



POST-COLONIAL STATEHOOD AND THE DEBATE ON RECOLONISATION IN AFRICAN POLITICAL DISCOURSE

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Abstract

This study examined the intricacies of post-colonial statehood and the debate about recolonisation in African political discourse to examine the continuing legacy of colonialism on political stability, governance, and economic development in post-colonial countries, namely Nigeria, Angola, South Africa and Kenya. The primary objective is to analyse the colonial legacy of political organisation, of economic dependence based on colonial domination and the contemporary debate about recolonisation in Africa. Using a variety of theoretical perspectives, including Dependency Theory, Post-Colonial Theory and World-Systems Theory, this study offers a multi-dimensional framework for understanding the post-colonial predicament in Africa. The methodology is based on a mixed methods approach, including both quantitative and qualitative data collection methods involving 350 survey respondents and 15 semi-structured interviews. Descriptive and inferential statistics were used to analyze the quantitative data and thematic analysis was used to analyze the interview responses. The study concludes that the legacy of colonial rule and economic structures still inform political and economic life in Africa, and that they create a pattern of dependence and instability. Social struggles have become the main agents of resistance to neo-imperialism and the defense of African independence. It is proven that even though the African nations are politically independent, they are economically and diplomatically dependent, thus weakening the spirit of any true independence. It is concluded that political reforms, economic diversification and support for civil society movements are necessary for Africa to truly achieve independence. The political system the study advocates is that of inclusive governance, less reliance on the export of primary commodities, empowerment of the grassroots movements of African people to reclaim African sovereignty in a globalized world.

Keywords: Post-Colonial Statehood, Recolonisation, Colonial-Legacies, Governance, Economic Dependency

1. Introduction

The postcolonial experience of African states has been deeply scarred by colonial legacies which continue to haunt political, economic and social institutions. While most African countries such as Nigeria became independent from colonial forces, the issues of statehood, sovereignty and economic development are

still multifaceted and continue to exist (Sempijja & Brito, 2025). For example, in Nigeria, as in other West African countries, the political arrangements are still a reflection of the reality of the British colonial rule and the reality of ethnic/regional division has continued to imperil Nigeria (Klug 2023). One of the challenges that the Nigerian state has encountered since independence is the achievement of equitable development and thus

unequal distribution of resources and power (Mlambo, Masuku, & Mthembu, 2024).

In countries like Angola and Mozambique, statehood has additionally been made more complicated by the legacies of decades of wars for independence and civil wars, driven in large part by legacies of colonialism (Sempijja & Brito, 2025). Second, they remain post-independence states and thus, are still recovering from the debilitating impact of colonialism and the need to heal deep socio-political wounds and develop inclusive governance models (Mlambo, Masuku, & Mthembu, 2024). In Angola, for example, the country still bears the scars of Portuguese colonialism, and the civil war over the past decades has further weakened its state structure, making the task of state-building even more challenging (Sempijja & Brito 2025).

In South Africa, the post-colonial statehood of the country has been profoundly impacted by the policy of racial segregation inherited from the colonial era as an important part of what is now known as the apartheid system (Klug 2023). Despite becoming a legally free country in 1994, the socio-economic inequalities that exist in the country due to centuries of colonial exploitation and apartheid continue to affect the country's unity and development (Klug, 2023). Yet despite the magnitude of the transition from an apartheid regime to a democratic government, the process is hampered by the continuity of the structures of inequality that trace their origins back to the colonial period (Klug, 2023). Moreover, the effects of post-colonialism policies to Kenya's political and economic systems is reflected by the fact that the centralized land and wealth distribution to the few has led to the struggle for balanced development till today (Nyamweno, 2024).

As a large African country with a long history of colonial and post-colonial struggles, Nigeria provides a stellar example of the challenges of post-colonial statehood. Although Nigeria gained its sovereignty from Britain in 1960, it has encountered many issues in terms of consolidating its democracy and achieving socio-political stability (Fentahun, 2023). In short, the country's ethno-religious cleavages - many of which

were reinforced in the process of colonialism - continue to structure its politics (Nyamweno, 2024). The British imperial legacy, combined with Nigeria's oil boom has also made the country susceptible to internal and external forces, most notably from multinational corporations and global powers vying for control of its resources (Mlambo, Masuku, & Mthembu, 2024). Thus the argument on post-colonial statehood and the prospect of recolonization still remains a dominant theme of the African political discourse. The colonial past of countries like Nigeria, Angola, South Africa and Kenya creates its own problems, which are interrelated yet different. These nations are still afflicted by the scourge of the evils of colonialism, political fragmentation or economic dependency, which prevent them from coming to the full experience of what is in reality real sovereignty and freedom (Fentahun 2023). The post-colonial struggle for inclusive development and overcoming neo-imperial shackles remains the defining experience in Africa's quest for development.

Post-colonial statehood and the question of recolonization in African political discourse remain an important and complicated problem. Despite the wave of independence that swept across the continent in the mid-twentieth century, many African nations including Nigeria, Angola, South Africa and Kenya continue to grapple with issues spanning their colonial past. The legacy of colonialism continues to undermine political stability, the consolidation of political processes, inclusive governance and just development (Kassaye & Ivkina, 2021). By the means of the artificial borders, reconfiguration of the colonial economy for the benefit of the colonisers, and transformation of the political structure, we see the emergence of fractured states (Chlouba 2025). The consequences of these decisions continue to unfold in the social, economic, and political life of these countries, and the nation-state remains a challenge for many post-colonial states (Magu, 2021).

For a number of African states the transition between colonial rule and independence was characterized by the lack of the infrastructure for self-rule, which has impaired their performance as independent and self-sustainable entities (Sempijja & Brito 2025). The

colonial powers bequeathed weak institutions which were poorly able to handle the diverse and complex societies that they had ruled over. As a result, African states have struggled to create national unity, ethnic and regional diversity, and to ensure equal opportunities for all citizens. In countries such as Nigeria, however, the ethnic and religious divisions that the colonial power has created continue to exist and are a source of tensions and conflicts (Ayuninjam 2024). These divisions were strengthened by the colonial policy of divide and rule under which the different groups were rendered suspicious of each other and competitively prevented from uniting in the direction of national integration (Chlouba 2025).

Furthermore, the form of government that was imposed on the colonies by the colonial powers was not necessarily the same as the indigenous forms of government, which were more decentralized and communal in nature (Majumder 2024). In many instances, colonialism brought with it top-down, centralized modes of governance that were not compatible with the social and cultural realities of African societies. The clash between indigenous forms of government and newly imported foreign forms of colonial government has been responsible for the political insecurity and the difficulties of governance in post-colonial Africa (Fisher-Onar 2022). For example, in South Africa, post-colonial political and economic conditions are a continuation of the colonialist apartheid; and the history of racial discrimination is continuously reproduced in terms of wealth distribution and social inequality (Klug 2023).

Also, most of the economic systems imposed by colonialism were geared towards collecting resources for the colonial powers instead of emphasizing economic growth of the colonies in a sustainable manner (Sheikha, 2025). This extractive model has made most of the African nations dependent on exportation of raw materials without much scope of developing the nation's capacity for industrialization or economic diversification (Sempijja & Brito, 2025). Nigeria is yet another natural resource endowed country

suffering from the "resource curse" where wealth generated from oil resources has failed to translate into a broader economic development (Kelecha, 2025). Dependency on foreign markets and foreign aid: The challenges of post-colonial economic independence are still a reminder of the dependence on foreign markets and foreign aid.

The issue of recolonization, with particular reference to its direct and indirect forms, is also still a relevant issue in the African political discourse. The resurgence of neo-imperialism, which describes economic exploitation via multinational corporations and political manipulation between former colonial powers and other international players, has created a problem for the continuation of hegemony by former colonial powers and other international players (Myles and Quansah, 2021). In the name of globalization, the new colonization is being achieved; this process is leading African countries to a situation of growing and increasing vulnerability to exogenous pressures and economic interdependencies that undermine their sovereignty (Sempijja & Brito, 2025). Thus, the issue of post-colonial statehood in Africa is not just one of recovering independence from colonial rule but also of experiencing the complexities of global power relations that continue to test African sovereignty.

Research Questions:

- i. How do the legacies of colonialism affect the political stability and governance structures in post-colonial African nations, specifically Nigeria, Angola, South Africa, and Kenya?
- ii. To what extent have the colonial economic systems imposed on African countries contributed to their ongoing dependence on external resources and global economic structures?
- iii. How does the debate on recolonization, in both its direct and indirect forms, impact the sovereignty and political autonomy of African nations in the modern globalized world?

Research Objectives:

The main objective of the study is to examine Post-Colonial Statehood and the Debate on Recolonization in African Political Discourse. The specific objectives are:

- i. To assess the impact of colonial legacies on political stability and governance structures in post-colonial African nations, focusing on Nigeria, Angola, South Africa, and Kenya.
- ii. To evaluate the extent to which colonial economic systems continue to influence the economic dependence of African countries on global markets and foreign aid.
- iii. To explore how the debate on re-colonization influences the sovereignty and political autonomy of African nations in the context of modern-day global power dynamics.

Hypotheses:

- i. The legacies of colonialism negatively impact the political stability and governance structures in post-colonial African nations, particularly in Nigeria, Angola, South Africa, and Kenya.
- ii. The colonial economic systems have led to a sustained dependency of African nations on external resources and global economic structures, hindering their development.
- iii. The debate on re-colonization, in both direct and indirect forms, significantly undermines the sovereignty and political autonomy of African nations in the current globalized world.

2. Literature Review

Post-colonial statehood is the political and social condition which arises upon the independence of a former colony from a colonial power (McConnell, Craggs & Harris, 2024). It is the process of the establishment of sovereign nation-state which aims for independence from the foreign domination but the burden of colonialism tends to shape the political, economic, and social structure of the new state (Moore

2024). With regards to Africa, postcolonial statehood refers to the formation of independent states after the decolonization process in the second half of the 20th century (Kassaye Nigusie & Ivkina, 2021). While these countries formally became sovereign, the struggles to consolidate independence, establish institutional political stability and generate inclusive growth are highly shaped by colonial legacies (Sempijja and Brito, 2025). Africa's current borders, political systems, and institutions of resource management are largely the products of colonial powers, which often imposed systems and institutions that were foreign to indigenous African systems (Mlambo, Masuku, & Mthembu, 2024). Thus, Africans are still paying the price for the fragmentation of their societies, ethnic polarization, and instability in many states (e.g., Nigeria, Kenya, and South Africa) (Chloubá 2025). Remnants of these colonial structures continue to be expressed today in the form of chronic national integration, governance, and economic self-reliance challenges (Fentahun, 2023).

Within the context of African political discourse, the term re-colonization is used as a synonym for direct or indirect renewed the external control or influence over post-colonial African nations (Widengard 2025). Direct re-colonization is the re-colonization or re-occupation by a foreign power and indirect re-colonization is the re-introduction of economic or political systems of influence by former colonial powers over African states and claiming their supremacy in the form of neo-imperialism (economic dependence, political manipulation, and cultural hegemony) Sempijja and Brito, (2025). This new resettlement takes the form of colonization of the African countries by multinational corporations, foreign capital and international financial institutions, which still dominate the political and economic life of the countries (Myles & Quansah, 2021). The forces of globalization have the potential to erode national sovereignty and thus cause continued dependency and a continuation of the colonial relationship in another guise. The current discussion about re-colonization is thus focused on the issue of whether African nations are actually independent or whether they continue to be trapped in patterns of

external domination disguised as globalization (Sempijja & Brito, 2025).

Further compounding the challenge of statehood especially in post-colonial Africa is the fact that the colonial borders still exist and they were demarcated by the colonial powers with no regard for ethnic, cultural or historical considerations (Baggett, 2022). These artificial borders have in many instances created tension and conflict within African states, with different ethnic groups and communities who were separated during colonialism now forced together as a single nation-state. Therefore, the issue of building unity in such divided societies still poses a major challenge to successful statehood in Africa (Nyamweno, 2024). Further, most political institutions introduced by the colonial powers are centralised, authoritarian and in conflict with indigenous systems of governance which are more decentralised and communal (Majumder, 2024). This has given rise to a dissonance between the political practice inherited from the colonial era and the traditional institutions of governance that predate colonisation (Sengar & Adjoumani, 2023).

In contemporary Africa, the post-colonial statehood is also intimately related to the search for economic autonomy. The economic systems that were introduced in Africa by the colonialists were meant to exploit the resources for the advantage of the colonizers, and this has resulted in many African nations having economies which are primarily based on exports of raw materials (Sempijja & Brito, 2025). While many countries in Africa such as Nigeria and Angola have politically gained independence, they are still economically dependent on foreign markets and foreign aid (Kelecha, 2025). This economic reliance is a key aspect of the debate on recolonisation, because it reminds us that despite formal independence, African countries remain vulnerable to external control (Fentahun 2023). The question that arises, therefore, is whether African states are really autonomous or whether they continue to function under the scope of a modern-day recolonization process that has been forced upon them by the global economic system and foreign interventions (Sempijja & Brito, 2025).

2.1 Empirical Review

Part of an ongoing debate in post-colonial statehood and recolonisation within African political discourse, academics have explored the complexities and dilemma faced by African nations in coming to terms with their post-colonial identity and sovereignty. A critical factor is the legacy of colonialism and how it continues to influence the political, economic and social systems of these countries. According to Mlambo, Masuku, and Mthembu (2024) in *The New Scramble for Africa in a Post-Colonial Era and the Challenges of Inclusive Development*, the post-colonial African contexts suggest that African countries are still being colonised and remain economically dependent and therefore, recolonisation, albeit in an indirect manner, is still very pertinent. Their semi-systematic review of the literature points to the ongoing domination of African states by global powers and multinational corporations, especially economically, leaving African countries susceptible to neo-imperial forces.

Similarly, Sempijja and Brito (2025) in their paper on *Colonial and Post-Colonial War Legitimization and Peace Process Efficacy: The Cases of Angola and Mozambique*, discuss the post-colonial wars in African countries such as Angola and Mozambique largely scarred by the legacies of the colonial war and still underdeveloped and fragmented. The study takes the form of a case study analysis of the strategies of control which have continued to be re-invented as colonial power in the processes of peace in these countries. They argue that a legacy of unresolved political tensions created by colonial war strategies (i.e., divide and rule) is driving contemporary fragility and instability, as well as impeding the emergence of sustainable peace and governance.

On the other hand, Onyango Ouma (2025) in *African Indigenous Thought Systems and Modernity* approaches it from another direction by challenging the relevance of colonial models of governance in the post-colonial African world. Ouma's contention is that the colonial imposition of foreign forms of government resulted in the disintegration of indigenous political structures that were more communal and decentralised.

He offers a powerful critique of the Western-imposed state-building model which has been embraced by African countries since independence, and shows how this has led to the dysfunction and fragility of many post-colonial states. Furthermore, through qualitative analysis, Ouma argues that the way forward for more sustainable and culturally-relevant modes of governance is the return to indigenous structures.

On the other hand, Chlouba (2025), in his book *The Precolonial Origins of African Nationalism*, agrees with the views that nationalism in Africa was not only a reaction to colonialism: it was also formed by pre-colonial political formation. Drawing on historical testimonies and using a historical comparative approach, Chlouba argues that the post-colonial statehood in Africa cannot be simply explained as a reaction to colonial oppression, and that indigenous political practices and systems of resistance pre-existed before the colonization of Africa by colonial powers.

In *Tracing Diplomatic Tutelage: (Post) Colonial Pedagogies and the Training of African Diplomats*, however, the authors of *Tracing Diplomatic Tutelage: (Post) Colonial Pedagogies and the Training of African Diplomats*, that McConnell, Craggs, and Harris contribute, focus on how post-colonial diplomacy is positioning Africa in the world. They have argued that although African states achieved political independence, they are still politically socialized by former colonial powers and Western institutions. For example, the study shows how, through critical discourse analysis, African diplomats trained in colonial pedagogies continue to serve foreign interests rather than domestic needs, and how this keeps Africa in a form of diplomatic recolonization.

Similarly, Majumder (2024) notes in *The Legacies of the British and the French Decolonization Process in Asia and Africa: A Comparative Study*, that the decolonization process in Africa was not "always economically and politically structured in such a way that newly independent states were vulnerable to foreign manipulation," neither in Asia. Taking a comparative approach, Majumder compares the experiences of Afro-nations such as Kenya and Nigeria

to that of former British colonies in Asia, and points out that the British and French colonial powers left African nations without an adequate framework for government. The paper argues that in many African states, political authority has been concentrated in a manner that privileged elites and reinforced social inequalities, and which prevented the emergence of 'decentralized, stable political systems' in which practitioners have an active and participatory voice. Majumder (2024) states despite gaining independence, African countries have had to battle economic domination from former colonial powers which continues to enforce chains of recolonization.

In his book, *The Precolonial Origins of African Nationalism*, which will be published in 2025, Lionel Chlouba describes the origin of African nationalism and the connection between nationalists and colonialism. Through a historical analysis it shows that the call for independence in Africa was not exclusively a reaction to colonialism, but was, in fact, based on pre-colonial institutions of government and resistance. Chlouba writes that African nationalism was no colonialist creation, but a continuation of indigenous resistance to foreign rule. This paper makes the case for a genuine analysis of African nationalism which takes into account its pre-colonial precedents shaped by the experience of colonialism. Chlouba (2025) argues that this historical framing of events represents a deeper understanding of statehood in Africa and argues for the reconsideration of post-colonial political structures that remain, in one way or another, entrenched in the legacies of colonialism.

In his book, *Not Set in Stone: An Assessment of the Impacts of Ethnicity on Statehood and Social Cohesion in Kenya, 1963-2022*, Nyamweno (2024) makes a case on the way in which ethnic demarcation created during the colonial period still affects the political stability of African states. Through a longitudinal analysis Nyamweno traces the political development of Kenya from independence to the present, demonstrating how the ethnic divisions fostered under British colonialism still work against national unity and social cohesion. This study argues that post-colonial statehood in Kenya,

among other African nations with similar histories, has been seriously undermined by the invention of ethnic categories by the colonial powers. As Nyamweno, (2024) elucidates, the ultimate antidote to achieve post-colonial sovereignty is to move beyond such internal divisions and build more inclusive political institutions that embrace the diversity of African societies rather than continuing to live with the colonial divisions.

Presenting an alternative to the discourse on economic and diplomatic recolonization is Onyango Ouma (2025), *Colonial Foundations for Economic, Cultural, and Political Domination in Africa* which takes a much more in-depth analysis of how colonialism transformed African cultural and social systems. Taking an interdisciplinary approach that combines political theory with cultural studies, Ouma examines how colonial domination reached beyond the economic and the political to manipulate African thought systems. Ouma concludes that not only did colonialism change African economies, but it also imposed Western cultural values and created an indelible divide between indigenous African systems and Western modernity.

Similarly, Chlouba (2025), *The Precolonial Origins of African Nationalism* puts African nationalism into historical context and makes the case that African nationalism was not simply a response to colonialism, but instead was grounded in the precolonial struggle against foreign domination. Through historical analysis, Chlouba (2025) argues that African political thought and nationalism was already in the process of being developed long before the arrival of European colonizers. What he argues is that the colonial experience, while it helped to form modern African nationalism, did not fully define it.

Gap in knowledge

The current research on post-colonial statehood and the debate on recolonization aims to fill several gaps in the literature, particularly on the persistence of colonial legacies with regards to political stability, government and economic dependency in African states. While the current literature is dominated by the historical role of colonialism in the fragmentation of African political

space and in the state's dependence on export agriculture (e.g., Sempijja & Brito, 2025; Nigusie & Ivkina, 2021), this paper highlights the ongoing nature of these colonial arrangements and their contribution to contemporary governance issues. Specifically, the study fills the gap in the literature by examining how models of colonial governance, patterns of economic organization, and borders still influence African political realities, to this day.

Moreover, while impacts of colonialism on African economies are known, there is little consideration given to the impacts of economic dependence and the debate of recolonisation in the context of the processes of globalisation and multinational corporations (Myles & Quansah, 2021). The research also makes a contribution by exploring the continuing debate on recolonization from the economic and diplomatic perspectives, looking at the way the external forces continue to defeat the sovereignty and political independence of the African states, even after formal independence.

Further, by virtue of the mixed methods nature of the research design (combining quantitative data and qualitative observation), the research is likely to contribute to a more detailed understanding of the realities of African countries and their post-colonial experiences that has rarely been recorded in the literature.

2.2 Theoretical Framework

Both post-colonial statehood and the argument on recolonisation in African political discourse have many layers, and various theoretical approaches can provide useful insights here. One of these paradigms is Dependency Theory, which argues that despite their formal independence, post-colonial African nations are economically subjugated to the former colonial powers and multinational corporations. One of the assumptions is that the African economies are still mainly dependent on the export of raw materials; an unending cycle of dependency that keeps them from truly being self-sufficient (Fentahun, 2023). Myles and Quansah (2021) also confirm this view, as they argue that the economic dependencies in many African countries are a more

general manifestation of the inability to form truly sovereign statehood as foreign powers continue to influence their economic and political spaces. They argue that these countries typically reside in a vicious cycle of international capitalism where the push for independence is hindered by the structural disparities placed in place during the colonial era.

Now, Post-Colonial Theory is a more culturally oriented critique of post-colonial Africa that addresses the psychological and social legacies of colonialism. As Amo-Agyemang (2024) and Ouma (2025) argue, colonialism not only politically and economically dominated the continent, but inscribed itself into African state identity. Amos Amo-Agyemang (2024) writes that the history of colonialism is a coloniality of dispossession which produced a coloniality of dispossession through expropriation of cultural identity and autonomy as well as material goods. Western ideologies and forms of domination are still dominant in the African political imagination and structures of government. Nyamweno (2024) adds to this line of argument by pointing out how the ethnic divisions brought in by colonialism still continue to impact the social unity and statehood in African countries, with Kenya being one of them. These cleavages are the direct product of the colonial imposition of boundaries and group identities, and complicate the formation of cohesive and inclusive states. Ouma (2025) goes further to assert that the psychological legacy of colonialism still sabotages the sovereignty of African political systems because most African states have not fully decolonized their institutions and structures of governance.

Alternatively, the economic and political positioning of African nations in the global system is viewed from a macro perspective of World-Systems Theory, developed by Immanuel Wallerstein. According to this theory Africa is still at the margin of the world economic system whose economies are based primarily on the exploitation of raw materials while its political structures are still subordinated to the interests of the core countries (Sempijja & Brito, 2025). According to this theory, the post-colonial state in Africa has been

structurally weakened by the continued exploitation of its resources by the forces of global capitalism. According to Kelecha (2025) and Baggett (2022), the international political system, although it claims to uphold African autonomy, retains colonial relation that limits the decision-making capacity of African countries in the economic and political spheres. These scholars argue that post-colonial sovereignty in Africa can only be realized if the global systems that continue to exploit the continent are dismantled and African political and economic relations are reimagined on more equitable terms.

Of these theories, the most appropriate framework for explaining the nature of post-colonial statehood and recolonization addressed within African political discourse is the Dependency Theory. It presents a detailed critique of the ongoing economic subordination of African states and sheds light on how the logic of colonial economic organization has been continued through global capitalism, thus creating new forms of neo-colonial dependency. It is this that is well synchronized with the present political and economic reality of most African states as captured by Mlambo, Masuku and Mthembu (2024) and Sempijja and Brito (2025). Moreover, it stresses that post-colonial statehood is not just a question of political emancipation, but is intricately linked to economic autonomy and the ability to have sovereignty over one's own resources. Thus, we find the Dependency Theory a strong framework to anchor the study of post-colonial statehood and the ongoing debate on recolonization in the discourse of the African political space.

3. Methodology

The methodology for this research about Post-Colonial Statehood and the Debate on Recolonization in African Political Discourse was a mixed-method approach, which is a combination of both quantitative and qualitative data collection methods. The study was designed to attain a holistic understanding of the legacies of colonialism, the economic systems inherited from colonial rule, and of the way in which the discourse of recolonization affected the sovereignty and

political autonomy of African nations. The quantitative approach was done using questionnaires and the qualitative approach was done using semi-structured interviews. This two-pronged approach allowed for a comprehensive analysis because the integration of quantitative information with a rich qualitative understanding afforded a larger picture of the spectrum of issues surrounding post-colonial statehood.

3.1 Research Design

The study was carried out using an exploratory research design which was appropriate for examining nodes of a phenomena which were little researched or understood clearly, as in this case, post-colonial statehood and recolonization in Africa. This framework allowed for more depth in terms of understanding the implications of colonial legacies in relation to political stability, institutional governance architecture and economic dependencies in post-colonial African states. The heuristic character of this exploratory design was also helpful in understanding how the discussion of recolonization, in direct or indirect ways, still shaped the sovereignty of these countries. This design was congruent with the purpose of the study to understand the multi-faceted nature of political change by using both statistical analysis and narrative analysis (Creswell, 2014).

3.2 Methods of Data Collection

This research employed two main data collection techniques: the quantitative data collection methodology of questionnaires and the qualitative data collection methodology of semi-structured interviews. These methods were selected in order to provide both breadth and depth of knowledge regarding the research questions. The quantitative part of the study used a questionnaire to collect numerical data regarding the perceived influence of colonial legacies on political stability, good governance and economic dependency of post-colonial African states. The questionnaire was developed with closed-ended questions and Likert-scale items which were used to gauge strength of

respondents' views on issues of governance, sovereignty and recolonization (Bryman 2016). The questionnaires were administered via Google Forms which made it easy to get data from a larger sample of participants. The total sample was 350 respondents from Nigeria, Angola, South Africa and Kenya. These countries were selected for their varying post-colonial experiences and continuing challenges of governance, sovereignty and economic development. Sample size of 350 made the data collected statistically representative and significant so that effective analysis could be conducted through the use of descriptive statistics and inferential statistics. All the data were processed and analysed using SPSS software for establishing patterns and relationships of the data.

Qualitative Method: Interviews

In addition to the quantitative data, semi-structured interviews were used to obtain in-depth qualitative data on the relationship among state sovereignty and public sovereignty. Semi-structured interviews provided a flexible yet focused mechanism for the researcher to investigate underlying themes such as state sovereignty, public movements in the fight for sovereignty and the impact of recolonization. The interviews were carried out with a cross-section of political commentators, civil society leaders, and activists from key public movements such as the EndSARS protests in Nigeria. These people were chosen because of their direct involvement in the political processes that are examined. The semi-structured nature of the interviews assisted the researcher to explore issues of interest while still keeping the framework required to answer the research questions (Cohen & Crabtree, 2006).

3.3 Population of the Study

The study population were adults (18 years and older) from four African countries: Nigeria, Angola, South Africa and Kenya. These countries were chosen because they represent a wide range of political, social and economic experiences in the post-colonial world. Not only urban, but also rural inhabitants were involved

in the meetings, and also political and economic activists, such as political leaders, civil society activists, scholars, and participants of public movements. The heterogeneity of the study population provided a breadth of representation of the political and social factors affecting post-colonial statehood and recolonisation in Africa.

3.4 Sampling Strategy

Both the quantitative and qualitative elements were based on a purposive sampling approach, identifying those individuals with the most knowledge or direct experience of the issues of governance, colonial legacies, and sovereignty in Africa. Purposive sampling is particularly useful when the researcher needs to find specific persons who can give valuable information on the topic of the research (Patton 2015). In the quantitative component, 350 participants were chosen from the population in order to ensure that results were statistically representative of the broader population. The participants were selected from different parts of Nigeria, Angola, South Africa and Kenya, in order to ensure that the sample represented a wide range of political and social contexts.

The qualitative component consisted of 15 interviews with key stakeholders (political commentators, civil society leadership & activists). This number of participants was suitable for qualitative research, as it was sufficient to enable a detailed and in-depth examination of participants' perceptions without overburdening the researcher with too much data. The interview samples were selected on the basis of expertise or active involvement in political movements or their role in defining the discourse surrounding post-colonial sovereignty and recolonization.

3.5 Method of Data Analysis

Data from the questionnaires were subjected to descriptive and inferential statistics. Descriptive statistics were used to summarise the respondents' demographic profiles and their perceptions of the

impact of the colonial legacies on governance, political stability and economic dependency. Inferential statistics (correlation analysis) were used to test for the relationships between colonial heritage, governance and systems of economic organisation. The data were coded and analyzed using SPSS software to identify the trends and relationships that answered the research objectives (Bryman, 2016).

For the interviews, a thematic analysis was used as a data analysis method, which is appropriate for qualitative data and aims to find patterns-themes in the data (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Thematic analysis was used to code the interview transcripts and categorize them under themes of colonial legacies in governance, public sovereignty, and economic dependency of African states. These topics were examined in the context of political and economic conditions in Nigeria, Angola, South Africa and Kenya. The interpretation attempted to determine what these dynamics entailed for post-colonial statehood and the discourse of recolonization.

By triangulating the different methodologies, the study provided a comprehensive picture of the extent to which the legacies of colonialism and recolonisation impact the political independence and the personal sovereignty of African states. The questionnaire was created using Google Forms, which enabled the collection of data from a large number of respondents in an efficient manner, while the semi-structured interviews enabled detailed information on experiences and perceptions of the main participants. Combined, these approaches enabled the study to take account both of the statistical patterns and of the nuanced accounts of post-colonial statehood and recolonisation.

4. Results and Discussion

4.1 Presentation of Results

The results are presented in tables, one for each of the various aspects of the research objectives. The results are presented as frequencies and percentages across several of the tables for the quantitative questionnaire and thematically for the qualitative interview analysis.

The analysis is conducted on a sample of 350 survey respondents and 15 participants from interview.

Table 1: Demographic Characteristics of Survey Respondents (n = 350)

Demographic Characteristic	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Gender		
Male	200	57.14
Female	150	42.86
Age Group		
18–30 years	120	34.29
31–45 years	130	37.14
46 years and above	100	28.57
Country of Residence		
Nigeria	100	28.57
Angola	90	25.71
South Africa	80	22.86
Kenya	80	22.86
Education Level		
Secondary	50	14.29
Tertiary (Undergraduate)	180	51.43
Postgraduate	120	34.29
Political Engagement		
Active in political movements	170	48.57
Not active	180	51.43

Source: Field survey, (2026)

Table 1 shows the demographic properties of 350 respondents to the survey. The majority of respondents are male (57.14%) followed in number by females (42.86%). In terms of age, 37.14% are between the ages of 31-45 years, 34.29% are between 18-30 years, and 28.57% are 46 years of age and older. Geographically, respondents are from four countries with Nigeria

constituting the smallest population (28.57%), followed by Angola, South Africa and Kenya, each constituting about 22-25% of the sample. Education: The main respondents are undergraduates (51.43%) with the postgraduate category coming in next (34.29%). Political participation is almost equally divided with 51.43% not participating in political movements.

Table 2: Impact of Colonial Legacies on Political Stability and Governance Structures (Objective 1)

Item	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Colonial legacy continues to influence political stability	62	17.71
Colonial governance models remain embedded in modern systems	70	20.00
Political instability linked to colonial power divisions	75	21.43
Colonial economic policies hinder effective governance	65	18.57
Ethnic and regional tensions are a result of colonial policies	78	22.29

Source: Field survey, (2026)

Based on the responses of 350 survey respondents Table 2 summarizes the effect of colonial legacies on

structures of governance and political stability. Twenty-two percent have some or complete confidence that

ethnic and regional tensions in Africa have roots in colonial policies. In addition, 21.43% of respondents link political instability to colonial political cleavages. Twenty percent of respondents responded that modern systems continue to embody colonial models of governance. Additionally, 17.71% believe that colonial

legacies still have an impact on political stability today. Finally, 18.57% have cited colonial economic policies as an obstacle to good governance. This finding reminds us that forms of political and governance organization still resemble the colonial order in modern Africa.

Table 3: Influence of Colonial Economic Systems on Dependence (Objective 2)

Item	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Africa remains economically dependent on former colonial powers	85	24.29
Colonial economic systems continue to shape modern African economies	80	22.86
African countries still rely heavily on raw material exports	90	25.71
Foreign aid continues to play a significant role in economic growth	85	24.29
African economies are structured for the benefit of global markets	85	24.29

Source: Field survey, (2026)

Based on the feedback from 350 respondents to the survey, Table 3 looks at how colonial economic systems have influenced Africa's continued dependence. A high proportion (25.71%) of respondents agree that African countries are still largely dependent on the export of raw materials, and 24.29% agree that Africa is still economically dependent on its former colonial masters,

that foreign aid is still an important contributor to economic growth and that African economies are organized for the benefit of global consumers. In addition, 22.86% think that old colonial economic systems still structure modern African economic systems. The findings shed light on the fact that African economies still remain structurally and economically dependent as a legacy from the colonial past.

Table 4: Impact of the Debate on Recolonization on Sovereignty (Objective 3)

Item	Frequency	Percentage (%)
The debate on recolonization is a central concern for African sovereignty	70	20.00
Recolonization through economic means weakens political autonomy	75	21.43
External political influences undermine African sovereignty	65	18.57
International relations affect African governance and autonomy	60	17.14
Sovereignty debates highlight Africa's vulnerability to external domination	80	22.86

Source: Field survey, (2026)

Table 4 draws on the 350 respondents to this survey and examines what this situation means in terms of the effect the debate about recolonization has on the sovereignty of African states. Twenty-two point eighty-six percent of respondents agree that sovereignty discourses emphasize the vulnerability of Africa to domination from the outside world. Further, 21.43% of respondents think recolonization through economic means undermines political autonomy while 20% feel

the debate on recolonization is a critical issue for African sovereignty; 18.57% of respondents think external political influences undermine African sovereignty and 17.14% feel international relations impact on African governance and sovereignty. These findings serve to highlight the degree to which issues of sovereignty are still relevant in light of modern influences and debates about recolonization.

Table 5: Test of Hypotheses

Hypothesis	Test Used	Test Result	Interpretation
H1: The legacies of colonialism negatively impact political stability and governance structures in post-colonial African nations, particularly in Nigeria, Angola, South Africa, and Kenya.	Chi-square test	$\chi^2(4) = 9.63, p = 0.05$	Significant effect of colonial legacies on political stability
H2: The colonial economic systems have led to a sustained dependency of African nations on external resources and global economic structures, hindering their development.	Pearson Correlation	$r = 0.75, p < 0.01$	Strong positive correlation between colonial economic systems and dependency
H3: The debate on recolonization, in both direct and indirect forms, significantly undermines the sovereignty and political autonomy of African nations in the current globalized world.	Regression Analysis	$R^2 = 0.62, p < 0.01$	Strong relationship between recolonization and sovereignty erosion

Source: Field survey, (2026)

4.2 Interview Results: Thematic Analysis

Interviews carried out with 15 participants including political analysts, leaders of civil society and activists participating in public movements such as EndSARS offered rich qualitative contributions to understanding the continuing impact of colonial legacies and the ongoing discourse of recolonization. Thematic analysis of the interviews identified a number of repeating themes, which contributed to the interpretation of the results from the quantitative survey.

Theme 1: Colonial Legacies and Political Instability

Nearly all interviewees (80%) spoke of the enduring legacy of colonial rule on African political institutions. They agreed that patterns of colonial governance continue to inform the manner in which African countries are governed, especially in relation to structures of centralized power that were imposed on African societies during colonial rule. Participants argued that these systems provide for political fragility especially in conjunction with ethnic and regional cleavage that have been exacerbated during the colonial era.

Theme 2: Economic Dependency and External Control

The theme of economic dependency was found to be a major issue raised during the interviews, with 66.67% of participants agreeing that African economies are still strongly dependent on their ex-colonial powers and the global capitalist flows. They pointed out that the economic systems created by colonialism for the extraction of resources for the benefit of colonial powers have condemned African nations to patterns of dependency, especially in the export of raw materials. This has not allowed the continent to attain sustainable economic growth and development.

Theme 3: The Role of Public Movements in Challenging Recolonization

The recolonization debate was at the heart of the interviews with 93.33% of the respondents agreeing that social mobilizations have played a very important role in confronting direct and indirect recolonization. Public protests such as EndSARS in Nigeria were cited as an example of how people are demanding more accountability from their government and questioning

the continued foreign interference into the sovereignty of Africa. The interviewees argued that these movements play an important role in advancing the public sovereignty and provide a platform for reforming democracy.

Theme 4: Sovereignty and International Relations

Interviewees raised the issue that the sovereignty of African states is still being violated externally by political forces, with 80% of interviewees acknowledging that African States are still being recolonized economically through international institutions and foreign aid. Thus, they proposed that African states should take the decision-making process regarding their political and economic affairs back into their own hands, independent of the influence of external players, to regain their sovereignty.

4.3 Discussion of Findings

The research findings of this study are richly informative, according to the three research objectives and are manifestations of the enduring presence of colonial legacy, economic dependency and the sovereignty question in post-colonial African nations.

Firstly, colonial legacies still have a fundamental impact on political stability and system of governance in countries such as Nigeria, Angola, South Africa and Kenya. The study confirms the idea that colonial templates of government such as centralized authority and artificial ethnic boundaries are replicated in modern politics. These structures destabilizing in the sense that they foster ethnic and regional tensions and make governance structures even more complex and fragile. The legacy of colonialism can still be seen, as the systems of power established during the colonial era continue to impact the governance structures in these nations. This conclusion is consistent with the arguments of Mlambo, Masuku, and Mthembu (2024), who stress that the formal independence of African states is not accompanied with a break from the colonial past, and ethnic cleavages and concentrated power are still major characteristics of African political systems.

Further, Sempijja and Brito (2025) note that the political tensions are yet far from being resolved and continue to contribute to instability due to the divide and rule politics of the colonial era. The findings of this study reflect these views, adding weight to the argument that post-colonial political institutions are still very much products of colonial dominance, and that ethnic tensions and issues with governance are a direct result of this. However, the findings in this study are contrary to those of Ouma (2025), who argues for deconstruction of the colonial models of governance and instead a resuscitation of indigenous political systems. Ouma concludes that African countries must break out of colonial forms of state and revert to more communally oriented, decentralized ones, rather than simply replicating Western models of state-building. While this viewpoint offers an alternative perspective, the conclusions of this paper are that the legacies of colonialism are so deeply ingrained that it would take large strides to move toward indigenous forms and that political stability is not yet in sight in the structures which still bear the mark of colonialism.

Second of all, the economic arrangements forced upon them by colonialism have made African countries economically dependent on international markets and foreign aid. The study suggests that most African countries have not yet escaped the dependence on exports of raw material products that were designed to benefit colonial powers. As a result, the continent has not been able to establish self-sustaining economic systems, and external economic systems continue to dominate African trade, investment, and financial systems. African countries depend on foreign assistance and external markets, which restricts their ability to grow economically on their own. This observation is in consonance with Kassaye Nigusie and Ivkina (2021), who argued that the economic infrastructures inherited by African countries from their former colonial masters still link African countries with external economic systems, which leaves them vulnerable to the neo-imperialist forces. Similarly, Majumder (2024) notes how the economic history of colonialism has made African nations highly susceptible to ongoing economic exploitation by the former colonial powers. However,

the study also disputes the ideology of Chlouba (2025) in emphasizing pre-colonial political organisations and the course of African nationalism and governmental institutions. Chlouba's (2025) claim that African nationalism was not a purely reactionary product of colonialism, but of both pre-colonial and colonial legacies, indicates that the economies colonialism forced on Africa could not be the only factors in determining Africa's economic future. Instead, the results of this study are more consistent with empirical evidence noted by others such as McConnell et al. (2024) on how African states are still politically socialised by their former colonial masters, a view that economic dependence is a consequence of the overall geo-political landscape that still prefers external ownership of African resources.

Finally, the question of recolonization is at the core of the African sovereignty and autonomy. The paper emphasizes the role of popular movements, like EndSARS in Nigeria, in contesting the continuing neo-colonialism of African governance. These movements are calling for more local control, the ideology of popular sovereignty and a resistance to recolonization. The debate reveals how external forces continue to erode political sovereignty and how global institutions are part of the problem for perpetuating Africa's susceptibility to external domination. Consistent with Sheikha (2025), who draws a comparison between the post-colonial quest for sovereignty in Africa and Israel, the research indicates that the plight of African states in achieving political independence is inextricably tied to the geopolitical power struggles in the world. The findings of the study provide evidence for the view that African sovereignty continues to be contested against external power whose interests are at stake in reasserting control over African political and economic systems. On the one hand, the significance of grassroots movements as change agents in the study differs from the notions of McConnell et al. (2024) who asserted that African diplomats who were nurtured in the colonial pedagogy have perpetuated foreign interests at the expense of domestic interests. While McConnell et al. argues that diplomatic recolonization threatens African

sovereignty, this study's findings highlight the importance of public movements in opposition to external forces and that struggle for sovereignty is no longer confined to the political elite but is now increasingly civil society and grassroots driven.

5. Conclusion and Recommendations

This research has brought to the foreground the still existing impact of colonial influences on the political and economic dynamics of post-colonial African countries. It has shown that the systems of government created in colonial times, including the centralized state and unnatural ethnic divisions, still exercise a destabilizing influence on political institutions in Nigeria, Angola, South Africa and Kenya. Further, the study indicates that the colonial economy has left African nations in an economically dependent position vis-a-vis external markets, and thus has continued the reliance on the export of raw materials and foreign assistance. Lastly, the question of recolonization is still a major subject of discussion, and popular movements have been a major source of resistance to outside influences and the promotion of African independence. The findings strengthen the arguments for African nations to deal with their colonial experience and to negotiate the challenges of sovereignty, political independence and economic freedom in a new world order.

Given the persistence of colonial models of governance, it is suggested that African countries focus on political reforms that would decentralise power and consequently, deal with ethnic and regional tensions that were accentuated by colonialism. In the face of political instability, establishing inclusive governance structures that respect ethnic diversity and promote political stability will be critical in overcoming the challenges to ensuring sustainable governance.

However, in order to overcome the nation's continuing economic reliance on global markets and former colonial powers, it is recommended that African nations should diversify their economies beyond the exportation of raw materials. Investment in

manufacturing, technology and renewable energy will decrease dependence on foreign aid while also providing long-term economic growth. Self-sufficiency will play an important role in breaking the chain of external economic command.

In view of the importance of the public movements in resisting recolonisation and in their struggle for a

greater political autonomy, it is suggested to African states to fund and empower civil society organisations and grassroots movements. The movements advocating for the sovereignty of the people and the democratic transformation of their countries are essential for standing up to external influences and guaranteeing the sovereignty of African countries in the face of globalisation.

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