuals, groups, classes, and institutions arise from the differences among them in the social, economic, cultural, political, and psychological historical experiences (Nnoli, 2003).

Reviewing the historical and political impacts of the British colonial government in Nigeria as it affects constitution-making and national unity, Erim (1999) captured the position of a school of thought which critically examined these challenges thus: "The problem of national integration (Unity) in Nigeria today stems mainly from the divisive constitution left behind by the departing colonialists



and their Nigerian Successors which fostered and nurtured antiNigerian values and attitude which in turn, were strengthened by a disproportionate distribution of political gains and roles in the three ethnic groups in the country” (Erim, 1999:9).

According to him, the school further argued that the departing colonialists or fathers’ and those who have ruled Nigeria since independence till date as ‘sons’ compromised to thwart any effort at national integration and unity. It was the "Sons" of these unending constitutions which rather than challenging and defending these colonial bestowed rules and privileges by their policies and actions, separatist or sectional policies that are inimical to the well-being of Nigerian society, policies of 'divide the gap between the minority rural poor and few majority urban rich, policies that constantly created ethnic acrimony, tension, mutual suspicion and distrust among the three major ethnic groups and even minority group against the major three existing ones, policies, and actions supporting the inequitable distribution of national wealth including railway infrastructural system. The school maintained that it was the 'Sons' who killed every genuine attempt at achieving national integration since independence. This position was also amplified by Mordi EN thus:“The Sons of the colonial constitution who have ruled Nigeria since independence (but) refused to challenge; rather defended those colonial bestowed roles and privileges by their policies and actions”(1988).

### **THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK**

This paper is anchored on the Internal Colonialism theory. Some of the major exponents include; Leo Maiguard (1957), Pablo Gonsalez C. (1965) Rodolfo Stavenhagen, and Robert Blauner. The theory suggests that a combination of uneven industrialization, uneven development, inequality, and cultural differences among regions in core nations cause ethnic grievances to assume the basis for enduring political contention. In this context, the sources of ethnic solidarity include even regional development that reinforces or generates inequality, dependence on external or international investment, and an occupational structure that is highly segregated along ethnic lines.

Furthermore, under this situation, a high level of ethnic solidarity and a division of labour is segmented in developed regions, rather than in impoverished areas (Hechter, 1975). The theory essentially postulated to explain, on the one hand, the horizons and the current interest of post-colonial, anticolonial, and decolonial criticism, and, on the other hand, the pace of politics in a heterogenous society such as Nigeria. The theory helps to offer clarification to social, political, and intellectual imagination from outside and from within colonial capitalism. It is used as a basis for comparative analysis of colonial experiences and structures and is frequently employed by post-colonial literary theorists (Aberg, 2018).

In the diverse historical contexts of colonial capitalism manifestation, the capital and labour tensions are reconfigured by the contradictions generated by forces such as ethnicity, nationality, integration, social, economic, and political cohesion, and subalternity influencing the collective political imaginary. In

postcolonial contexts, the domination and exploitation mechanisms such as liberation strategies always go through the mapping of conflicts and inter-ethnic agreements, involving the ethnic group of the dominating. The theory is progressively formalized by the consciousness of the impact of racial, ethnic, tribal, and national discrimination on the social and political changes in post-colonial societies throughout the 20<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup> centuries. The theory argues that certain regions of a state exploit other regions of that state. Internal colonialism is an economic occurrence that is compared to general colonialism. To this theory, colonialism is when an external state lay claim to a region of another location, resulting in the disenfranchisement of the original inhabitants of that land. Internal colonialism occurs when states "colonize" certain regions for the benefit of others. This resulted in some regions of a state being given more economic benefits than others. This economic imbalance can cause further issues, such as class-based ethnic struggles, national unity, and integration. Internal colonialism is the imbalance that occurs when internal divisions between regions of a country or ethnic group create inequalities of various types. The application of this theory to the impact of British colonial infrastructural development on national integration is germane.

The British colonial government laid a faulty foundation for Nigerians beginning with the process of amalgamation (without adequate consultation and inputs from Nigeria) to infrastructural development such as the railway system. Their policies of 'divide and rule', regionalism, and segregation exploited solely to achieve their colonialist economic mandate were later seen to have far-reaching diverse effects on successive post-colonial Nigerian governance. Ayoola (2009) pointed out that during the colonial period in Africa, transport facilities, for instance, were noted for their inadequacy and neglect of the needs of the majority of the colonized. The imperial European powers namely; Britain, France, Belgium, Portugal, and Germany only developed transport infrastructure that served their narrowly defined interests (Zelensky, 1981) at the expense of sustainable Nigeria's national unity and integration.

Nigeria became an independent country with an unsuitable constitution that was characterized by diverse peoples who had not yet attained full integration. Challenges such as independence and the fierce competition for power, intense inter-regional, inter-ethnic suspicion, distrust, and hostility widened the fissures and sharpened the cleaves of the union called Nigeria (Ajayi, 2022) colonial infrastructural development creating some gaps, divisiveness, imbalance, and unevenness and inequality tendencies among the diverse nationalities making the quest for national integration elusive even after 63 years of independence. Meanwhile, national integration must involve collective inter-related actions to promote certain mutual interests, usually ranging over national matters of welfare and defense or security. A discussion on national infrastructural development as it affects national integration in Nigeria must accommodate some critical issues bordering on ethnicity, language geographical demarcations, religion, minority question, resource control, federal character, or Quota system, to mention a few.

## **MAIN REASONS FOR THE INTRODUCTION OF COLONIAL RAILWAY TRANSPORTATION**

It is worthy of note that the railway transportation system was a veritable and strategic instrument used by the British colonialists to promote and facilitate their economic interests. Some other main reasons for the development of colonial railway infrastructure include:

1. The quest for articulation of raw materials from the hinterland especially with difficult terrain (The conveyor route syndrome).
2. The rapid growth and development of the market economy adversely led to structural economic inequality and imbalances among the three major regions in the country and by extension, other colonies in West Africa.
3. The rail transport system was considered then to be the only veritable means to more bulky or large cargoes (goods and services) from the various places of commercial interest to the central hub for onward exportation. The rail lines were only designed and connected to areas of economic potential especially the interior parts or hinterland of the regions.
4. The need for commercial expansion and control of the capitalist economy occasioned by export commodities production or cash crops, mineral extraction, and mining activities.
5. To complement the waterways transport which forms the main traffic lines between the coast and the hinterland, Njoku (2001) pointed out that it was the railway that practically "rewrote the economic geography of Nigeria".
6. The railway benefited the colonialists so much as it helps to properly define Africa's economic geography. According to Kerby, Morabi, and Jedweb, (2017), the three identifiable motivations behind the establishment of the railway by the colonialists include:
  - i. **Military Domination:** The line was built to exercise effective control in the scramble for Africa, or to dispatch troops for better control of the native population. Unlike Nigeria's first rail line which was established in 1901, other European colonies had experienced this before this time. This was the case in places like Mombasa in Uganda, Kenya, etc.
  - ii. **Mining:** The line was built into the interior or hinterland to further European mining interests and especially in places like Udi in Enugu for coal and Jos in Plateau for tin.
  - iii. **Cash Crops:** The colonial power built the line to connect agricultural areas with limited budgets, colonisers expected the railroads to pay for themselves hence, the connected areas of high economic potential.
7. The desire to run a less expensive administration that was cost-friendly. Road projects across the entire region would probably cost more.
8. The shortage of British personnel to deploy, to man all the road routes to avoid diversion also made the colonialist in their calculation to opt for the railway system.

9. To bulky nature of both import and export commodities as well as the absence of good roads and the unavailability of heavy haulage road vehicles also made the colonial government decide to establish railway transport.

10. There was also the desire to establish a more flexible movement of colonial administrative personnel in the vast colony, especially after the amalgamation in 1914.

11. The military control of Inland territories also made the British colonialists establish the railway transportation system. Bringing the construction of the railway was solely the responsibility of the colonial government, they use it as a strategic tool to assert authority and influence over the people in the hinterlands.

## **CONCLUSION**

This paper examines the impacts of colonial infrastructural development on national integration in Nigeria, with a focus on the railway transportation systems. Essentially, the transport system has been considered to be one of the developmental infrastructures that bring progress to any society. Notable among such transportation systems in Nigeria as elsewhere in Africa are the traditional modern one hand which prevailed in the pre-colonial society including trekking, donkeys, horses, and camel, and the modern on the other, which cuts across the road, rail, port, or waterway system. At any rate, they all have the potential to contribute to the promotion or enhancement of socio-economic and socio-cultural growth and development of society through trade and its expansion, exchange of ideas, and transfer of know-how, which in the long run promote social cohesion and integration among communities and states (Addussalam, 2019).

There is no gain in saying that the nucleus or foundation of what appears today to be modern transportation systems in Nigeria, especially the railway, was laid in the distant past by the British government, though for some strategic interests or reason. But whether by omission or commission, such colonial policy was strategically designed and implemented to effectively achieve her economic objective or in addition to unifying and integrating the various diverse regions or entities of Nigeria with different respective political, social economic, and cultural settings, leaves much to be desired.

Literature abounds describing the British colonialist's motives for such infrastructural development as essentially and solely created for their mining interests, evacuating of agricultural produce and other raw materials from the hinterland to the seaports for onward shipment to the metropolis. However, little or no existing literature are found supporting any genuine claim or justification for virile and sustainable national integration and unification of the diverse ethnic nationalities of the groups, by the British colonialist using the rail system in those material days.

Unfortunately also, with the 'Divide and Rule' sectional divisive and alienation colonial policies including the distorted and disarticulated social, economic, and political systems, various lopsided constitutional legacies bequeathed on the

country, the successive post-colonial Nigerian leaders who may be described as the "anointed sons" of the British colonialists rather than seize the advantage of the few existing modern colonial rail transport system to promote buttress sense of cohesion, unity, and national integration failed. Attempts by these successive colonial leaders to reinvent, revamp, and rehabilitate the dilapidated ones and reshape and link them for sustainable development and accommodation of other ethnic minorities have almost always, been fraught with some parochial challenges and primordial forces including ethnic politics and sentiments.

In reminiscence of the early days of independence, the movement of cargoes and people fairly flourished among those three major regions with few commercial towns (hitherto, the colonial mapped out hinterland for raw material sourcing and mining activities). For instance, the rail transport and movement of people with goods and services between Aba to Umuhia, Enugu to Jos, Kaduna (Kafanchan) to Minna or Zenguru (Nigeria), Kano to Maiduguri, Ibadan to Lagos to mention a few, were progressively visibly and effectively operational in the 1960s to 1980s. The Nigeria Railway Corporation (NRC) then provided a kind of melting pot for Nigerians showing of high sense of nationalization as the Westerners and Easterners were found working in the Northern Region and vice versa. The political turmoil during the mid and late 1960s driven by ethnic strives and subsequent impacts of military coups and civil war (fought with bitterness and Vengeance) had configured and put the country in another different unproductive direction. Rather than largely promoting and sustaining the expanding marketeconomic created by the British Colonial government, existing inherited public infrastructures such as the railway system were now deployed as an instrument for political patronage, nepotism, and ethnic consolidation by the successive postindependence leaders, which is evident in a manner public policies are formulated and implemented. Most of the initiatives and actions taken are usually haphazardly conceived, ill-designed, and poorly executed, inevitably leading to the moribund state of the rail transportation system in some parts of the country.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

In the light of the above observations, the following suggestions are hereby made:

- (a) A comprehensive or holistic review of the entire railway routes and lines in Nigeria. This will rehabilitate existing rail lines and establish newer oneto ease transportation of goods and services, and revenue generation.
- (b) Encouragement of public-private management to break the yolk of unnecessary bureaucracies involved in infrastructural development in Nigeria as it pertains transport sector since the colonial era.
- (c) Mandatory policy and programme to link all the states of the federation by rail for socio-economic development and the promotion of national unity.
- (d) Improved funding for the rail transport infrastructure and legislative oversight on the effective utilization of appropriations.

(e) There is need for improved security in the country to guarantee a conducive commercial environment. Also, safety measures and maintenance should be intensified along rail lines and offenders punished accordingly.

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