

ANALYTICAL ASSESSMENT OF THE ATTRIBUTES OF NIGERIAN FOREIGN POLICY TOWARDS THE TRANSFORMATION OF AFRICAN UNION

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Abstract

The African continent has benefited immensely from Afrocentric nature of Nigerian foreign policy. This has invariably added to the reasons behind the successful transformation of Organization of African Unity (OAU) to African Union (AU). Having checked through the existing literature, it was observed that limited studies were found on Nigerian foreign policy's contribution towards the transformation of the continental organization in Africa. The study's findings have revealed the following attributes possessed by Nigerian foreign policy as one of the factors that aided the transformation of the continental organization in Africa. These attributes include: leadership role, economic-existing role, democratic-setting role, peace and security role, population factor, decolonization and anti-apartheid role. As part of the academic contribution of the study to the existing knowledge, the study indicated that Nigeria and its citizens tend to benefit more if its foreign policy tailors in such a way that would have a direct positive impact on Africa as a continent. Thus, the study concludes that Nigeria would have more influence in the continent particularly during decision making on Africa's matter, if she allows her fellow African countries to benefit from her favourable foreign policy. This study adopts functionalism theory to describe the possibility of mutual benefits when countries come together through functional cooperation to address common issues. This work is a qualitative study that utilizes both primary and secondary sources of data. Eight respondents were interviewed from different Nigerian government parastatals and higher institutions. The interview data was analyzed thematically with the aid of Nvivo-10.

Keywords: Nigeria, Foreign Policy, Transformation, OAU, AU

Introduction

The formation of the Organization of African Unity (OAU) constitutes an integral part of the rich tapestry of African modern history. The purpose of the OAU's existence as an umbrella body, uniting African continent (then) was intentionally designed to be in line with the goal behind the drive of Pan-Africanism, which was to encourage and expedite a sense of unity and cooperation among all Africans. Without this unity and cooperation, many of the Pan-Africanists were of the view that African continent would not be able to defend and free itself from continued domination and exploitation by its Western colonial masters. Notably, the Pan-African leaders, including Kwame Nkrumah of Ghana, Nnamdi Azikwe and Sir Tafawa Balewa of Nigeria, Ahmed Sekou Toure of Guinea, Julius Nyerere of Tanzania, Ruben Um Nyobe of Cameroon among others, believed that for the chain of imperialism and colonialism to be broken in Africa, the continent must be able to overlook and harmonize their ideological differences and at the same time retain their ethnic and cultural diversity (Dauda et al., 2021).

Several ideas were initiated by Pan-Africanists towards the need for the African continent to be placed under one single organisation. The initiatives by several Pan-African leaders would lead to a series of meetings on how Africa could come together. Their roles cannot be overemphasized in the history and evolution of organization in Africa before the OAU came into existence. Under the patronage of Pan-Africanism movement, a series of meetings, consultations and conferences were held within and outside the

African continent, with many of them were organized with the primary aims to harmonize the ideological differences among the African groups (Malakar, 2000).

The outcomes of the meetings at that time led to the formation of five prominent ideological groups in African which include; Ghana/Guinea Union, Pan-African Freedom Movement for East and Central Africa (PAFMECA), and the three political blocs (Brazzaville Bloc, Casablanca Bloc and Monrovia Bloc). These five groups were recognized by scholars to have played a greater role in unifying the African States (Cervenka 1977). Thus, the the ideological struggle over the continent's integration process and the dynamic of African politics eventually led to a declaration of African Charter of Monrovia in 1962 (Malakar, 2000).

The creation of the OAU in 1963 symbolized a momentous event in the African history, representing a testament of the willingness of African States and leaders to abandon their ideological differences for the sake of attaining African unity and liberty. High hope was also pinned on the Organisation to overcome the malaise that had long been pervasive in most parts of the continent such as civil war, racism, poverty, health pandemic and abuse of human right. On the contrary, the OAU had been widely viewed for its failure to accomplish the intended purpose of its existence. Hence, the failure of the OAU increased the tempo among African leaders for replacement of the organization.

The idea behind the transformation of the OAU to African Union (AU) was done in order to revamp the former. The official inauguration of AU as the successor of the OAU was made during the 36th OAU's summit of Heads of State and Government held in Durban, South Africa on 9th July, 2002. The 36th summit witnessed the ratification of the draft of AU Constitutive Act which was signed by the convergence of 53 African leaders. Similarly, Nigerian foreign policy which is afrocentric had assisted the transformation process of the OAU to AU.

The foreign policy postures of Nigeria and its Africa's centerpiece principle since the country's independence in 1960 had influenced the successful transformation of the OAU to AU. One can argue that Nigeria's positive

gestures toward advancing the security, socio-economy, and stability as well as general well-being of Africa is substantiated by its active role during the transformation process. Thus, such transformation is in consonance with Nigeria's national interest specifically and the well-being of the African continent in general. Viewing through how Nigeria's foreign policy attributes had assisted in enhancing smooth and successful transformation of OAU to AU as the African continental organization, one might not be adequately convinced due to limited / scanty nature of the existing literature on the phenomenon. Thus, it is against this backdrop that the study appraises the attributes of Nigerian foreign policy towards the transformation of African continental organization.

Statement of Problem

Nigerian foreign policy as a phenomenon that scholars such as Gambari (1989), Maduekwe (2008), Agbu et al (2013), Folarin (2013), Ashiru (2014), Ajayi et al (2015), Amuwo (2016), Oni and Taiwo (2016), Gambari (2017), Warner (2017) among others, have carried out numerous studies on it. Having studied their works, it was discovered that little attention was focused on the attributes of Nigerian foreign policy towards the transformation of the Organisation of African Unity to African Union. In particular, Nigerian foreign policy's attributes has tremendously assisted Africa during the metamorphosis of the former organization to AU which has formed a gap in the literature that is yet to be addressed. Similarly, the nature and manner at which Nigeria's foreign policy is designed particularly towards African continent canvass for scholarly studies like this. The Afrocentric nature of the country's foreign policy which has benefited immensely many African countries to achieve one level of development or the other, has invariably assisted the transformation of the OAU to AU to have gained a successful soft landing during the metamorphosis of the organization in Africa. Hence, such monumental and landscaping achievement recorded by Nigeria as attested to by many literature could not have been possible without the supports of its well tailored foreign policy towards Africa's direction. Thus, the aforementioned reason(s) has canvassed for an

analytical assessment of the attributes of Nigerian foreign policy towards the transformation of OAU to AU.

Methodology

The study utilizes literature related to transformation of OAU to AU and Nigeria's foreign policy. The study is qualitative that makes use of both primary and secondary sources of data. The primary source of data comprises of the professional views granted by experts in the field of Foreign Policies and International Relations. These experts include diplomats, academicians, senior civil servants at the Nigerian Ministry of Foreign Affairs and relevant Embassies among others. Justification for chosen the respondents that participated in the study was based on their involvement and experience on the issues being discussed. As argued by Obikeze (quoted in Biereenu-Nnabugwu, 2006), in-depth interview method of gathering data assists to gain access to processes, structures and it can invariably lead to the discovery of unexpected phenomenon. While the secondary data used for the study comprise of published and unpublished material generated from library (such as books, journal articles, bulletins, newspapers, and policy documents), archives and other search engines. Similarly, the adoption of interviewing approach by the study is to validate the existing knowledge in the literature and at the same time accord credibility to this study's findings. Therefore, triangulation of data used for the study is necessary in order to increase credibility and validity of the research findings.

Conceptual Review of the Study

The review of literature for this study was conceptualized and segregated based on the issues that led to the transformation of OAU to AU in African continent. The following notable issues include: (a) Economic Integration; (b) Regional Peace and Security and (c) Political Issues

Economic Integration: Scholarly works in the literature such as Nalditand Magliuerast (1999), Obeng-Odoom (2013), Opiko (2013) and Makinda et al (2016) have exhaustively examined and analyzed the causes of OAU weakness as a continental organization. This weakness is linked to its failure to fully achieve its established goals and objectives. One

of the causes of such failure as identified in the study conducted Makinda et al (2016) is the inability of the OAU to promote and attain the socio-economic goals and objectives embedded in Article II of the OAU's Charter which states "to coordinate and harmonize economic cooperation, including transport and communications, among member States" (OAU Charter, 1963). Opiko (2013) asserted that the idea of continental economic is to improve the economy of African continent. Thus, the idea was further institutionalized in the Lagos Plan of Action and finally concluded in the Abuja Treaty of 1991.

The 1991 Abuja Treaty, as affirmed by Adar et al (2010), proposed the establishment of the African Economic Community (AEC) which motivated the creation of Regional Economic Communities (RECs). The creation of RECs arguably integrates African continent together economically. This is what Bamidele (2016) described as what led to the formation of Southern African Development Community (SADC), the Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa (COMESA), the Community of Sahel-Saharan State (CEN-SAD). These newly created regional economic organizations added to the services provided by the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS).

Economic integration and markets in Africa could be prevented from being marginalized by other continent as part of providing succor for the economic lapses / failure found in OAU. This was argued by Adejumobi and Olukoshi (2008:82) that, "only if the regional integration efforts can be fully developed through a developing macro-states approach that would facilitate better strategies for integration in a globalized world". The authors supported the attempts towards African economic and regional development as incorporated in the AU by adopting an historical perspective approach of Pan-Africanism towards achieving the economic integration in Africa. This approach was employed during the transition of OAU to AU and, on how to tackle the challenges facing the OAU from achieving its objectives appropriately.

Regional Peace and Security: The OAU as a continental organization in Africa had failed to act and intervene in many intra-state conflicts. Although, the OAU's failure was also

attributed to the provision in the organization's Charter. The Charter prohibits OAU from interfering in the affairs of other members. As argued by Murithi (2008), the OAU was considered weak as it embarked on a number of failed initiatives to influence national politics, the behavior of its member states and in prevention of human rights violation and other atrocities in the continent. This position was supported by Masabo (2013), that the consequences of global community's failure in the 1990 to deal decisively *inter alia* the genocide in Rwanda and Burundi, state collapse in Somalia, 1997 crisis in Comoros and Ethiopia-Eritrea crisis, Darfur crisis, Sierra Leone and Liberia crises had triggered a high rate of insecurity and frequent conflicts in African continent. As observed by Olasunanmi (2016) and Dustmann et al (2017), some of the conflicts in African continent were predominantly intra-state and interstate in origin and generate huge refugee flows and displacement of persons. As OAU continued to disappoint African continent for its failure to fulfill its objectives to the continent, this form part of what made African leaders to have come up with the idea of transforming the OAU to AU.

Political Issues: Series of efforts have been made by scholars to examine the political challenges in Africa. African continent has faced with many challenges particularly in the area of democratization. As opined by Clionadh (2016), in most cases it has been impossible to transfer political power successfully from one democratic government to another in African continent. Young (2016) argued that despite the fact that, OAU strive hard to ensure principal of political independence for member states as contained in its Charter but successful transition of power from one civilian government to another has become a serious challenge.

Similarly, African continent has experienced series of military interventions in politics due to some abnormalities among the political leaders in government. These abnormalities were categorized by Houngnikpo (2016) to include the following; corruption, misappropriation of funds, embezzlement, ethnics' imbalances and unhealthy rivalry among the politicians. These abnormalities according to Mikail and Lee Abdullah (2017) have caused set back and even condition the

present state of the African continent. All these and many others were parts of the reasons for the transformation of the continental organization in Africa.

Theoretical Framework

The study adopts functionalism theory to appraise some of the attributes of Nigerian foreign policy towards the transformation of African continental organization. This theory grew largely from the outbreak of World War II, which raised concern that the state had become moribund as an institution for social organization (Diiego-Castaneda, 2006; Ogbonna et al, 2013). The theory was against power-politics and state-centredness in international relations. Its position focuses on common interests shared by states. Functionalism explains phenomena as functions of a system rather than an actor or actors. According to David Mitrany's (1943) in his book titled, "A Working Peace System - An Argument for the Functional Development of International Organisation", he affirms that war is a universal problem that affects people and, as such, the need for world peace is shared by everyone. The theory believes that through a system of functional cooperation, people are brought together and a sort of community feeling is generated and sustained (Ayinde, 2011; Mitrany, 1943).

The theory therefore emphasized on the role of international organizations in addressing common problems and providing for human welfare and basic requirement (Rosamond, 2000; Ayinde, 2011). As an integration theory, functionalism perceives international cooperation to be the first stage in the integration process which will allow people to pool their efforts in order to achieve a common objective (Rosamond, 2000). The idea was seen through the pan-Africanists motive of founding OAU to unite African countries to be able to present for common front in the international community. At the same time the transformation of OAU to AU with the quest for regional economic integration considering the political imperative through the resources of endowed countries in Africa such as: Nigeria, Libya and South Africa in order to promotes socio-economic development in Africa has equally make the theory to be relevant in the African context. Similarly, the theory is germane to explain the transformation of the OAU to AU

due to its mutual benefits connotation. As observed in functionalists' propositions, the common pursuit of welfare needs through interstate cooperation is integration which encompass the intensification of policy collaboration in a specific functional area such economic or technical among others. This is what Afrocentric nature of Nigeria's foreign policy has assisted to achieve with ease in ensuring peaceful transformation of OAU to AU in the African continent.

Traits of Nigerian Foreign Policy Towards the Successful Transformation of the OAU to AU

Nigerian foreign policy practice, as argued by scholars like Gambari (1989) and Folarin (2013), is described to be predominantly an Afrocentric in nature in which the country's priority is to ensure the betterment of the African continent. This is especially the case in the context of security and stability. The principles of Nigerian foreign policy which was described by Gambari (1989) and Adebajo (2008) as four concentric circles have also shaped its stronger relations with other African countries. This policy orientation invariably dictates the country's influential role during the transformation process of the OAU to the AU. There are several identified attributes of Nigerian foreign policy which have influenced and facilitated the transformation process successfully.

Nigeria's foreign policy orientation since its independence has been focusing on a range of objectives aimed at promoting and upholding the rights and welfare of African people (Gambari, 1989; Agbu et al, 2013). Ashiru (2014) affirmed that the framework of Nigeria's foreign policy objectives and direction can be traced to the country's 1999 constitution. He highlighted further the objectives contained the constitution of the country:

The promotion and protection of the national interest, the promotion of African integration and support for African unity, the promotion of international co-operation for the consolidation of universal peace and mutual respect among all nations and elimination of discrimination in all its manifestations, respect for international law and treaty obligations as well as the seeking of settlement of

international disputes by negotiation, mediation, conciliation, arbitration and adjudication (Ashiru, 2014, p.3).

In pursuit of Nigerian foreign policy objectives, the government has taken serious consideration on economic and security issue, peace, unity and cooperation both within Nigeria and the entire African continent.

In addition, the African-centered foreign policy of Nigeria has assisted the country towards its leadership role in Africa during the transformation process of the OAU to the AU. The content analysis of interview in **Figure 1.0** highlights the following as attributes or characteristics of Nigerian foreign policy that have influenced the successful transformation of the OAU to the AU. These include leadership role, peace, security and stability role, decolonization and anti-apartheid role, economic role, democratic setting role, population factor, prompt payment of dues, and effective lobbying strategy.

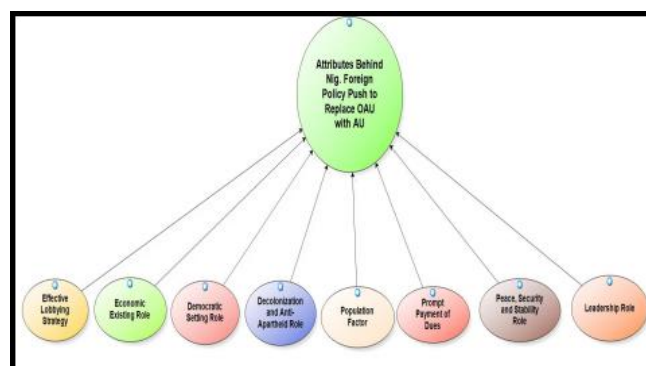


Figure 1.0 Attributes of Nigerian Foreign Policy and their Influence towards the Transformation of OAU with AU

a. Leadership Role

Leadership role is arguably one of the key foreign policy objectives that influenced Nigerian government to hasten the process of transforming the OAU to the AU. Nigeria has been actively engaged since its independence in facilitating the replacement of the OAU with a more effective continental organization. The country's substantial influence in Africa has been described by Oni and Taiwo (2016) as one of the significant pillars holding the security and socio-economic activities in the continent. Similarly, Respondent 3 elaborated the Afrocentric policy of Nigerian foreign policy as thus:

Nigerian foreign policy has been consistent since its independence, which

is to put Africa as the primary environment of our foreign policy activities. In fact, there was a time that was concretized in the expression that Africa is the centerpiece of Nigeria's foreign policy. Now, in reality, of course, Nigeria foreign policy has been more in the form of what I described as the Concentric Circle of interest and reaction. First, of course, issues that touch us directly, our welfares, our prosperity and our security, that is at the core. The next ring in that circle/concentric circle is related with our neighbouring countries because that directly affects us, our security, our prosperity (Respondent3, personal communication, September 16, 2017).

Hence, the assertion by the Respondent above shows that Nigeria is self-committed to the African welfare through its foreign policy. Such assertion is supported by Respondents 8 and 2. The former suggested, "Nigerian foreign policy has been favouring Africa. This is because of the commitment and seriousness that Nigeria is nurturing for Africa towards making it a better place". Meanwhile, Respondent 2 affirmed that, "the fact that Nigeria has been able to achieve or played a major role in the transformation is an achievement on its own".

The assertion above reveals that Nigeria is politically committed in carrying out the necessary action to ensure and promote the betterment of African continent. The self-determination and commitment of Nigeria to Africa is equally attested to by Respondent1, where he stressed that:

Nigeria is a leading African nation, the most populous black nation in Africa, the country sees Africa as its centerpiece of its foreign policy. Whatever anybody is thinking about, there would not be AU without Nigeria. As a matter of fact, Nigeria was the second to the last to append her signature on the formation of the African Union. Nigeria had to do that because it knows what has been done in the life of OAU. Nigeria knew the challenges ahead of her. So, there are some scepticism under Obasanjo that time, but at least, some scholars will always put it, with the development in Europe, Nigeria must belong to other

African nations. So, Nigeria has no option than to append its signature followed by South Africa and that ushered in the African Union. So, there is no how Nigeria will shy away from her responsibility in nurturing African Union, in achieving (Respondent 1, personal communication, September 9, 2017).

As suggested by Esidene and Onyebuchi (2012), Ibrahim, Ogbeidi and Adams (2015), the leadership role played by Nigeria, particularly its influence towards the transformation of the OAU has been commendable. This was also stressed by Respondent 5 where he posited that "Obasanjo really make sure that Nigeria featured permanently in the transformation process and Nigeria was one of the Leaders together with Thabo Mbeki of South Africa, Abdelaziz Bouteflika of Algeria and Gaddafi of Libya" (Respondent 5).

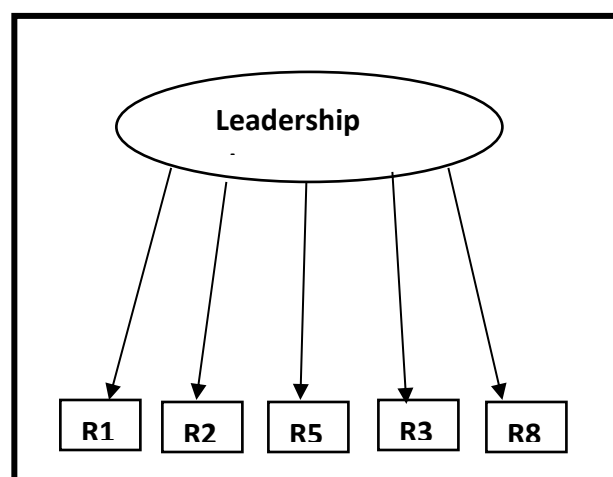


Figure 1: Leadership Role as Nigerian Foreign Policy's Attribute

b. Decolonization and Anti-Apartheid Role

Decolonization and eradicating apartheid in Africa is one of Nigeria's foreign policy influences during the process of transforming the OAU to the AU. Some of the problems confronting African continent even until today can be traced to the legacy of Western colonization (Ekwealor, 2017). This condition has made several concerned African states, such as Nigeria to champion a series of campaign against the colonial rule and apartheid in Africa as a crime against humanity. Nigeria's role in Africa according to Ashiru (2014:4) "has been influenced largely by destiny". He further suggested that Nigeria's Afrocentric foreign policy would serve as "thrust on the

decolonization of the African continent and the promotion of African unity”, with positive consequence to its reputation in pushing for positive change in Africa. Nigeria has done great for Africa when looking at her role against colonization and, at the same time, her role towards eradication of racism and apartheid in countries such as Mozambique, Namibia, Zimbabwe, Angola and the liberation struggle in South Africa.

Furthermore, Nigerian government has been trying to liberate other African countries from the shackle of colonialism. Evidence to this could be seen from Nigeria’s suspension from the Commonwealth of Nations in 1961 over her demonstration to show to the world that the apartheid rule in South Africa was a crime against humanity (Koutonin, 2016). Nigeria was the first African State to have provided financial supports to the African National Congress (ANC) in its struggle against apartheid in South Africa (Umezurike & Lucky, 2015; Koutonin, 2016).

In addition to Nigeria’s self-commitment to Africa’s liberation through her foreign policy objectives, the country had adopted “no string attached” policy when rendering assistance to its neighbouring African countries. This is affirmed by the country’s first Prime Minister, Sir Abubakar Tafawa Balewa during the delivering of his inaugural speech at the UNGA on the 7th October 1960. In his speech, he stated that, “we in Nigeria are prepared to do anything towards the liberation of all African countries...if we assist any dependent country in Africa, we must see to it that we do not attach conditions to our assistance” (Ariyo, 2014: 139). In the same vein, Chief Olusegun Obasanjo equally restated Nigeria’s position on the need for Africa’s total freedom. He reiterated this at a Seminar organized by the OAU in Abuja on May 15, 2001, that:

The road to freedom and unity has been long and tortuous, but the dream has been kept alive like a flickering candlelight in a dark night of hopelessness. Nigeria has always shared this Pan-African vision. Nigeria has always been prepared to commit men and resources for the realization of this great objective. Nigeria remains committed to the pursuit of this

noble goal of African freedom and unity (Wapmuk, 2014: 79-80).

Therefore, the argument above on Nigeria’s role in decolonization and removing apartheid regime in the entire African continent was supported by a Respondent that “Nigeria has gone beyond its region when it comes to anti-apartheid, decolonization” (Respondent3). This means that Nigeria commitment in African continent is not limited to only West-Africa region but the entire African continent (Freund, 2016).

Similarly, another Respondent has described Nigeria’s role against apartheid in South Africa as one of the factors that has recognized Nigeria as a key player in the transformation of OAU to AU. He added that, “Nigeria’s role in South African and other countries in Africa towards decolonization and apartheid added weight to her involvement in the transformation” (Respondent 5). The view was buttressed by Respondent3 that “On the continental scale, the OAU/AU provides another instrument/theatre for Nigerian foreign policy but we tend in practice to be a lot more particularly after the achievement of the decolonization and apartheid”. The liberation struggle in Africa as posited by Umezurike and Lucky (2015) and Koutonin (2016) cannot be completed without acknowledging Nigeria’s efforts. This assertion was buttressed by Respondent 1:

Nigeria has done so much under OAU, do not forget some of these policies we have, do not forget the crises where Nigeria played the active roles in liberation of Mozambique, Zimbabwe, Angola, apartheid and some others. Do not forget the seals of aids and grants Nigeria have given to some other countries (Respondent 1, personal communication, September 9, 2017).

The Respondent argued further that Nigeria had taken active role towards the campaign against apartheid. This role made the United Nations to have appointed Nigeria as the Chairman of the United Nations Committee on Apartheid in South Africa.

Nigerian foreign policy according to Respondent4 was influenced by the experience of African countries during the colonial period. He stressed further that:

Nigeria took up the mantle for independence of countries that were still under the forms of colonialism. One of the theatres where Nigeria was visible was in the Southern African fought, in South Africa itself, others like that were Angola, Zimbabwe among others. Nigeria was very visible there. Were these achieved to the large extent? Absolute yes (Respondent 4, personal communication, October 4, 2017).

Hence, the argument above shows that Nigeria, through her foreign policy objectives of African centerpiece, has been for long time a partner of Africa freedom, progress and development. Therefore, Nigeria's self-commitment towards Africa liberation and freedom has paved way for easy transition of the OAU to the AU.

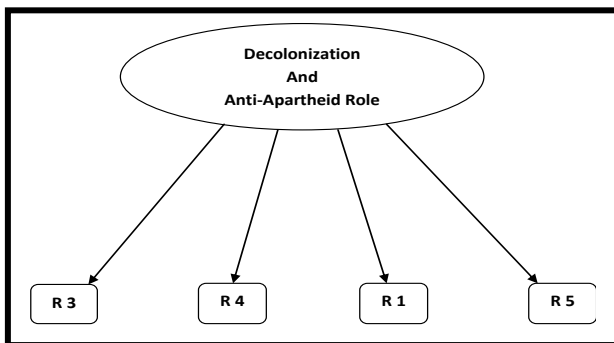


Figure 2: Decolonization and Anti-Apartheid Role as Nigerian Foreign Policy Attribute

c. Democratic Setting Role

Apart from the decolonization and anti-apartheid role of Nigeria as an attribute behind Nigeria's foreign policy, the democratic setting role boost the country's influence towards the transformation process. Nigeria role towards propagating the democratic principles and values in the Africa and the need for African States to accept democracy has also added to Nigeria's role and influence in the transformation process of the OAU to the AU. In the opinion of Wapmuk (2014) "Nigeria has also made commitment to the promotion and consolidation of democracy, good governance and human rights in Africa" (p. 84). The assertion is arguable because the democratic administration as a suitable system of government was demonstrated by Nigeria not only to Africa but to the entire world that the system is a form of government that guarantees the fundamental human rights.

The 1999 transition of power from military to civilian rule in Nigeria demonstrated to the entire world that the country has imbedded the principle of democracy (Yusuf, 2015; Eneh, 2017; Gambari, 2017). Similarly, the successful transfer of power Nigeria from one civilian administration to another democratic rule in 2003, 2007, 2011, and 2015 promotes Nigeria's image in the area of good governance. This invariably motivated Nigeria in her civil rule campaign in Africa. As part of Nigeria's campaign of the democratic principles in Africa, the country ratified the African Charter on Democracy, Elections and Governance and delivered to the OAU/AU. Not only that Nigeria, according to Wapmuk, "provid[ed] necessary material and other support to the democratic and electoral processes in Guinea-Bissau, Mali, Senegal, Liberia, Ghana, Niger and other African countries" (Wapmuk, 2014: 84).

In the same vein, Nigeria's democratic support in Africa was equally buttressed by Respondent 5 that:

Nigeria also led other members in the organization on the campaign for democratic principles in the continent in order to encourage harmonious relationship between the governors and governed and at the same time will assist the governed to choose or select who is going to lead them (Respondent 5, personal communication, August 26, 2017).

As partners in the campaign for democratic norms and value in Africa, African leaders who shared similar opinion with Chief Olusegun Obasanjo joined the team in spreading the message to the continent (Ibeanu, 2014). The view was supported by Respondent4:

The matter of democratically elected government in some African countries, fairly intelligent, a little bit more knowledgeable to say about the state of our problems the likes of Olusegun Obasanjo, the likes of Thabo Mbeki, Buti Flika in Algeria and so many others (Respondent 4, personal communication, October 4, 2017).

The collective efforts of African leaders in the continent in which Nigeria played the leading role as attributed to the influence used in the transformation of OAU to AU.

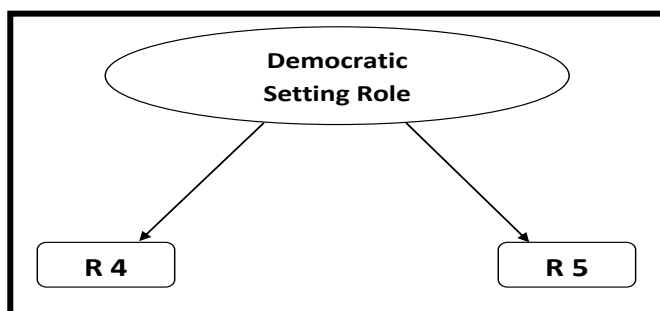


Figure 3: Democratic Setting Role as Nigerian Foreign Policy Attribute

d. Peace, Security and Stability Role

Nigeria's role in ensuring peace, security and stability in Africa is another foreign policy influence used by the country to secure successful transformation of the OAU to AU. The maintenance of peace, security and stability in African continent was part of Nigeria's pledge in her foreign policy objectives (Agbu et al, 2013). Relevantly, Wapmuk (2014) suggested that, "Nigeria has consistently played a prominent role in the area of peace and stability in Africa" (p. 84). As it will be elaborated below, Nigeria has made significant contributions to ensure peace and stability in the African continent. Such contributions in some ways were highly valued and widely recognized by most African states and the international community who look up to Nigeria whenever there is need for a regional State to lead others in securing peace and stability in the continent. Nigeria's role in ensuring peace and stability in Congo, Chad, Somalia, Sierra Leone, Liberia and others is part of what made Nigeria to be reckoned with in any matter concerning Africa (Akinsanya, 2014). In fact, Nigeria has been playing a decisive role as a leader in ensuring stability across the African continent before the establishment of the PSC in 2003. Having created the PSC, Nigeria under the leadership of Chief Olusegun Obasanjo was the first chairman of the council where he intervened in the Sudan's crisis involving the government and rebels (Arthur, 2017). The peace and stability role played by Nigeria's through her foreign policy has assisted the country to get the supports of other African States in transforming the OAU into the AU.

Nigeria's peace and stability role in Africa is widely recognized through its discernible leadership and financial

commitment in peacekeeping missions across the continent. This was described by Respondent 5 as "one of the areas where Nigeria has done great in making Africa a peaceful place". The peacekeeping exercise has cost the country nothing less than US\$80 million (Agwu, 2014). During the 1989 civil war in Liberia, for example, Nigeria provided ECOMOG with more than eighty percent of funds to be utilized, and provided seventy percent of the troops to the Liberian's crisis. Similarly, Nigeria did the same by contributing both personnel and resources to the crises in Sierra Leone, Chad, Darfur, Mali and other conflict zones in Africa (William, 2014; Adebajo, 2018).

This was possible for Nigeria because of its level of military might which made a Respondent to have argued that:

In terms of security, Nigeria has the largest Army, largest military force or Armed forces in Africa. So, Nigeria is key to whatever OAU/AU wants to do and to whatever AU is doing be it economic, political, and socio-security wise, Nigeria is a very key. Without Nigeria, the survival of OAU/AU will be a mirage (Respondent1, personal communication, September 9, 2017).

Similarly, the argument above on how Nigeria has been featured in Africa's affairs was corroborated by another Respondent that:

Nigeria had emphasized or coupled with serious role by intervening in the areas of peace and security through the platform of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) and Nigeria single-handedly pushed the idea of ECOMOG when other countries were quite reluctant initially and as one can agree with me that ECOMOG to some extent has recorded success. Of course, Nigeria has lost a lot of men, a lot of resources (Respondent 4, personal communication, October 4, 2017).

Furthermore, Nigeria's desire and self-determination to ensure peace in Africa via collective security of committed States in Africa is done in order to promote the level of stability and development in the continent. This assertion was supported by Respondent1 that "the earlier Nigeria realized the needs to address instability in the African continent and achieve the

modicum of peace, the better for the continent”. With the above contributions of Nigeria to African continent therefore, one can argue to a considerable extent that Nigeria had paved way for the smooth transformation of the OAU to AU. Hence, it equally provided Nigeria an avenue to showcase its worth as a trusted partner especially in the area of peacekeeping in the continent.

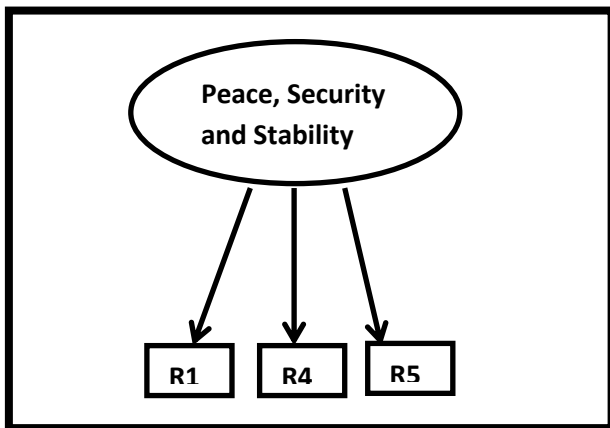


Figure 4: Peace, Security and Stability Role as Nigerian Foreign Policy Attribute

e. Economic Existing Role

The buoyancy of Nigeria’s economy, with the abundance and myriad natural resources endowed to the country has strengthened not only its positive image among the African States, but also its influential role in the transformation of the OAU to the AU. Indeed, Nigeria is categorized as a resource-rich country. Nigeria is rated as 13th largest oil producer in the world and 6th largest oil producer among the Organisation of Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC). According to OPEC Annual Statistic Data Bulletin for year 2017, daily crude oil production of Nigeria since 1990, 2000, and 2016 is approximately 1,727,000; 2,054,000, and 1,427,000 per barrel respectively (OPEC, 2017). Apart from oil and gas, Nigeria, as noted earlier, is endowed with abundant mineral deposits such as iron ore, tin, coal, limestone among others, which serve as source of raw material to many industries, both local and international (Dauda & Ameen, 2017). These resources are capable of generating revenue to Nigerian government. For example, crude oil accounts for over 70 percent of revenue at all levels of government in Nigeria (Dauda & Ameen, 2017).

The revenue acquired from its natural resource wealth had made Nigeria financially capable to assert its influence in the development of Africa. Since its independence, it has been widely known that Nigeria has been actively participated in the planning and formulating of strategy and policy to assist African economic growth and development. Therefore, one can argued that Nigeria’s relatively strong economy and endowment with rich natural resources enabled it to play active role in transforming the OAU to the AU. Similarly, scholars like Bunwaree (2008) and Yoo (2016) argue that Nigeria’s role in the transformation process of OAU is possible due to the influence of its endowed natural and mineral resources. This view is supported by Respondent1 that “we have resources but again we have a conducive climate in Africa that can bring about harmonious trading relationship. Nigerian investors, businessmen still have the largest benefits of the climates”.

Blessed with bountiful natural resources, coupled with its relatively robust economy, Nigeria has been committed towards the continent’s economic development and growth. This commitment is evident when the country is the first among the African countries to initiate and support a series of economic plans, such the Lagos Plan of Action and the Abuja treaty of 1991 (Opiko, 2013; Wapmuk, 2014). The outcomes of these economic plans had led to the formation of AEC, an institution that would serve as the bedrock for the RECs which invariably steered to the formation of economic blocs in each of the five African regions (Adar, Juma & Miti, 2010). Nigeria had played a prominent role in pushing for the formation of several institutions in promoting economic development in the continent. One of such institutions of paramount importance to the economic development of Afric is the adoption of NEPAD under the OAU and later, the establishment of APRM. Furthermore, Nigeria’s role is not only to provide the needed leadership in mobilizing other African States at the continental level but also, according to Wapmuk, “collaborated with other leading countries in the continent and facilitated the engagement of the larger international community to partner with Africa under the NEPAD arrangement (Wapmuk, 2014: 84-85).

The willingness of Nigerian government to assist Africa to achieve sustainable economic growth and development, to some extents, made Maduekwe (2008) to argue that the country is ready to utilise its abundant deposition of natural resources to promote the African economy. He stressed further in his definition of Nigerian foreign policy as “the totality of transaction of economic, trade, cultural, financial, political and diplomatic....” (2008: 5). The important value of Nigeria’s self-commitment towards African economic development was stressed by Respondent1 that, “the country’s economy, political, socio-security wise are keys. That without Nigeria the survival of AU will be a mirage”.

The passion that Nigeria has for the African economic development canvassed for hosting of continental’s committee meeting in which Respondent4 posited that “Nigeria played the role of captain like in the Lagos Plans of Action, the name alone you will know that Nigeria has done much in it”. Another Respondent buttressed the argument that “of course the Lagos Plans of Action which was took place here (in Nigeria). Nigeria is the pillar or the building or the foundation for African Economic Integrations” (Respondent 3).

The Afrocentric policy of Nigeria towards Africa has been reflected in all Nigeria’s activities at both continental and global levels. In fact, Nigeria’s economic potentials and abundant natural gifts has enticed most developed countries of the world (e.g. US, Britain, China, Japan) to have signed of Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the country (Nagy et al., 2018). The MoU and other multilateral agreements that might have entered into by Nigeria will always be in the interest of Africa (Wapmuk, 2014; Olagunju, 2014). Thus, Respondent1 buttressed their assertions that:

Regardless of what could be our economy, home domestic challenges, security wise, economic wise, Nigeria will continue to play an active role for the sustenance, survival of African Continent and AU. Because one, we have resources, conducive climate in Africa that can bring about harmonious trading relationship. Nigerian investors, businessmen will still have the largest benefits of that climate. So, whatever we do today, we are going to

reap it, if we do not reap it economically, security wise we will reap it because, we are the one that has the resources to protect, Nigeria is the one that has properties to protect, Nigeria is the one that has life than any countries to protect (Respondent 1, personal communication, September 9, 2017).

Nigerian foreign policy is oriented to favour African continent. Coupled with its economic potentiality and natural wealth, it would be wise for African States to engage and cooperate with Nigeria for mutual benefits. This, either directly or indirectly, had placed Nigeria in a strong position to convince and lobbying them for their supports in the transformation of the OAU to AU.

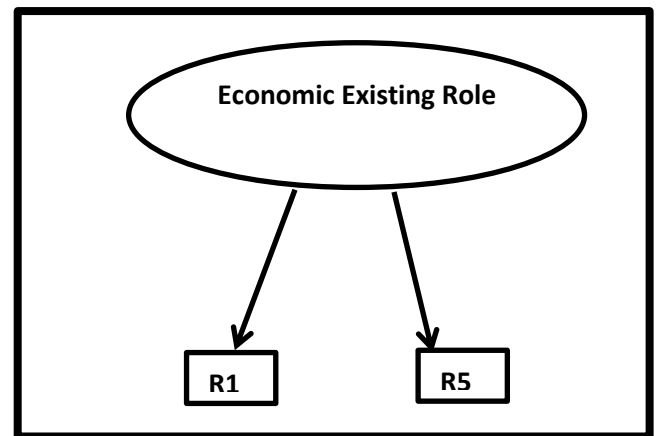


Figure 5: Economic Existing Role as Nigerian Foreign Policy Attribute

f. Population Factor

Apart from its economic existing role, Nigeria, being the most populous country in African continent, has used its population strength as one of her foreign policy influence in Africa, particularly during the transformation of the OAU to the AU. The report by the UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs, Population Division indicated that Nigeria’s population in 2000 was 122,352,009, with an estimated growth between 2.6 to 3.0 percent annually from the previous years (Worldometers, 2018; World Bank, 2018). Six years forward, Nigeria’s population census record shows that the country’s total population in 2006 was approximately 140 million (Adebowale et al. 2014). Similarly, the UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs, Population Division’s reports indicated that

Nigeria's population as at December 2017 was 190,886,311 which ranked the country as seventh most populated country in the world (Worldometers, 2018).

Nigeria's population strength has also contributed for the country's strong human resource capacity in the aspect of military strength and technocrats. This assertion is supported by Respondents 2 and 6 that "there is no African countries where we do not have Nigerians" and that "Nigeria's residents are in numerous African States, perceive what number of them are in South Africa, a large number of them are in Kenya". Similarly, Respondent 2 highlighted further that:

The fact that Nigeria has been accepted as a major player, do not forget the population of Nigeria in Africa is over (180 million), I mean one percent (1%) of Africans seen anywhere in the world are Nigerians. So, that one notwithstanding, it actually added to the importance of Nigeria in the Africa's Affairs (Respondent 2, personal communication, September 11, 2017).

This shows that Nigeria is everywhere not only in African continent but also in the entire world at large. The population factor of Nigeria as one of the foreign policy tools used to influence decision in the continent as asserted by Respondent5:

The population of Nigeria also counts on its influence. Wherever you go on earth, there is no how that one will not find at least a Nigerian. In fact, an adage says, one in every black found anywhere in the world, is a Nigerian. Nigeria's population which made it to be regarded as the giant of African attributed to the role Nigeria played in the transformation of OAU to AU (Respondent 5, personal communication, August 26, 2017).

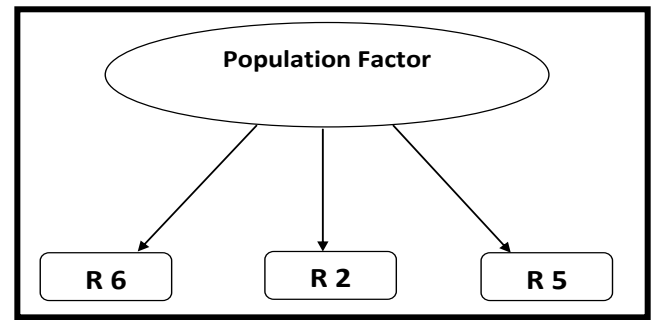


Figure 6: Population Factor as Nigerian Foreign Policy Attribute

Conclusion and Recommendations

Conclusively, this work examined the attributes of Nigerian foreign policy towards the transformation of OAU to AU. Nigerian foreign policy is the main tool guiding the country's relationship with other countries. Similarly, its Afrocentric policy towards African continent has given Nigeria an ample opportunity to play active role in many developmental projects in Africa, particularly in the transformation of the OAU to the AU. Nigeria's influence in Africa was attributed to its favourable foreign policy posture towards Africa. This has made Nigeria to have played such greater roles and function in the continent towards the transformation of OAU to AU. The study findings revealed that Nigerian foreign policy with its favourable attributes to Africa has canvassed for the excel leadership role played by the country among its counterparts in Africa. Similarly, the country's existing economic role and its action during campaign against apartheid in Africa added to Nigeria's giant stride during the transformation process.

Furthermore, Nigeria's passion for peace and stability in Africa together with its democratic setting created through its foreign policy's attributes has equally added to the country's great influence in the transformation of OAU to AU. The above itemized attributes of Nigeria's foreign policy had in no small measure made the country to have greater influence in Africa. Therefore, as this study contributes to the existing body of knowledge, the research's findings reveal that Nigeria should not relent in its efforts to ensure its Afrocentric foreign policy benefits African continent more. This is because some countries that Nigeria was a benefactor to, through its Afrocentric foreign policy, has failed to reciprocate such positive gesture (in kind) to the

latter. Such reason(s) for not reciprocating positive gesture perhaps could be further researched by future studies.

Considering how Afrocentric nature of Nigeria's foreign policy had favoured the country to achieve its benefits in Africa particularly during the transformation of OAU to AU, it is therefore recommended that Nigeria should continue to ensure its foreign policy objectives benefits Africa more. The more African continent benefits from Nigeria's foreign policy objectives, the better for the latter and its citizens.

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