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**African Journal of Political Science and
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Full Length Research Paper

Stay at home: Coronavirus (COVID-19), isolationism and the future of globalization

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The novel Corona Virus (Covid-19) is creating havoc in the world. It is causing greatest damage to the health and economic fabrics of societies with considerable impact on individuals, families, communities, and nations in unprecedented scale. At the same time countries are taking desperate measures to curb its spread and limit its negative consequences. Some of these measures include stay at home and closed door policies. The objective of this paper is to argue that while these policies can reduce the spread of the virus and saves lives, the unintended consequences in terms of inappropriate use of time, pyscho-emotional distress, and loss of livelihoods on one hand and shrinking international or inter-state cooperation and declining trend of globalization, on the other hand, will be incalculable. Given the recent arrival of the complex social, political and economic problems associated with the virus, our knowledge about the scale and directions of these problems is yet to emerge. Using the critical observation and analysis methods, the various implications of the pandemic are highlighted throughout the discussion. The concluding section of the paper calls for a continuous and comprehensive research to generate relevant policy recommendations on constructive responses to the short and long term consequences of Covid-19 and its impacts on individuals, families, communities and the future of globalization.

Key words: Covid-19, solidarity, international cooperation, globalization, developing countries.

INTRODUCTION

The world is grappling with unprecedented levels of crises encompassing all sectors of life: health, economy, social life, religion, politics, and international relations. At the root of these complex challenges facing the world is the invisible virus called Coronavirus (Covid-19) from Wuhan, China, which, in a space of three to four months, spread across the globe infecting more than 8.7 million and killing thousands of people in different countries (WHO, June 2020). The countries being worst hit by the pandemic, at the time of wiring the final draft of this

paper, include USA, Brazil, Russia, India, UK and Spain. China and South Korea are reported to have curved the spread of the virus and reduced its impact on society and economy significantly. Moreover, China has emerged as a provider of medical and technological support to other countries, notably to the largest victims of the Covid-19, Italy, Spain, the US and other European countries to help respond to the disaster. In addition, China, through the billionaire Jack Ma, is shipping tons of medical equipment and supplies to a number of African countries which

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were caught by this monstrous disease quite unprepared.

Africa has received the virus relatively late; and both infection and fatality rates are considerably low. But this is not time for complacency as the number of cases is growing rapidly. It is also important to note that while the developed countries with 'advanced' health care systems and well-trained health workers are unable to cope with the carnage of Covid-19, Africa, with very poor health systems, fragile economies and abject poverty, will find it exceedingly difficult to tackle the pandemic. More frustrating, when it comes to Africa, the low level of literacy and lack of awareness, among the majority of the population regarding the mode of transmission of the virus, methods of prevention and limited understanding of the magnitude of the immanent destruction, once it penetrates deep into heavily populated urban and rural communities. Though governments are trying to educate people through mass media, random observation of public interactions on streets, market places, transport stations and religious establishments reveal that there is no significant behavioral change at individual, household and community levels. This means, when the virus grows into a full blown pandemic, Africa could likely suffer the greatest blows unseen in its history.

The argument advanced in this paper is that aside from individual and family tragedies that we are witnessing around the world, the impact of Covid-19 on the future of globalization and international relations will be far-reaching. Based on observations and information from the international media of all sorts, the paper outlines three critical issues resulting from the policy of isolationism in a desperate effort to reduce the spread of the virus. These include (a) its impact on individuals, families, communities and nations; (b) implication for international and interstate interactions; and (c) the future of globalization. The discussion is presented in that order.

Objectives

The overall aim of this paper is to pinpoint major areas of concern for research and knowledge generation on the scale and severity of ongoing and emerging challenges facing individuals, families, communities and nations following the outbreak and spread of the Covid-19 pandemic. The specific objectives of the study include:

(1) To discuss the immediate and long-term effects of the stay at home policies adopted by countries and regions;
(2) To identify the implications of isolationism on interstate and international relations, and
(3) To outline the possible consequences of closed-door and closed-border regimes on the future of globalization.

The ultimate purpose of the paper is to motivate others, academics, researchers and policy or decision-makers, to undertake their own studies on the wide-range of issues that the Novel Corona Virus has unfolded since its

emergence three to four months ago.

This paper thus suggests some key conclusions and suggestions including the need for continued monitoring and analyses of the situations as time go on.

METHODOLOGY

The methods employed in this study include observation, interpretative and context-analysis. This is one of the few attempts at explaining actual and potential implications of the Covid-19 pandemic at international scale. As such, it is not possible to obtain relevant literature and statistical data. This is the characteristic of emerging global issues and will take time to have comprehensive information on the subject. However, this could soon be resolved as more and more scholars could be engaged in generating data and analyzing the short and long term implications of the Covid pandemic. Therefore, It is hoped that the present study will contribute to future studies aimed at understanding the multiple consequences of the stay at home regime on individuals, families and nations, especially on the pace of globalization and inter-state collaboration.

In this regard, those who wish to do so are encouraged to conduct their own empirical studies on the various themes touched throughout the paper.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The impact of staying at home on individuals, families, communities and nations

Millions of workers, students, business operators, and travellers in many countries have been told to stay at home. The purpose of the stay at home advice, which later turned out to be a coercive order in many countries, is to keep people away from each other and reduce the spread of the virus through physical contacts. The underlying assumption is that physical distance, coupled with personal hygiene, could prevent new infections so that hospitals could deal with patients already affected by the virus. In a situation where little is known about the virus and where no biomedical cure, other than treatment and care, exists, limiting physical contact and encouraging preventive social and cultural practices are believed to respond to the pandemic and return to the state of normalcy. These measures have their own strengths and limitations, which are outlined in the following paragraph.

On the positive side, the stay at home measure will save millions of lives and billions of dollars because prevention has always been the best remedy for most diseases including new viral outbreaks. In the first place, people will remain healthy in the fullest sense of the term: physically, mentally and emotionally, if they stay away from close contacts and large gatherings which have immense potentials to spread viral infections. Needless to state that individuals and families who are enjoying good health will contribute to rapid recovery and faster economic growth, when the battle against the Covid-19 is won; and this is inevitable no matter how long it will take

to do so.

In the second place, individuals and families staying at home will have more time for personal reflections, creative thinking and engaging in something meaningful to them now that they have plenty of time for themselves, though they have to discharge their work related responsibilities from home. It may be possible that people who do not have time for personal growth because of routine office work, traffic jam and other factors will have the opportunity to do what is best for them under the present situations. In the third place, maybe for the first time in many years, families will be at home together. Children will stay with parents and couples could stay together for days or months. This could enable family members to reclaim 'lost' family times and their collective enjoyment, perhaps under one roof, in close interaction and consultation with one another, including reflections on their future. At the same time, they could use this relatively longer time to plan and conduct some of their unfinished family or household affairs. Parents could tutor their children. The latter could help each other or their parents in different activities and make life easier. Most importantly, working family members could use part of their time indoors to take care of the sick, elderly and persons living with disabilities, where these exist. Individuals and families could also save money that could have been spent on fuels, transport costs, eating out at places of work, or recreation outside after work hours. Studies usually reveal that, thousands of family breakdown cases are associated with drinking habits and staying away from home during off-hours or weekends.

In light of the foregoing, the Covid-19 induced stay at home policy could have direct and indirect benefits to individuals, households, and maybe, nations indirectly because a nation of happy and satisfied individuals and families will be a healthy and productive nation.

However, the actual consequences of stay at home cannot be entirely rosy. In this regard, it is important to outline some of the problems associated with staying at home involuntarily. The first and most important challenge to individuals and families is managing time. People who are used to working in structured and controlled environments, in both public and private sectors, would find it difficult to adjust to sudden changes in their work spaces and schedules. It is not easy to shift to new plans and manage time for different activities. Some would think that they have now abundant free time at their disposal. They may forget to ration time between personal enjoyment and discharging their duties virtually. The struggle between enjoying ones 'free' time at home and observing work ethics through self-discipline will be intense. This could lead to psycho-emotional tensions for a good number of people everywhere. However, this does not mean that all workers who are staying at home will spend their time uselessly. It is difficult to make such a gross generalization on this issue without adequate empirical evidence, but this will surely be the case among the majority of the population staying at home, especially the less experienced youth and unskilled workers.

Therefore, while countries, communities, corporations, families and individuals are waging war against the pandemic, they also need to do something to help workers staying at home to make the best use of their time. The role of the media in this task will be quite essential. As much as their active engagement in creating awareness about the mode of transmission and prevention of this deadly virus, the media can also involve in educating people about the irretrievability of time. Moreover, the communication strategy designed to prevent the spread of the virus should also have messages about proper use of time at home. No doubt, this would appear paternalistic at best, and interventionist, at worst. Be that as it may, efficient utilization of one of the precious resources, time, should be part of the campaign against Covid-19 and the recovery process afterwards. As we know, this virus, like most other pernicious viruses, is the fastest ever flying monster. It can also be killed by time: our staying at home is to slow down its speed and gradually deprive it the opportunity to ride on all of us. Therefore, time is everything in any battle; and individual time at home should be considered as one of the powerful weapons in the fight against the disease, against poverty, and all against other social problems.

The second challenge related to staying at home is psycho-emotional problem. When people that are used to working and staying out for most of the day close themselves in, they will undoubtedly feel isolated from the world. Work outside the home is characterised by myriads of non-work related to social interactions, intimate relationships (friendship, collegiality, etc.) through dyadic, group or mass communications. Because of this, in addition to earning income, people find meaning in their work and they feel attached to one another to perform their duties as important members of society. Even some of the workers who may have personal or family problems at home could find comfort at places of work and forget the sources of their distress. In this regard, staying at home may reduce their social proximity and curtail their frequent interactions. This isolation may, to a certain extent, lead to a sense of exclusion and the resulting pyscho-emotional strains, especially when the duration of stay at home is extended for an indefinite period of time.

It is, therefore, imperative to understand the extent of the psycho-emotional problems to design coping strategies at all levels: individual, family, corporations, communities and national. Here again, the role of the media will be critical. However, psychiatrists, social and industrial psychologists and social workers should take the matter very seriously and respond to this unforeseen but equally devastating challenge carried on the other wing of Covid-19.

The third and most important problem due to the stay at

home policy being followed by almost all governments is the actual or potential loss of income. Millions of people around the globe, particularly in least developed countries, earn their daily bread from causal or informal employment. This group of hand-to-mouth means of subsistence is the greatest victim of sudden closures of workplaces including streets where the majority of the world's poor earns their living. Ultimately, closure will definitely consign millions of individuals and families to starvation and vicious cycle of poverty. The rich or well-to-do may survive by stocking up goods especially food and other amenities. The poorest of the poor who live on their daily toil will not afford to provide bread to themselves and to their families. Hunger, starvation and malnutrition will be the major consequences of staying at home without the means to address the sudden income loss of people. The wealthiest countries are trying to rescue businesses, provide social security or keep workers on payrolls for a given period of time. However, poor nations cannot provide even adequate health services and the means of protection from the virus: water, sanitizers, and protective medical equipment event for their health workers who will bear the brunt of the Covid-19 disaster. As things stand, governments everywhere have resorted to closure to prevent the spread of the virus, but they have not and cannot respond to the economic needs of the majority of the population which will suffer from this measure. This is very worrisome for developing countries, most importantly for Africa. Both the virus and the loss of income and livelihoods will kill millions of people until it is brought under control. Without sounding too cataclysmic, poorer nations will take decades to recover even after the spread of the pandemic is halted, if at all, unless the developed countries, including China, invest heavily to arrest the spread of the virus, reduce its destruction, and revive economic and social infrastructures as rapidly as possible. However, developing countries should take greater responsibility and build internal capacities to save lives and revive economies. For this reason, it is imperative to redouble efforts to bring about sustainable development. When individuals and families lose income *en masse* and suffer from both the disease and economic hardships, it will take a long time for the nation to recover. Therefore, urgent efforts are needed to minimize the damage caused by the policy of stay at home on individual and household incomes. In other words, it is imperative to devise mechanisms for alternative employment opportunities and income generating schemes. In addition to keeping employees at work even when firms are closed, governments should take into account the plights of people who earn their living from the daily labor in the informal sectors.

In this respect, it is essential to consider strategies that can turn the challenge posed by Covid-19 into opportunities. For example, what can women, the youth, out of school children or the elderly do to produce goods

and services at home? What should governments and non-governmental organizations do to support these people to engage in productive and income generating activities in the domestic arena? What modes of delivery of goods and services produced at home can be used? What measures can be put in place to prevent the spread of the virus if and when goods and services produced at home are distributed to consumers through formal (supermarkets) and informal (direct home delivery) marketing channels? These and other questions are important to consider in responding to the Covid-19 pandemic as they require quick policy and decision-making capacities of governments.

Isolationism: Implications for international and interstate interactions

International cooperation and interstate collaboration were among the most common emergency response mechanisms in the past. Most importantly, immediate relief and life-saving assistances used to come from the developed world, notably from North America and European countries, to countries in need. What was largely missing, and was much advocated for, was south-south cooperation. China was a selective partner and often latecomer when it comes to material relief assistance in the past. It is very rare to find intra-Africa cooperation and mutual support, extremely dismal though African leaders talk of solidarity when they meet in their biannual assemblies.

Now that developed countries are in a cut-throat confrontation with the Covid-19 pandemic and themselves facing the severest shortages to deal with its devastating consequences, they are struggling to provide much needed assistance to developing countries. Quite interestingly, almost all traditional donors are seeking help from other countries. China, Russia and Turkey are sending equipment, medical supplies and health workers to fill gaps in many countries. European countries, particularly those in the east are expressing strong appreciations to these countries, notably to China, for such support. In a sense, the west is losing its image as an omnipresent provider of relief and emergency assistance to developing countries and communities. This has caused a remarkable decline in international cooperation on the wake of the novel corona virus pandemic. Moreover, since almost all countries are closing their borders, air spaces and sea ports, flows of goods and services are virtually on stand-still. This not only affects the trade-based interactions between and among nations, but also undermines the economic capacity of poor countries which rely on importation of commodities including food. As a result, millions of people across borders have become jobless and unable to feed their families. Diplomatic interactions between and among nations have significantly reduced given the

fact that embassies and consulates are closed in countries where total closure has been instituted. This has negatively affected the movement of people, including diplomats. International conferences and travels are put on hold for an indefinite period of time. The damage inflicted by Covid-19 upon families, societies, economies remains incalculable. Above all, its impact on international relations and interstate collaboration is hugely unfathomable as well. However, this does not suggest, in any way, that lack of cooperation results in hostile or negative relations. Rather, it is to indicate that closed doors and closed borders are slowing down the interaction between and among nations. How long will this isolation remain in place depends on the speed with which countries manage to stop the spread of the virus. Even after states officially declare total victory, like China, it will take time for people from other countries to believe in such declarations and resume travels or other interactions. In effect, economic recovery, large-scale cross-border mobility and international movements will be slow and take time to reach the pre-Covid-19 level.

While the Covid-19 phenomenon has brought a decline in inter-state and international cooperation along the traditional lines, where Western countries used to lead international solidarity, it has also led to the emergence of new international players. As mentioned elsewhere, China and Russia are taking the lead and are being followed by Turkey and Cuba; whereas Europeans and North Americans are either looking inward or are seeking help from these countries, particularly from China. Since the latter claimed to have won the battle against the pandemic, it is using her speedy recovery as an opportunity to scale-up the production of preventive, treatment and care technologies. China is also engaged in building her image as a great global player to fill the void left by US America. This will not only boost her international standing but also her economy shattered by the outbreak of the coronavirus. Though it has to cope with her own internal Covid-19 crisis, Russia, too, is appearing a significant global player, if not a competitor to China. Russia is forging some type of relationship with heavily affected countries notably Italy, Spain and other countries by sending medical supplies, personal protective equipment, ventilators and doctors. Lately, Russia herself has become one of the hardest hit countries.

Based on the foregoing observations, it is important to point out that isolationist policy being pursued by most countries of the world in response to the Covid-19 pandemic are putting an indelible mark on international and interstate relations both now and in the foreseeable future. First and foremost, it exposes the superficiality of concepts like solidarity, international or regional cooperation, unity of humankind, universal values, etc., which were at the heart of international cooperation in the past. In the second place, the pandemic made it abundantly clear that at the end of the day what matters is national self-interest of individual countries; and that the gibberish talk of international brotherhood is merely for domestic or external political consumptions. Third and most importantly, it accentuates the competition over scarce resources, in particular health facilities, as is amply evidenced in the United States of America where the Governor of New York lamented on the ongoing inter-state scramble for ventilators and PPEs. Fourthly, the Covid-19 pandemic also exposes the powerlessness and incapability of international institutions such as the UN, EU, ASEAN, AU and others to foster international cooperation at this very trying time. In this sense, the pandemic lays bare the much talked about 'international solidarity among the community of nations'. In fact, some of them, like the EU, are singing into the tune of isolationism by closing EU external borders, putting an unhealthy distinction between European and non-European human beings. And this signals the death of solidarity now and may remain irredeemably lost in the years to come. At least people the world over will be forced to believe that when bad times come, they are unto themselves. This may sound an unkind and pessimistic conclusion given the myriads of ways solidarity can be realized, including financial assistance, targeted lending or donation of medical supplies, food aid, debt cancellation, etc. But whatever forms of solidarity exist, closing doors and borders, at a scale unseen in the entire hitherto history of the world, will only be mechanical or superficial. The psycho-emotional attachment of people as global citizens seems to have gone forever. "I stand to be corrected at best or blamed at worst for this generalization and a prophecy of doom and gloom in international and inter-state relations". Yet, this is the reality we are living in and it will have huge actual and potential implications for the future, which is the subject of the next section.

Covid-19 and the future of globalization

Though the term globalization has been a buzz word during the last three or so decades, the practice and history of globalization is as old as humanity itself. However, the globalization being talked about here is the one that began to shape the world in the last five hundred years in general and the last four or so decades, which coincided with the emergence of the new Information and Communication Technologies (ICT), the profuse use of air transport and the accompanied increased flow of goods, services and people. The rapid pace of globalization has brought nations and societies together at an unprecedented level as a result of the compression of time and space, a theme very well-articulated by the renowned British Sociologist Anthony Giddens (Giddens, 1999).. This acceleration of contacts among nations and societies is associated with both positive and negative social phenomena including distribution of global wealth

as well as social problems such as diseases, notably HIV/AIDS, and now the Covid-19 pandemic. While HIV/AIDS has been a source of social and global solidarity, coronavirus is reversing this solidarity and negatively impacting the process of globalization. In fact, the reverse trend of globalization begun a few years ago, mainly since the coming to power of Donald Trump. To be exact, globalization has been under constant attack since 2016/2017 as a result of Trump's isolationist policy in his vainglorious pursuit of the policy of 'Make America Great Again'. Most importantly his trade war with China and other countries as well as US's withdrawal from a number of international agreements (for example, the Paris Agreement, the US-Iran Deal) and institutions (for example, UNESCO), have entailed significant blows on globalization as a world order. In effect, the retreat of the US, the principal promoter and beneficiary of globalization, has cast considerable doubts on the future of globalization and international cooperation. At the same time, the process has diminished the image of US America, contrary to the isolationist or *hidden hegemonic* agenda of Donald Trump (Desai, 2019). This shall be a subject of another paper in the near future. Here, highlight a few of the unintended consequences of isolationism both before and following the outbreak of the Covid-19 pandemic. These include: (a) loss of trust on US America as a leading world power which used to galvanize support to communities and countries affected by natural or manmade crises; (b) the emergence of China as a major globalizing force, both in economic and political terms, with its systematic and aggressive soft-power diplomacy; (Nye, 1999) and (c) increasing leaning of developing countries, especially Africa, towards the east, notably towards China, India, Japan, Turkey and the Middle East, with a series of high-level bi/multilateral conferences between each of these emerging eastern powers and Africa as well as establishing cooperation mechanisms and platforms. Three of these mechanisms are worth mentioning (a) the Belt and Road initiative of China, (b) BRICS and (c) the Tokyo International Development for Africa (TICAD) with the aim of strengthening cooperation and providing development assistance to developing and African countries. Though, these may not replace the huge amount of lending and aid from Europe, America and the Bretton Woods Institutions, they provide alternative financial and technical assistance when getting from the west is either too conditional or unable to address the needs of developing countries. In the long-run, this new arrangements by individual or group of countries could compete with Euro-American powers to attract interest which would gradually lead to a politico-economic leaning of developing countries to the East. Already, the Chinese aggressive presence in Africa has created a sense of anxiety and a source of fierce resentment for the west. Because of this, the US and some of the major European countries have reestablished bases in Africa and this is

seen by some African scholars, including myself, as a sign of impending re-colonization of the continent (Tsegaye, 2016). The Covid-19 lockdown and the resulting isolationist approach is emboldening China to assert its control over Africa, an issue worth understanding further.

In general, the future of globalization following the outbreak and spread of the Covid-19 pandemic is uncertain at best and heading to a downward spiral at worst. The impact of this declining globalization will be debilitating for both developed and developing countries. The latter will bear the brunt of regressive globalization in terms of shrinking economic and social development opportunities since the recent gains of developing nations were tied directly or indirectly to the rapid advances of globalization.

Conclusion

The actual and potential consequences of the Covid-19 pandemic on the lives of individuals, families, communities and nations have been discussed. It highlighted the desirability of the stay at home policies adopted by an increasing number of countries around the world to curb the spread of the virus and avert impending human tragedy. At the same time, it also outlined the negative impacts of stay at home measures on citizens, and closed borders on outsiders. Some of the negative effects include sudden loss of livelihoods, declining solidarity between and among nations; and the regressive trend of globalization. Despite the short-term advantages of staying indoors and closing borders, these policies could likely result in economic difficulties and dwindling trust on practices of international and interstate cooperation, globalization and global social cohesion, in the long-run.

At this stage, our knowledge on the unintended consequences of both the pandemic and closures to deal with Covid-19 is yet to grow. Therefore, it is recommended that comprehensive and continuous assessment of these impacts on short, medium and long-term basis be conducted. In this regard, the role of universities and research institutions in conducting timely studies of Covid-19 on the future of globalization will be critical. Empirical evidence generated through research should enable countries and international organizations, such as the UN, to make informed decisions on how to forge new, sustainable, credible and fair global alliance as well as effective response to the Covid-19 pandemic.

Limitations

Since the analysis presented here is based on observations of existing and emerging global situations, the paper does not claim to have empirical or quantitative strength. It is my firm belief that given the dynamic nature

of the problems related to Covid-19, quantitative data, which are changing by the day, are less important at this moment in time. Moreover, the paper does not use direct quotations to support arguments since no source has been cited directly though reference is made to a couple of authors in the discussions. Accordingly, the list of references at the end of the paper is very short.

CONFLICT OF INTERESTS

The authors have not declared any conflict of interests.

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The two World Wars (1914-18, 1939-1945) cannot be forgotten easily. This is because of their uncanny brutality and imponderable consequences which in no small measure demonstrated man's capacity to destroy himself and decimate the environment. This assertion is predicated on the millions of people who were gruesomely killed, maimed and properties wantonly destroyed. The proliferation of weapons of mass destruction undoubtedly became an easy way to mediate an insatiable economic instinct. Propelled by the desire to save the human family from imminent extinction, world leaders decided to stop the carnage. They were convinced that upholding the tenets of human freedom in all ramifications offers a guarantee for human security and development. Therefore, this study seeks to examine the extent the UN has been able to ensure that human rights become the cornerstone of human security, its challenges and prospects. This is a qualitative study, and data collected was based solely on secondary sources. These include, browsing of the internet, review of existing literature, UN Resolutions, Official bulletins, Newspapers, Magazines and visit to some research institutes like the Nigerian Institute of International Affairs (NIIA), Center for Black Arts and African Culture (CBAC). It was discovered that since its formation in 1945, the UN has accomplished a lot in mainstreaming human rights. Consequently, many regional bodies like the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), European Union (EU), the Organization of American States (OAS) and member States of UN have keyed into the UN emphasis on respect and promotion of human rights as a minimum condition for global peace. We recommend that knowledge and respect of human rights should be deepened in the curriculum of every level of socialization.

Key words: Human insecurity, human rights, human family, development, global peace.

INTRODUCTION

Since the end of the Second World War (SWW) to the 21st century, the global arena has witnessed a phenomenal transformation in all ramifications. This has spawned myriad complexities and multilateralism. People easily connect with fast exchange of goods and services which transcend geographical limitations. One is tempted to surmise that the world is passing through its golden era with its global village status. Sadly, this scenario is almost blighted by the growing trend of human insecurity. Humanity is being dragged gradually to tender hooks. The two global wars gave an ominous signal that the world would not be a safe place, if there is no form of

check and sanction on the excesses and destructive instinct of rulers. It was the bitter lesson learnt from that horrendous episode that constrained world leaders to do something to save mankind from self-destruction. They were alarmed by the sophistication of weapons, and shocked by the degree and dimension of destruction which had no parallel in recent history. Rulers hiding under the banner of sovereignty and prodded by their barbaric thoughts consciously perpetuated and visited unimaginable cruelty and pain on their people. Flagel (2012: 6) pointed out that the First World War (FWW), was by all measures the bloodiest war in history, ending the lives of eighteen million people as well as empires of Russia, the Ottomans, Australia, and Germany. Its lethality also surely wounded the empires of France, and Britain and shocked latecomer United States away from foreign entanglements for a generation.

Rourke and Boyer (2003: 249) also asserted that during the World War 1, six soldiers died for every civilian killed (8.4 million soldiers and 1.4 million civilians). World War II killed two civilians for every solider (16.9 million troops and 34.3 million civilians). These scaring revelations signpost the worthlessness of human life in time of war. It was against this backdrop that human rights became global instruments to checkmate the totalitarian tendencies of sovereign states and their rulers. Indeed, the emergence of the United Nations Organization (UN) in 1945 was a clarion call to half the inevitable dead-end of humanity. The underlying philosophy was to make the world safe and happy place to live, and never to subject mankind to another state of nature with its nasty existence and worthlessness of life. In other words, creating a congenial atmosphere for a commodious existence is to lay a foundation for the maximization of human potentials necessary for the take-off of human civilization.

It is, therefore, not amazing that the Global Human Rights Regime (GHRR) has become a recurring mantra in all global discourses. Civil society groups, Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs), individuals and States have come to manifest human rights because of its essentiality to the totality of sustainable development and life itself. After all, ours is the age of rights. Human right is the idea of our time, the only politico-moral idea that has received universal acceptance (Henkin, 1990). But the acceptance and implementation of the demands of this idea has met some challenges. This paper seeks to examine the extent the UN has popularized human rights, its challenges and prospects.

Clarification of concepts

A clear comprehension of this paper would require the clarification of the concept of human right. Human right has acquired its lexicon and universal status. It has also become a barometer through which the performance of

states is measured. As Henkin (1990: xvii) pointed out, Human rights is (sic) the subject of numerous international agreements, the daily gist of the mills of international politics, and a bone continuing contention among super powers. If the concept is important in human relations and possesses the quality of universality, then what is human right? There are two contending approaches to the concept based on ideological justification: The Marxists and the Liberals. The Marxian notion of human rights is that it is a myth, political sophistry and a fallacy of liberalism to legitimize the values and goals of the ruling class. In other words, any kind of so-called human rights does not go beyond the egoistic men, nor does it go beyond the man as a member of civil society, that is the man as an individual locked in himself, their private interests and private waywardness, and at the same time is out from the whole society (Marx and Engels, 1956:439). The thrust of the Marxian argument is that capitalism has an inherent explorative capacity, and therefore, cannot guarantee and uphold human freedoms. In fact, the motif of capitalist mode of production is to reduce man to an exploitable and expendable article. This will facilitate the triumph of private interest. The cornerstone of Marxist political theory which is anchored on historical materialism points out that the nature and character of a mode of production determines all super-structural manifestations, including rights. This accounted for the eclipse of human freedom in the slave and feudal modes of production. With capitalism which is rooted on freedom of private accumulation of wealth, human rights became a historical necessity, and not naturally-ordained.

Marxism believed that all rights are subject to certain constrain of the socio-economic base and cultural level, and that rights can never go beyond the economic structure of society as well as the cultural development of society restricted by economic structure (Marx and Engels, 1963: 22). The rights of man as expressed in the Revolutions of the 17th and 18th centuries represent a historical breakthrough for egoistic interest, a triumph of the bourgeois class over the doctrine of the Divine Right of Kings. Most importantly, at the very core of the rights of man is the intangible right to private property (Lacroix and Pranchere, 2013: 449). It is important to note that the Marxist school of thought was inveterately against private property because,

The right of private property emerges with the capitalist mode of production. The loss of control over one's labour, its commodification, brings forth the immoderation and loss of rights of the working class. All that remains are the rights of property over the rights of the individual (Fansenfest, 2016: 2).

From the Marxian perspective, human rights are not natural and universal, but historically determined. Rights under capitalism is a deceit, and represents the rights of inequality (Lacroix and Pranchere, 2013: 447). On the

other hand, the liberal definition of human rights is anchored on nature, and therefore, inalienable and universal. They are apriori to humanity, and cannot be abrogated or abridged by provincial law without due process of law. They are not just mere rights. They are fundamental. They belong to the citizen. These rights have always existed even before orderliness prescribed rules for the manner they are to be sought (Eso, 2003: 138).

The philosophical inspiration of human rights can be located in the writings of Locke (2004), Rousseau (1968) and other Enlightenment Philosophers, the United States (US) Declaration of Independence in 1776 and the French Revolution of 1789 and the Declaration of the Rights of Man and Citizens. Human rights take for granted that man is born free, with rationality and that all men by nature are equal (Locke, 2004: 141). They are those rights which accrue to humans because of their humanity, and without which they cannot reproduce themselves. To inhibit or curtail them is to wittingly destroy human civilization. Apart from its natural orientation, they can also be demands or claims which individuals or groups make on society, some of which are protected by law and have become part of the *lex lata* while others remain aspirations to be attained in the future (Eze, 1984: 5). In what can be seen as a celebration of human rights, the US Independence Declaration stated that:

We hold these truths to be self-evident that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their creator with certain inalienable rights that among these are life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness; that to secure these rights, governments are instituted among men deriving their just powers from the consent of the governed. That whenever any form of government becomes destructive of these ends, it is the right of the people to alter or to abolish it, and to institute government laying its foundation on such principles and organizing its powers in such form, as to them shall seem likely to affect their safety and happiness.

The declaration mandates governments to protect human rights, for the safety and happiness of the people. The equality of persons arising from possession of human rights planted by their creator makes human rights beyond the control and manipulation of governments or groups. Therefore, the suffocation of this gift of nature cannot be without some imminent danger. This was why Laski (2004:91) averred that:

Rights, in fact, are those conditions of social life without which no man can seek in general, to be himself at his best. For since the state exists to make possible that achievement, it is only by maintaining rights that its end may be secured.

The necessity of rights to human happiness and its inviolability is aptly captured in Article I of the French Declaration. 'Men are borne and remain free and equal in rights. Social distinctions can only be founded on public utility." Goldstein and Pavehouse (2013: 265) pointed out that human rights emanated from three sources. They include religion, political and legal philosophy and political revolutions in the 18th century. The political philosophers developed the idea that natural law exists, and grants humans the right to life, liberty, property and happiness. Therefore, any person, community or state that wants to reach the pinnacle of success must mainstream it without hesitation. This was re-echoed by Jimmy Carter, 39th President of USA in his inaugural address in 1977. According to him,

We have already found a high degree of political liberty and we are now struggling to enhance equality of opportunity. Our commitment to human rights must be absolute. Our laws far, our natural beauty preserved, the powerful must not persecute the weak, and human dignity must be enhanced (Presidential Inaugural Address, 1977).

From our discussion thus far, we can deduce the main characteristics of human rights. They include:

(1) Human exclusivity
(2) Inalienability
(3) Universalism
(4) Natural
(5) Equality

These characteristics are embedded in Article 1 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR). It is noted that, human beings are born free in liberty and rights. They are endowed with reason and conscience and should act toward one another in a spirit of brotherhood. Article 5 of the Vienna Declaration of 1993 also stated that human rights are universal, indivisible, independent and interrelated. By the 21st century it has become an indispensable article of faith, and an integral part of good governance and democracy. Member-states of the UN have not hesitated to insert it in their statute books. Sections 33 to 43 of the Nigerian 1999 constitution as amended contain provisions for fundamental rights, while the 1996 constitution of South Africa as amended has the bill of rights from article 7 to 30. The constitution of the Republic of Ghana 1992-95 amended provided for fundamental rights and freedoms from articles 12 to 33. These provisions shape, guard and subject rulers and other public officers to accountability and respect for popular sovereignty. Laski (2004: 88) pointed out that every state is known by the rights that it maintains. Our method of judging its character lies, above all, in the contribution that it makes to the substance of man's happiness. The substance of man's happiness is the principal goal of human rights. Al Hussien, Zeidrai and UN Commissioner for Human Rights (UNCHR) in no

uncertain terms declared that:

None of us will find peace, development, dignity, safety if we stand by and allow the human rights of the people of all the people to be trampled upon. So, stand up, we must now, before it is too late (UNCHR, 2017).

The above is a well-throughout charge not to see human rights as a mere cinematic fiction worthy of an off-hand attention. Only a bold attempt to destroy the catacomb of inhumanity and injustice would solidity human rights advocacy. In this paper, the liberal notion of human rights which sees it as universal, inalienable and independent is adopted. We contend that without the efflorescence of these rights, no person can maximize his/her potentials and a siege mentality will invade society.

UN and human rights

We noted that the UN emerged as a result of the horrific and awe-inspiring world wars. The processes of its formation commenced with the 1941 Atlantic Charter, the Dumbarton Oaks Conference of September 29- October 7, 1944, the Yalta Conference of February 4-11, 1945 and finally the San Francisco Conference of June 26, 1946 with the signing of the Charter. A common theme that permeated all the conferences was the need for global peace. This fact was expressed by the 32nd President of USA at the Yalta Conference. He stated that this time we shall not make the mistake of waiting until the end of the war to set up the machinery for peace (Ziring et al., 2005: 26). The founding fathers were concerned with the dimension of mindless destruction and false propaganda which incubated and sustained the wars. UN became a global watchdog that would make the world a safe place to inhabit. In other to realize the lofty ideals of peace and unity, a Charter was drawn as a standard principle for the regulation of the impulse and actions of states. The preamble stated that:

We the people of the United Nations determined to save succeeding generation from the scourge of war, which our lifetime has brought untold sorrow to mankind and to reaffirm faith in fundamental human rights, in the dignity of men and women and of nations large and small, and to establish conditions under which justice and respect for the obligation arising from treaties and other sources of international law can be maintained, and to promote social progress and better standard of life in larger freedom (Ziring et al., 2005: 532).

The Charter which has nineteen chapters and one hundred and one articles, laid more emphasis on the importance of human rights. Mazrin (1984: 99) noted that the Charter became a kind of documentary expression of natural law and a global bill of rights in favour of the

privileged. The establishment of the International Military Tribunal and the Nuremberg trials of 1946 were meant to curb ultra-nationalism and racial intolerance, as in the Jewish holocaust. According to Goldstein and Pavehouse (2013: 266).

Horrified by Nazi Germany's attempt to exterminate the Jewish population by Japanese abuses of Chinese citizens, many scholars and practitioners began to say that there were limits to state sovereignty. States could not claim to be sovereign and above interference if they attempted to massacre their own people. We can pontificate that these two instruments (the Charter and IMT) laid the background for the triumph of human rights agenda. Pursuant to Article 6(2) of the Charter, the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) was mandated to make recommendation for the purpose of promoting respect for, and observance of human rights, and fundamental freedoms of all. ECOSOC established a Committee of nine members out of the forty-seven member Human Rights Council (HRC). It was this special Committee headed by Mrs. Eleanor Roosevelt, wife of President Franklin D. Roosevelt that prepared the draft for the UN.

On December 10, 1948, the document was adopted by the UN General Assembly (UNGA) through Resolution 217A at the session of the UN in Paris, France. It was a historic moment as it sets a pedestal for all member states to follow. As Wonteg (2017: 1) puts it,

The UDHR is a timeless document and has been and continuous to be a source of inspiration at the global, national and regional level. It brings with it the promise of rights that everyone is inherently entitled to as a human being.

Mrs. Roosevelt also underscored the importance of the document which has been translated to more than five hundred languages. The document took cognizance of many pre-UDHR instruments and did not hesitate to take whatever was relevant for humanity. According to her,

We stand today at the threshold of a great event both in the life of the UN and in the life of mankind. The declaration became the international magna carta for all the men everywhere. We hope its proclamation by the General Assembly will be an event comparable to the proclamation of 1789 (the French Declaration of Rights of Citizens), the adoption of the Bill of Rights by the United States, and the adoption of comparable declarations in difficult times in other countries (Address of Mrs. Eleanor Roosevelt, 1948).

UDHR placed a burden of responsibility for all men and states to promote protect and defend fundamental freedoms of humans. The universalistic character of human rights was reflected in the description of humanity as a human family. The Preamble stated that:

Whereas the recognition of the inherent dignity and inalienable rights of all members of the human family is the foundation of freedom, justice and peace in the world, whereas a common understanding of the rights and freedom is of the greatest importance of the full realization of this pledge.

Article 3 declared that 'everyone has the right to life, liberty and security of person'. This is an open declaration that the world and UN in particular would not tolerate any attempt to impose a state of fear and helplessness from any person or institution. UDHR propelled the resonance of human rights mantra, and became a weapon for people deprived of their rights to seek redress and self-determination. It was within this scenario that the 1955 Bandung Conference declared it as a common standard of achievement for all peoples and all nations. It is gratifying to note that since 1948 to the 21st century, the UN has expanded its corpus of human rights literature and being supportive of a resounding global advocacy. It is instructive to know that more than nine international human instruments including eighteen Protocols have been produced by the UN. These include but not limited to:

(1) International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination, January 4, 1969.
(2) Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ECOSOR), January 3, 1976.
(3) Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (CPR), March 19, 1976.
(4) Covenant on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), September 3, 1981.
(5) Convention on the Right of the Child (CRC), September 21, 1994.
(6) The Vienna Convention and Programme of Action, June 25, 1993.

Apart from the above, regional bodies have come to comprehend the necessity of protecting human freedoms. As an integral part of the UN, they have also enunciated their own human rights instruments geared towards strengthening and reaffirming their commitment to UDHR ideals. Some of these instruments include:

(1) The Protocol to the African Charter on Human and People's Rights of Women otherwise called the Maputo Protocol, November 25, 2015.
(2) African Charter on Human and People's Rights, October 21, 1986.
(3) American Convention on Human rights, July 18, 1928.
(4) European Convention of Human Rights, September, 1953.
(5) ASEA Human Rights Declaration, 2005.
(6) Arab Charter on Human Rights, May 24, 2004.

All these instruments rededicate their focus to the protection of human freedoms. This is because to unduly trample upon the rights of persons is to scuttle the trajectory of development. The consistency of UN in its policies, programmes, conventions and declarations in upholding the tenets of human rights as the cornerstone of human existence have in no small measure broadened that ecosystem of human rights. This can be gleaned from the Millennium Declaration (2000), the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), 2000-2005, the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) 2015 – 2030, International Criminal Court (ICC) 2002, and the Responsibility to Protect (R2P) 2005. Section 1(6) of the Millennium Declaration identified six essential values to international relations. These are freedom, equality, tolerance, solidarity, and respect for nature and shared responsibility. Section V declared that 'we spare no effort to promote democracy, and strengthen the rule of law, as well as respect for all internationally recognized human rights and fundamental freedoms including the rights of development. The wanton massacre of persons in Rwanda and the Balkans in the 1990s necessitated R2P. R2P is anchored on three planks: Responsibilities of the state, international assistance and capacity building, and timely and decisive response. Therefore,

Every individual state has the responsibility to protect its population from genocide, war, ethnic cleansing and crime against humanity. This responsibility entails the prevention of such crimes, including their incident through appropriate and necessary means. We accept that responsibility and will to act in accordance with the {human rights principles}. International Community should as appropriate encourage and help states to exercise their responsibility and support the UN in establishing an early warning capability (World Summit Outcome Document, 2005).

R2P recognizes states sovereignty but frowns at abandonment of responsibility to protect its people from crime against humanity. It also implies that if states derelict their responsibility, the UN would not hesitate to act in favour of human rights. This scenario has been created in article 4(h) of the Constitutive Act of the African Union (AU). Regrettably, despite the uncommon commitment of the UN to save mankind from the scourge of man's inhumanity to man, it has been saddled with myriad challenges. This is the next focus.

Challenges and prospects

The UN has for the past seventy years ensured a minimum threshold for the promotion and protection of human rights. This, to a large extent, has prevented a repeat of the two world wars. According to the Former Secretary-General of the UN, Ban Ki Moon,

The United Nations was created to be an agent of

change, not just an object of change. It has made history, even as it evolved. From its inception, the UN has been an incubator of ideas, a builder of norms, and an arbiter of standards. It remains so today. Through its actions, as well as its words, the world body has helped transform the global agenda by embracing human protection as an essential component (Address at the Cyril Forster Lecturer, 2016).

Unfortunately, the global political theatre with its complexity is weakening and suffocating the demands of human rights. It appears that human right is now on a voyage to nowhere. The aftermath is that our basket of human rights is gradually depleting, while the catacomb of human insecurity is on a fast expansion. Al Hussein (2019:9) noted that:

Human rights face a stress today; and the knuckled, multi-directional brawl about the legitimacy and necessity of rights. With the departure of the World War II, generations, and the dimming of memory, the growing unknowing as to why this rights architecture came to exist in the first place, means a decisive moment   will soon be reached.

The growing fragility of the Global Human Rights Regime (GHRA) is pointers to that approaching decisive moment. They constitute the current challenges to human freedom. Some of these challenges include state sovereignty, global power/refugees crises, terrorism, and wards/conflict. Let us briefly examine them.

State sovereignty

Many states have come to see the protection, promotion and adherence to human norms as an unwanted infringement on their treasured sovereignty. Right from the Westphalia Treaty of 1648 to the Montivideo Declaration of 1933 in Uruguay, states have claimed absolute monopoly of violence, and supremacy in the affairs within their jurisdiction. The Westphalia Treaty recognized 'the exclusion of sovereignty of each party (state) over its lands, people and agents abroad.' Vinod and Desphanda, (2013: 177) asserted that sovereignty is the institutional arrangement for organizing political life that is based on two principles, territoriality and the exclusion of external actors from domestic political structures. Apologists of state sovereignty emphatically argue that its emporium and dominium powers would be defeated when subjected to the dictates of exogenous clout. Therefore, issues of human rights should be within their behest, and not to be coerced into sovereignty-infringing rights demands to satisfy global political practice. This is because:

Human rights taking precedence over sovereignty and

'humanitarian interventions' seem to be in vogue these days. But respect for sovereignty and non-interference are the basic principles governing international relations and any deviation from them would lead to a gun boat diplomacy that would wreak havoc in the world (New York Times, 1999).

It is in furtherance of the above stance that many states have become de facto human rights free zones. They disrespect the rights of their citizens at will, and flagrantly disobey orders and judgments from human rights courts. In the case of D. H. and others V Czech Republic, the later refused to discontinue its discriminatory education polity which violated the European Convention of Human rights as directed by the Grand Chamber of European Court of Human Rights. Other cases where states have refused to comply with judicial decisions on enforcement of human rights include:

(1) Yean and Bosico V Dominican Republic in 2015: The American Court of Human Rights found the Dominican Republic guilty of racial discrimination contrary to American Convention of Human Rights.
(2) Marques V. Republic of Angola: In 2005, the UNHR Committee ruled that Angola violated the Petitioners freedom of speech by holding him in communicado contrary to the provisions of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights.

In many states of Africa, human rights have become a fantasy and a bogus idea that are sanctimoniously sermonized, but not practiced. There is glaring lack of access to the basic means of life, and violations of human freedoms with impunity. The state has lost its autonomy to the ruling class who privatize it as a patrimony. Oyobode (1998: 90) asserted that:

A situation in which Africans are held hostage by self-opinionated, unelected, self-serving, self-perpetuating and generally inept rulers who pay the scantiest regard to the basic needs of their compatriots is hardly one that argues well for the promotion and enforcement of human rights.

This is the scenario of states who have degenerated to the status of 'Isomorphic mimicry' – weak and fragile to enforce human rights regulations, yet hide under the canopy of sovereignty to watch millions of their people suffocate and perish in pain and penury. This is the genesis of popular discontent witnessed in countries like Somalia, Afghanistan, Libya, Algeria, Sudan and Syria. In Afghanistan,

Violence against women remains a problem throughout the country. Women and girls are subjected to rapes, kidnapping and forced marriage. Taliban restriction against   women   and   girls   remained   widespread,

institutionally sanctioned and systematically implemented. The Taliban imposed restriction dress codes prohibited women from working outside the home, girls were prohibited formally from attending school… there was widespread and widely accepted social discrimination against women and girls throughout the country (US State Department Report on Afghanistan Human Rights, 2015).

The dearth of human rights in Afghanistan made it rank as the most dangerous country for women, especially in terms of health, economic condition and discrimination against them (Reuters, 2011). In a nutshell, the major challenge to global human rights enforcement is:

The reluctance of states to do more (and this) reflects the realities of an international system made up of sovereignty entities. If states are thus inhibited, the United Nations is still less able to enforce individual rights against the wishes of a recalcitrant state (Ziring et al., 2005: 413).

It is important to state that those who cling on state sovereignty to commit mayhem should be reminded that articles 2(7) and 41 and 42 of the UN Charter mandates the Security Council (SC) to take necessary action to maintain international peace and security. It should also be emphasized that the Agenda for Peace by the former Secretary-General, Boutros Boutros Ghali in 1992 note unequivocally that the time of absolute and exclusive sovereignty has passed (United Nations, 1992). Directly related to state sovereignty is the contentious argument of cultural relation and universalism. Most people believe that human rights should be culturally determined. To make it a universal phenomenon is to assume a common global culture. This is why the concept is seen as the universalization of western values and culture, couched in a sublime and solemn manner to elicit global acceptability. While most Africans are not comfortable with same-sex marriage, Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender (LGBT) practices, in Asia and Middle East, human rights are considered an anathema especially when they conflict with the tenets of sharia law. This has led to rival human rights instruments like the Cairo Declaration of Human Rights. These have slowed down the enforcement of human freedoms.

Poverty/refugee

The success of human rights is high in a stable polity. People can only feel free to exercise their freedom when there is freedom from want. As Marx (1984:21) noted, it is not the consciousness of man that determines their existence, but their social existence that determines their consciousness. This means that people must eat before they can engage in any political, social or philosophical

voyage. Unfortunately, poverty and refugee crises have combined to hinder the efflorescence of human rights. As the ranks of the poor keep swelling, the scope of human freedom is shrinking. Today, poverty and refugee have transcended the national barriers, and manifested in many forms.

Poverty is antithetical to human rights because it is a human condition characterized by sustained or chronic deprivation of the resources and capabilities, choices, security and power necessary for the enjoyments of an adequate standard of living and other civil, cultural, economic, political and social rights (Committee on Economic, Social and Political Rights, 2001).

In recognition of the negative effects of poverty to human rights and development, the International Day for the Eradication of Poverty was instituted in 1993, to promote awareness of the need to eradicate poverty and destitution in all countries. The magnitude and dimension is so threatening that:

Every year, more than 6 million children die from malnutrition. Every day, more than 810 million people to bed hungry. Every minute, a woman dies of pregnancy or childbirth. All these tragedies have one thing in common, poverty. Poverty is a human rights issue, one that affects people in every nation across the globe (Amnesty International Report, 2016).

Martine (2008) also pointed out that there are 20 poorest countries whose GDP falls below $1,000, and out of these 23 are in Africa. It is estimated that there are 341 million people that live in the ten countries with most extreme poverty. Nigeria tops the list with 86.9million people. Most frightening is that extreme poverty will increase tremendously from 2018 to 2030 in South Africa, Burundi, Venezuela, Nigeria and Dr. Congo (World Poverty Check, 2018). Poverty induces negative pressure to engage in unsustainable and ignoble activities. It can also induce deviant behaviour and deepen inequality. Shutter (2017:1) pointed out that:

For the past 30 years, inequality has grown in almost all countries leading to the demands of the richest and not the needs of the poorest being met. Highly urged societies continue to grow beyond and wealthy accumulation is a major problem as a result. Within the context of business, there is now a growing pressure in having the rights of business balanced with the rights of those they affect. Unfortunately, the UN has no body code of conduct to be able to regulate relations with business as the major UN Guiding Principle on Business and Human Rights are weak, ambiguous and voluntary.

As the crisis of poverty heightens, that of global refugees is becoming a daily concern. The UN High Commission for refugees (UNHCR) reported that 685 million people were forcefully displaced worldwide. Out of this number,

40 million were internally displaced, 25.4 million refugees from Syria, Sierra Leone, and Afghanistan, 3.1 million asylum seekers. According to Mills et al. (2017:20) in 2016, an estimated one million people from sub-Saharan Africa (SSA) migrants were waiting along the North African Coast mostly in Morocco, Algeria and Libya intent on making their way to Mainland Europe. Goldstein and Pavehouse (2013:436) stated that in 2010 out of the 33 million refugee population worldwide, Africa had ten million and Middle East and Asia had twelve million. It is therefore, not amazing that with the high rate of poverty and swelling number of refugees, the efficacy of human rights observance will be at its nadir.

Global crises

There is a limitless fear because of the current global terrorism which has transcended continental barriers. Since the September 9, 2011 in the USA, the world has witnessed devastating and horrifying scenes of death and bloody wars. Those who think that their sectarian belief must reign supreme have become instruments of sabotage and terrorist operations. Their determination has almost placed everybody in a cavern of insecurity. The Global Terrorist Index (GTI) of 2016 held that 274 terrorist groups carried out attacks in 2015, and 103 did not kill anyone. It also noted that twenty of the most terrorist attacks in 2015 had 3,146 deaths. These fatalities were as a result of the activities of the most dreaded groups like ISIL, Boko Haram, Taliban and Al Quida. From 2017 to 2019, more than 2,200 people were killed and 2,889 injured (Table 1).

From Table 1, Afghanistan received the highest terrorist attacks between 2017- 2018, while Sri Lanka received the highest number of causalities, both dead and injured. Within the period under review, there were 2,200 death and 2,889 injured as in Table 2. Apart from the terrorist activities, the wars in Syria Yemen, Somalia and Afghanistan with corresponding massive destruction of property and mindboggling killings have placed human rights on tenterhooks. No one can even talk of human freedom and dignity in this situation of lawlessness. Indeed, these wars have placed a strong-booby trap on human rights. Al Hussein (2017:2) asserted that humanitarian workers are prevented from bringing in essential medical supplies, even food, to the hundreds of thousands of people confined in besieged areas, all in direct violation of international law.

Activities of western powers

The global crises and terrorist activities cannot be divulged from the pontification and self-opinionated posture of western states, particularly the U.S. The country (US) sees itself as the policeman of the world,

the custodian of human rights and the ethical master of the world. But it has not hesitated to fraternize with terrorist groups and violators of human rights to uphold its economic interest and market ideology. During the war between the former Union of Soviet Socialist Republic (USSR) and Afghanistan, President Renal Reagan supported Afghanistan with more than $3 billion. Some of the beneficiaries of this financial largesse included Osama Bin Laden and his terrorist groups. Darwish and Alexander (1991) stated how western powers including France, Europe and USA supplied Saddam, Hussein, President of Iraq with massive weapons so that Iran would not rise as a military power in the Middle East. The defense of national economic interest as against human rights prompted

British and other western policy-makers and strategists (to see) Iraq purely as a key regional power who possessed the largest oil reserves after Saudi Arabia, as a profitable export marked and as a force to help keep the Iranians in check (Darwinsh and Alexander, 1991: 227). Basking in the support of western countries, President Hussein assumed unprecedented powers and engaged in a killing spree. This earned him the notorious name, Butcher of Bagdad. The meddlesomeness of US in Venezuelan internal Affairs and its prevarication on the death of Jewal Koshegen, killed in Saudi Arabian consulate in Turkey speaks volumes about the barefaced hypocrisy of US and its allies when issues about human rights conflict with their national interest.

Furthermore, the US cannot be the vanguard and a pacesetter for human rights when African-Americans are tortured, brutalized and killed wantonly in the streets. They are denied access to basic necessities of life. It becomes hypocritical when these countries mount the UN podium to preach about human dignity. Other challenges include the rise of non-state actors whose activities and policies influence millions of people across the world. The most powerful fifty banks control assets of $20 trillion in the year 2000 (Rourke and Boyer, 2008: 305). Their financial clout sometimes influences national policies in favour of World Bank and International Monetary Fund (WB/IMF) dictated programme like the Structural Adjustment Programme (SAP). Their mantra of privatization and commercialization has assumed anti-people and anti-human rights posture.

Arms race

The increase in terrorists' activities and wars are fuelled by availability of weapons. The proliferation of weapons including Small Arms and Light Weapons (SALWs) prolonged the wars in Liberia, DR Congo, Angola, Sierra Leone, Somalia and the spate of kidnapping, cult clash and herdsmen killing in Nigeria. The guts and determination of terror-oriented groups are emboldened with an uninterrupted source of weapons.

Table 1. Terrorist Attacks/Activities from 2017 to 2019.

Location	Date	Deaths	Injuries
2017			
Turkey	January 1	39	70
Iraq	January 2	36	52
Afghanistan	February 8	6	0
Afghanistan	February 11	7	21
Pakistan	February 16	88	100
Iraq	February 19	5	0
Pakistan	February 21	7	22
Egypt	February 22	2	0
Afghanistan	February 28	12	0
Afghanistan	March 8	40	50
Irag	March 8	26	67
UK	March 22	6	49
Russia	April 3	5	15
Sweden	April 7	5	15
Egypt	April 9	47	100
France	April 20	2	3
UK	May 22	22	129
Egypt	May 26	28	22
UK	June 3	11	48
France	June 6	0	2
Iran	June 7	22	43
Iraq	June 9	30	36
Egypt	July 14	2	4
Pakistan	August 7	29	35
Spain	August 17-18	15	120
Finland	August 18	2	8
UK	September 15	0	29
Total		**484**	**952**
2018			
Iraq	January 15	38	105
Afghanistan	January 20	40	22
Afghanistan	January 24	6	27
Russia	February 18	6	5
Somalia	February 18	45	36
Burkina Faso	March 2	30	85
Afghanistan	March 21	33	65
France	March 23	15	15
Somalia	April 1	59	0
Afghanistan	April 22	69	120
Afghanistan	April 30	29	50
Nigeria	May 1	86	58
Libya	May 2	16	20
France	May 12	2	4
Indonesia	May 13	25	55
Belgium	May 29	4	4
Afghanistan	July 1	20	20
Pakistan	July 10	22	76
Pakistan	July 13	154	223
Tajikistan	July 29	4	2
Jordan	August 12	5	26

Table 1. Cond.

Netherlands	August 3	0	2
Iran	September 22	24	20
Egypt	November 2	7	19
Australia	November 9	1	2
Morocco	December 17	2	0
Total		**845**	**1,296**
2019			
Kenya	January 15	21	0
Afghanistan	January 21	190	70
Nigeria	February 10	141	-
Mali	March 23	160	70
Seri Lanka	April 21	359	500
Total		**871**	**641**

Source: https/en.wikipedia/org/wiki/list-of-terrorist-incidents-from2017-2019. Retrieved on 25/4/2019

Table 2. No. of death and injuries.

Year	Death	Injuries
2017	484	952
2018	848	1,296
2019	871	641
Total	**2,200**	**2,889**

Adopted from 2017 – 2019 Terrorist Attacks.

As the people die in their millions, manufacturers of this deadly weapons smile home with supernormal profit. In 2016, the Stockhlin Institute of Peace and Research (SPIRI) declared that ten companies manufacturing arms made a profit of $25,571 million in 2015. SIPRI also revealed that in 2016, global military expenditure was $1,359.8 trillion. The US had $611.0 trillion representing 36%, followed by China with $215.0 trillion representing 13%. In 2018, the figure increased to $1,822 trillion. This translates to a weaponization of the world. The implication for human rights is that it would survive at the whims of the stronger countries. When weapons with lethal efficacy fall into the hands of countries and groups intolerant of other people's views and opinions, brute force becomes a veritable channel of enforcement and definitely justice will be in the interest of the stronger.

Prospects

The mounting challenges faced by   human rights are enormous, but these cannot constitute an alibi to jettison it or consign it into the pit of irrelevance. Respects for human rights typify a state that is prepared to be on a transformatory trajectory. This is because no development

process can triumph without its preeminence. Human development which is the creation of an enabling environment for people to live long, healthy and creative lives (Nault, 2009:2) takes for granted the respect and promotion of human rights. Creating a decent order for creativity and happiness of people is to ensure sustainable development and human civilization.

It is therefore, not out of place that almost all the UN pronouncements and policies are solidly anchored on the expansion of the contours and frontiers of human rights. The libratory content inherent in human rights has sustained the world from experiencing another tragic war. The Nuremberg trials of 1947 remind us of the danger of shrinking the space of human rights to satisfy selfish and national interest. In its judgment, it noted that:

We have here participated in a crime of such savagery that the mind rebels against its own thought image and the imagination staggers in the contemplation of a human degeneration beyond the power of language to adequately portray (Nuremberg Military Tribunal, 1947).

The determination to save the human family from the scourge of human indignity made the UN not to relent in deepening human rights ideals into the consciousness of the world. Today, human rights studies have occupied distinct position in the curriculum of tertiary institutions. This has produced an avalanche of human rights advocates, enriched international Human Rights Laws, enhanced civil society activism and produced global human rights watchdogs as in Amnesty International, Human Rights Watch and other national pro- human rights groups. These are welcome developments that are suggestive of a brighter prospect for human rights in the years ahead. What is needed therefore is to vigorously intensifying these effects for the broadest possible support of the ideals of human rights as enshrined in the UDHR. Almost all UN member-states have human rights

provisions in their statute books. This formed the basis for the Nigeria's Freedom of Information Act of 2018. Considering the expanding prospects of fundamental freedoms, limiting its space and reach to national demands is to consign human civilization to an apocalypse whose effect on the human family would be unimaginable.

Conclusion

The UN was formed to check the excesses of states and other actors that want to impose their dominion – powers at all cost. Its historical charge and mission is to save humanity from self-destructive activities, and make the world a safe place for all to inhabit. Pursuant to this charge, it enunciated a Charter as a guard, and the UDHR as a veritable instrument to accomplish this mission. The Declaration on December 10, 1945 became a watershed in the annals of human rights history. UDHR became a standard for all states and actors to comply in the process of protecting and promoting fundamental human rights. The philosophical underpinning of this process is that, when the rights of people are recognized, promoted and systematically protected, foundation for human sustainability would be laid and the reproduction for the innate potentials of the people necessary for civilization would become a near-possibility. It was against this backdrop that Jane Torrres Bodef, former Director-General of the United Nations Education, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) stated that:

The declaration (UDHR) of 10 December is not only a milestone in history; it is also a plan of campaign. Every paragraph is a call to action, every line a condemnation of indolence or national pasts, every word forces us to re-examine our present state. Can we say we are 'Not Guilty'? No country that is guiltless of the oppression that still weighs upon mankind… The destiny of man is a universal responsibility shared by everyone. So long as any right of any man is violated, the United Nations Declaration will hold us guilty of cowardice, negligence, laziness and inhumanity.

Since 1948 to the 21st century, the UN has enhanced the frontiers of human rights through its programmes, policies, protocols and covenants. In fact, it has become the cornerstone and fulcrum of global activities. Today, human rights have come to stay. It has not only become a veritable channel for promoting development trajectory, but occupies a prominent position in the statute books of UN member states, regional bodies, and the development of human rights defenders both at the national and global level.

Unfortunately, the enforcement of human rights has faced many daunting challenges. They range from

protection of state sovereignty, the weaponization of the globe and increasing global poverty. These challenges have to a large extent, led to an off-handed treatment of human freedoms, recalcitrance of states to fulfill their responsibility to protect their members and growing inequality. In this scenario, our mutually assured honour is destroyed at the altar of political expedience.

In spite of these challenges, the prospects of human rights in the years ahead cannot be overemphasized. This is because of the intensification of the UN efforts to popularize and deepen the consciousness of the concept in the international community. Policies like R$_2$P and Agenda for Peace in 1992 are some of the laudable measures to compel states to strictly adhere to human rights norms. The effectiveness of local and international NGOs committed to its defense vividly point to the fact that human rights cannot be eclipsed or abridged with the numerous body-traps. More importantly, states should be reminded of their statutory obligation to honour treaties signed at any point. Article 18 of the Vienna Treaty on the Law of Treaties enjoined states to obey the agreement they have consented to.

A state is obliged to refrain from acts which would defeat the object and purpose of a treaty when (a) it has signed the treaty or has exchanged instruments constituting the treaty subject to ratification, acceptance or approval, until it shall have made its intention clear not to become a party to the treaty, or (b) it has expressed its consent to be bound by the treaty, pending the entry into force of the treaty and provided that such entry into force is not unduly delayed.

The Vienna Treaty makes it clear that all the 193 member states that signed the UN Charter must respect its content; the same for the countries that signed the UDHR. In conclusion therefore, the founding fathers of the UN considered the human rights as a single weapon to move humanity away from jungle justice and man's inhumanity to man. This underlies the ever-growing emphasis, attention and focus on it. Despite the numerous challenges, the prospects for its expansion and consolidation in the global consciousness remain positive.

RECOMMENDATIONS

In view of the importance of human rights to human development, we make the following recommendations:

(1) Human rights should be mainstreamed in the curriculum of our socialization centers, especially at the tertiary level.
(2) Civil society groups and NGOs should be encouraged and supported to deepen their human rights advocacy within their jurisdiction.
(3) The UN should intensify efforts to punish/sanction states that flout the provisions of R$_2$P, or engage in

activities that would consign people into the cocoon of brigandage and terror.

(4) The time has come to check the commercial excesses of manufacturers of weapons who supply states and terror-based organization massive weapons used to kill millions of people. The UN should begin to check how these deadly groups get their weapons and sanction such manufacturers.

CONFLICT OF INTERESTS

The author has not declared any conflict of interests

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African compliance with state fragility to gain agency in the international system: A case study of Uganda

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Most states in Africa, due to their unique history of state formation, do not satisfy the established (western-centric) pre-requisites of statehood. This incongruity results in Africa being framed as a place of fragile states with African agency discounted in the process. The discourse on state fragility is instrumental in insidiously granting legitimacy for western governmental interventions in Africa. Meanwhile, the resulting reception of international aid and security assistance by African governments has produced an increasingly popular claim: African states have lost the autonomy to determine their affairs. An important aim of this paper is to challenge this assumption and re-insert African agency into the discussion by revealing how African state-elites have made strategic appeals to notions of African weakness and state fragility to convince donors to finance their governments and assist in the elimination of rivals for continuing their (sometimes) illiberal rule. Subsequently, speeches, interviews, newspaper articles and donor reports from Uganda will be subject to critical discourse analysis (CDA) to demonstrate this point. On a theoretical plane, studying how African actors' interactions with discursive structures have granted them room for agency, a dialectical position is taken in understanding the structure-agency debate.

Key words: Africa, agency, fragile states, discourses, Uganda.

INTRODUCTION

Overview

In much of international politics, the primary unit of analysis is taken to be states and agency of a state is often assumed to correspond to its capacity for sustaining proper bureaucratic and coercive structures. In Africa, however, most states do not meet these pre-conditions for state capacity, resulting in the categorisation of African states as fragile states with African agency disregarded in the process (Williams, 2013: 130-142). This framing of African states as fragile is understood to be vital for western actors in legitimising their increasingly interventionist position in African countries. The ensuing receipt of aid and military assistance by African states

from western donors has, in the meantime, produced a popular argument: African-foreign relation is driven by western interests with African governments losing self-sufficiency in determining their affairs (Woods, 2005: 392-402; Duffield, 2001: 120-140). A crucial purpose of this paper is to dispute this claim and re-introduce African agency into the conversation by illustrating how African states have gained from their classification as fragile states and have even actively stabilised their perception as weak states for regime maintenance reasons.

One might question this all-embracing usage of 'Africa' in the singular. Following Harrison (2010: 15), however, there are some circumstances that permit describing 'Africa' as a whole as states with a shared history, as a collective international force or as a discursive entity. Today, African states are nowhere near a united presence in international politics and although they share a colonial history (and therefore similar development of states), due to the varying experiences and impacts in this period, even such a union cannot be strongly justified. Hence, the most powerful union African states hold is discursive. Africa has been established as a category and referred to as such on countless occasions by both foreign and African political and intellectual actors (Harrison, 2010: 16-17; Brown, 2011: 2-3). This is especially true in the field of international politics and development policies where common solutions and problems are constantly assigned to 'Africa' as a whole (Zondi, 2011: 5-17). In other words, I justify speaking of Africa in the singular based on the fact that it has already been extensively employed before. Similarly, any discussion of the 'western/donor community' as a whole would normally result in sweeping generalisations about various actors and organisations that differ along national and institutional lines. However, in the case of Africa, these actors subscribe to similar (interventionist) attitudes and actions in combating the continent's fragility, making it reasonable to talk about them collectively (Harrison, 2012).

Structure and theoretical framework

The paper will begin by tracing the rise of the fragile state agenda and confirm that African states are labelled as such on the grounds that they lack the accepted pre-requisites for state-capacity. Next, by demonstrating the historical variations in state formation between Africa and Europe (which reveals the non-universality of existing theories on statehood), a flexible re-conceptualisation of African agency that overlooks such requirements will be justified. Considering the diversity of actors in Africa, talking unproblematically of 'African agency' as a collective force is hazardous. So, it is essential to clarify that the only African agency that I intend to consider here is that exerted by the ruling class, particularly government leaders and their representatives. Therefore, a take on agency that is divorced from state capacity and employed

by state elites will be utilised to analyse the complex existence of African agency. In Wight's (2009: 187-188) neat phrase 'it is not the state which acts: it is always specific sets of politicians and state officials' who introduce meaning and intention into actions.

By looking at agency this paper also addresses the longstanding structure-agency debate, which may be perceived as the contest between social constraints and personal freedom in influencing events (Sibeon, 1999: 139). Against this backdrop, a dialectical position that aspires to engage with the temporally embedded nature of the structure-agency relationship in Africa will be taken. Eventually, a case study of Museveni's (president of Uganda since 1986) regime will be carried out to demonstrate how the Ugandan elites have embraced the fragile states discourse for securing greater agency in the international realm. The evidence about Uganda gathered from political speeches, interviews, newspaper articles and donor reports will be subject to critical discourse analysis (CDA) to demonstrate this point.

Discourses, in its most basic sense, can be regarded as a 'particular way of talking about and understanding the world' (Jørgensen and Phillips, 2002: 1). Most discursive methodologies, including CDA, share a social constructivist epistemology- the notion that discourses are crucial in the construction of ideas and social processes. In other words, the social world is not 'given', but rather the common sense(s) and structures of knowledge in this world are constructed and normalised through repeated discursive activities (Milliken, 1999: 273). Proceeding with this understanding, in discussions regarding the 'securitisation' of Africa, this paper subscribes to the Copenhagen school theorists' argument that the framing of a security threat (here, the African continent due to its accommodation of failed states) is facilitated through certain discursive practices that stabilise this notion as an autonomous reality (Buzan et al., 1998: 21-23). Finally, the concluding part of this paper is dedicated to discussing findings from the case study and addressing the possible limitations of my work.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Jackson and Rosberg's (1982a: 1-24) work *Why Africa's Weak States Persist* touched off discussions on the inferior capacities of African states. Over time, numerous analyses of weak states emerged and phrases like 'failed state', 'lame Leviathan', 'collapsed state' and other variations became prevalent in academic works.[1] Many of these expressions ultimately boil down to the inadequate and insufficient state capacity in delivering core services to the citizenry (Helman and Ratner, 1993: 1-19). Most scholars in the academic can be separated into 'problem solvers' and 'critical scholars.' Problem solvers are

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[1] See Mazrui (1995, pp.28-9), Callaghy (1987, pp.87-90) and Zartman (1997, pp.19-37) respectively.

inclined to give attention to development and performance concerns of fragile states and produce recommendations for governments and international agencies in dealing with such states. This strand of work, however, provides little conceptual or theoretical reflection (Lemay-Hébert, 2013: 243).

Meanwhile, literature from critical scholars tends to challenge the analytical soundness of the fragile state label. They have examined the manipulation of this narrative by western agents for justifying their intervention into spaces classified as 'fragile'. They also highlight the misrepresentation of African reality and the imposition of neo-colonial theoretical hegemony through the use of this label. This is my starting point. Building on such works,[2] attempt will be made to expose the label's weak conceptual underpinning. However, many of these critical scholars dedicate little attention to the agency of failed states and prematurely conclude that they are passive victims of western discursive control. This approach is worrying as it presumes that fragile states are incapable of responding to the situation, thus further perpetuating their perception as weak states. Therefore, the contribution of my work lies in attempting to bridge this gap by asking how and in what ways have the apparently fragile African states managed to gain agency in the international system. This is not a completely new line of research, but neither is it a well-trodden ground. For instance, some studies have located African agency arising from resisting and publicly opposing foreign arrangements through the bolstering of pan-Africanist and nationalist rhetoric.[3] In these works, agency emerges from acts of resistance. However, this view of agency seems less adequate to the task of analysing the *utilisation* of 'fragile state' label. Since this study was intended to study how elites exist within the system to extract benefits, my work will explore instances where agency emerged through acts of *compliance* with (rather than dismissal of) discourses that portray African states as fragile and lacking in agency.

There exists a small and somewhat under-appreciated strand of literature that examines the use of discourses (mostly on democracy and good governance) by African actors for manipulating western donors. For instance, Whitfield and Fraser (2010: 341-366) convincingly argued that Rwanda and Ethiopia managed to play the part of 'the good reformer' or 'donor darling' for gaining space for manoeuvre in their engagements with western patrons. Similarly, Bayart and Ellis (2000: 219-227) looked at how a range of African regimes have utilised 'the discourse of democracy' to manipulate the donor community into providing resources. Even so, there is limited exploration in such works of the relationship between utilisation of

discourses and African agency. Therefore, I will draw on these works for guidance in conducting my own investigation on the utilisation of 'fragile state' discourse while also relating it to African agency. Before doing so, however, it is first essential to explore the reasons and circumstances that contributed to African states' classification as fragile states.

Why the African states fail?

Max Weber's (1964: 156) interpretation, employed by many political scientists today, established the pre-conditions for statehood by defining it as 'a corporate group that has compulsory jurisdiction, exercises continuous organization, and claims a monopoly of force over a territory and its population'. Meanwhile, in much of the literature, agency is regarded as 'the faculty of acting or exerting power' independently upon situations (Buzan et al., 1993: 103). In the case of states, their capacity to act is said to correspond to their capacity for maintaining these pre-conditions: effective collective action, collective identity and compulsory jurisdiction (Williams, 2011: 8-9).

A state produces efficient collective action through its bureaucratic and coercive apparatuses. However, in the African context, most states do not always have a legitimate monopoly on violence to tame the society. Instead, coercive instruments are wielded by various regional and military groups that are available for hire to both governments and corporations (Dunn, 2001: 51-55). Without exclusive control over violence, internal conflicts become prevalent and state capacity becomes further compromised. Meanwhile, the fundamental bureaucratic arrangement in Africa is neo-patrimonial in nature. That is, top leaders swap valued goods (such as access to resources or a position in the bureaucracy) in return for political loyalty and support from subordinates (Callaghy, 1987: 93-95). This system of repeated reciprocity, a quid pro quo network, indicates that states acquire their legitimacy, not from the implementation of law and order, but rather from pleasing individuals in the patronage pyramid. When this is not achieved, the clientelist networks break down and military coups occur, resulting in a reshuffle of the state's personalised structures (Jackson and Rosberg, 1982b: 38-44).

With ethnic boundaries cutting across political ones, the pre-eminence of several local (tribal/ethnic/religious) identities render national identities in Africa fragmented (Widner, 1995: 114). Also, ever since it was determined by the Organisation of African Unity (OAU) that governments would be recognised as sovereign as long as they commanded the capital city, the control of the outermost regions have remained variable (Herbst, 2000: 110). Even though this rule now remains revoked, due to low population densities in hinterlands, African governments continue to make compromises in their area of jurisdiction, thus encouraging illegal activities and contributing to the African instability (Herbst, 2000: 109-

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[2] See Call (2008, pp.1496-8), Nuruzzaman (2011, pp. 288-9) and Dunn (2001, pp. 46-63).

[3] See Lee's (2012, pp.93-7) work on the African 'won't do' stance in trade relations with WTO or Murithi's (2012, pp.662-669) paper on AU's collective rejection of NATO's involvement with Libya in 2010.

112). With the state regarded as incompetent in maintaining supreme authority over its entire territory and population, the account of a *Leviathan* (the most classic western understanding on statecraft) that can protect citizens from 'war of all against all' (Hobbes, 1651, chapter XIV p.72), fails in Africa. This has prompted scholars to like Clapham (1998a: 269) to go as far as to say that '…anything readily identifiable as a state is hard to discern' in Africa.

A little bit of history

These supposedly universal pre-conditions, that remain a litmus test for state's capacity for action everywhere, relate directly to the *European* process of state formation. It is not surprising then that African states, which have their own history of state formation, do not fit the definitions of sovereignty and statehood developed for understanding and analysing European nations. However, once specific constructs (about statehood) become fixed in place, the constructivist logic could seem almost as deterministic. So, the only means to reveal the constitutive capacity of concepts is by exposing the actions through which they became created. Taking a brief look at the varying history of state emergences in Africa and Europe will illuminate this point.

The most famed words about state formation came from Tilly (1975: 42): 'War made the state, and the state made war'. Indeed, the territorial borders of European states were established while defeating external and internal competitors. Meanwhile, the collection of resources for waging wars helped generate efficient bureaucratic and coercive structures state representatives to execute taxation, policies to regulate the extraction and the police to ensure compliance with legislation. Along with improved capacity for states to penetrate the society and monitor the population, facing 'external' enemies also consolidated national identities (Bean, 1973: 220-223).

In the newly independent African states, however, the story was quite different. The borders were never contested since the states were bequeathed with their artificial boundaries from the colonial past. In the words of Delavignette (1950: 276), 'the machinery had changed hands, but not the parts.' Also, due to lack of wars, there was never any need for the collection of resources or conscription to fend off aggressors. This meant that powerful institutions required for regulating and monitoring the citizens took time to appear in Africa (Herbst, 1990: 128-131). Meanwhile, due to the precedence of ethno-regional identities, the governments continue to remain concerned about loyalty and support, causing patron-client networks to emerge as the primary state-society linkage in Africa. This is especially true in the case of Uganda where previous coups and regime reversals can be seen as the manifestation of political struggle between the different regional groups (Green, 2017: 11-14). As a result, the regime structure and political authority in Uganda, and everywhere else in Africa, is more personal rather than institutional (Clapham, 1998b: 143-144; Grovogui, 2006: 25-63).

However, the persistence of western theories that define a proper state through the evaluation of its institutional arrangements continues to deny the reality of African state formation and has profoundly impacted how the world perceives the continent. Relying on western concepts of statehood, many works have reached the conclusion that African states are fragile or failed. A failed state is understood to be a state that is unable to deliver crucial political goods such as territorial control, security and legal order, leaving citizens vulnerable to a range of shocks (Zartman, 1997: 20; Jackson, 1987: 527). Using this as their starting point of analysis, in its recent publication, Fragile States Index (2020) also identified seven of the world's top ten fragile states to be from Africa. When African states 'fail', they are not only perceived as weak players in the international arena, but they also become open to intrusions from foreign agents. The following will delve into the consequences of such intrusions.

The consequence of failure: Aid deployment and securitization of Africa

The overlap between scholarly literature and policy developments should not be overlooked. Knowledge generated in the academia is constantly utilised by policymakers in creating the 'dominant intellectual/policy perspective' (George, 1994: 34). Indeed, international policy initiatives since the 1990s mirror the change of attention in scholarly papers towards the 'fragile state' agenda. Since configurations of state capabilities remain fundamental in the present-day perception of state agency, the apparent lack of this in Africa has resulted in many works actively advocating the requirement for western humanitarian and security interventions in the continent. For instance, take the following excerpt from Rice and Patrick (2008:4): 'Africa is the region with the world's highest concentration of weak and failed states and requires increased US attention […] to address performance gaps and improve security'. Academic works such as this (which falls into the 'problem solvers' category) provide western interventionist initiatives with a justification for moving into African spaces.

Intervention, particularly through aid deployment, is almost always appreciated as a morally sound and altruistic act. Indeed, the Commission for Africa under Blair declared that 'the developed world has a *moral duty* to assist Africa, which remains a *scar* on the conscience of the world' (The Guardian, 2001). Such statements, however, not only reiterate Africa's assumed vulnerability but also keep alive justifications mirroring the colonial

times, once again opening African spaces to the interventions or rather civilization missions from outside. Moreover, with foreign agencies stepping in for the supposedly 'missing' state, even something as basic as the capacity to act becomes an extension of forces external to the state, thus creating a *dependent state* (Bräutigam and Knack, 2004: 257-259).

In the years following the events of 9/11, however, a tendency has surfaced among donors to minimise development aid while continuing to expand military assistance. As Duffield (2001: 121) put it, development has now repackaged itself as a 'conflict prevention' mechanism, resulting in the continued militarisation of donor-Africa relationship. Beyond understanding this shift as a mere policy development, security initiatives could also be regarded as a social and intersubjective construct. According to Copenhagen School scholars, a matter becomes a security issue not because it poses an objective threat, but because it is represented as constituting a threat (Buzan et al., 1998: 21-23). This is made possible through 'speech acts.' Speech acts are not direct accounts of a presently prevailing autonomous situation or reality. Instead, they bring forth an issue (as a security threat) by successfully presenting it as such. Therefore, speech acts/discursive practices can be regarded as holding a performative function: they stabilise certain realities and thus facilitate certain practices (Searle, 1965: 221-29; Austin, 1962: 4-7).

In other words, 'securitization' of something requires the employment of speech acts that work to elevate it as a security threat requiring countermeasures that exceed the norms of everyday politics (Buzan et al., 1998: 24). In the case of Africa, due to its fragile states, the continent is presented as a security threat to western states and populations, thereby legitimising foreign intervention into African states. In a world that is becoming increasingly smaller and interconnected, it is argued that the conflicts in failed African state can easily spill over and 'threaten security at home' (Abrahamsen, 2013: 135). After all, the 9/11 incident proved beyond dispute that instability and disorder in one corner of the globe can traverse national boundaries and threaten the stability of the international community. Indeed, soon after 9/11, British Foreign Minister Straw claimed that 'unspeakable acts of evil are committed against us, coordinated from failed states in distant parts of the world' (quoted in Abrahamsen, 2005: 66).

The logic here is that if a certain form of the state is understood to be universal and perfectly exportable, the only thing stopping the development of the 'right' sort of state is the 'wrong' kind of people. Failed states, therefore, are no longer dysfunctional states affecting only local citizens. Instead, they are now 'free trade zone for the underworld' that needs to be effectively regulated (Abrahamsen, 2013: 136). Hence, securitization works on a preventive doctrine- it focuses on preventing potential attacks rather than fixing the problem after it has already

occurred. Indeed, the USAID website (last revised 2017) state that their 'work in preventing conflict and violent extremism reduces political instability that can threaten U.S national security'. Meanwhile, the UN (2017) also concurs that intervention in Africa is necessary for sending a 'united message to rebuke terrorist attacks' that would otherwise breed in weak African states. This pre-emptive approach permits western powers to become involved in African affairs even when there is no indication of a threat. Over time, therefore, western governments have heavily invested in regional peacekeeping missions in Africa, with the Horn of Africa now an important military hub for Task Force 150 that is collectively managed by Britain, United States, Spain, France and Germany (Fisher and Anderson, 2015: 135-136).

Duffield (2001: 139) argues that such security initiatives are imposed on African states as part of the wider western objective to establish itself 'as an intimate and regular presence' in the continent for regulating the lives of passive and vulnerable people. In a similar vein, Woods (2005: 393-403) also confirms that securitisation becomes a vehicle for western military expansion and corporate interests. With rising uncertainties in the Middle East, some scholars have also argued that the securitization of Africa is more precisely the securitization of Africa's energy resources, especially crude oil (Andreasson, 2015: 20-42). Some others have insisted that the 2011 Libyan intervention proves that post 9/11 western activities in the continent is 'selective' and motivated by geo-strategic concerns (Fermor, 2012: 323-361).

These works demonstrate that the 'failed state' label is often inconsistently utilised and politically non-neutral. The recognition of having failed is certainly more a matter of the certain actors' concerns and convenience than an 'objective' evaluation of the state's performance. However, the fixation of these works with western capacity for discourse manoeuvre leaves Africa with victimhood status. The assumption that African states are submissive objects of western discursive domination bears connotations of weakness. Therefore, works informed by this reasoning continue to preserve the 'state failure' narrative. Breaking away from this pattern, the subsequent chapters will reformulate African agency and observe it in action by analysing African actors' responses to the fragile state discourse.

Reconceptualising African agency

As the part on the history of state formation indicated, many states in Africa do not function in the defined ways when it comes to the delivery of core political services like security, rule of law, territorial control, etc. Indeed, their population has almost never obtained services from states, but instead through alternative forms of

governance established at levels other than the state-including via sub-state actors (tribes and local strongmen) and international institutions (Boege et al., 2009: 8). However, it is not always the case that stateless areas become hotbeds for criminal networks and terrorism. Often, local authorities, who might be more responsive than state and more credible in the eyes of the local population, emerge in such zones (Boege et al., 2009: 6-10; Niang, 2018). Even so, since the state is widely regarded as the *only* acceptable form of political organisation, when the state is unable to achieve supreme authority, it is automatically assumed that all control is lost.

Due to our preoccupation with fixed pre-conditions for state capacity, we are unable to accept hybrid institutions or political orders within (incomplete) state structure, resulting in the contextually insensitive assessment that African states have failed. Borrowing the words of Dunn (2001:50), 'the African state is not failing as much as is our understanding of the state'. Existing definitions concerning state, therefore, needs to be reconceptualised. However, it is not my intention here to theorise new definitions of statehood that can accommodate African realities. Instead, my objective is simply to destabilise the myths about a 'proper state' in order to justify my take on agency that is divorced from this Westphalian straitjacket. Indeed, we can no longer use institutional capacity of the state as an indicator for agency when existing understandings about state continue to miss significant elements of African politics. Therefore, my (interim) conclusion is that more theoretical consideration is required for understanding African agency.

Agency of state-based actors

Some scholars (Krasner, 1978; de Mesquita and Lalman, 1992; Wight, 2009) have maintained that state and its agency can be interpreted as actions and interactions undertaken by state-leaders and elites on behalf of the state. In other words, only structurally positioned governmental actors can 'bring into play specific powers and state capacities that are inscribed in particular state institutions' (Wight, 2009: 187). This is a useful starting point. Especially so in the case of Africa where state elites establish 'personal rule' and define the external representation of the state (Jackson and Rosberg, 1982b: 42-43). More recently, Ronald and Knowledge (2018) have also made the argument that African agency is multi-actor in nature and exerted by state elites in their interactions with external agents.

Proceeding with this understanding, a range of works have looked at how African agency is exerted by state leaders through outright resistance and opposition of foreign arrangements. Indeed, some states in Africa now trainings[4] and condemn western policies by waving the

'African solutions for African problems' banner (Lee, 2012: 93). However, since agency arising from restricting external demands has already been explored at length elsewhere, this paper will attempt to study how aligning with donor activities can also become a channel for amassing agency. That is, the emergence of African elite agency is observed through acts of compliance with prevailing commentary on fragile states.

Agency from compliance: The role of structures

Unlike the voluntaristic celebration of agency that denies any role to structures, my account portrays agency as embedded within wider structural contexts. Here the term 'structure' alludes to the conditions within which agents function (Sibeon, 1999: 141)- encompassing the discourses that categorise African states as failed states. Indeed, discourses can be regarded as a type of structure that is 'actualised in their regular use by people' (Shapiro, 1989: 11) and it works to operationalise a particular 'regime of truth' (Milliken, 1999: 273). That is, while discourses stabilise and enable some representations of the world through the articulation of certain knowledges, they also silence and disable other forms of meanings and practices (Weldes, 1999: 154-155). In other words, they facilitate some actions while constraining others. This reasoning is true in the case of fragile state discourses since it privileges western notions of statehood while delegitimising others, thereby having an impact on the actions undertaken by African state-based actors.

My argument here is that African (elite) agency is produced by strategically complying with and utilising the structures produced by 'fragile state' discourses. An obvious criticism, however, in viewing discourses as 'a structure of meaning-in-use' (Weldes and Saco, 1996: 373) is the possible disregard for *material* structures. After all, when Africa is so hemmed in by concrete structures of poverty, underdevelopment, institutional fragility and military incapacity, it is only logical to believe that material conditions would affect (and even limit) African state leaders' capacity for action. Indeed, following this logic, one could even argue that African elites are not so much utilising discourses on fragility as they are abstaining from disputing an objective reality- Africa's lack of state capacity and material inferiority. I welcome this interpretation wholeheartedly. In fact, the rationale behind choosing Uganda, a country lacking 'hard power', as the case study for this paper is precisely to include the possibility for testing such an argument.

Presently, the Ugandan state headed by President Yoweri Museveni is financially dependent on over forty development partners, making it one of the world's top aid recipients (Branch, 2011: 84-86). Additionally, following the events of 9/11, considerable military assistance has also been granted to Uganda to strengthen the 'incompetent' and 'poorly trained' Ugandan

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[4]Morocco with the US in 2011 (Morocco World News, 2013).

People's Defence Forces (hereafter UPDF) (Feldman, 2008: 46). Those providing foreign assistance continue to argue that Uganda 'has performed poorly in promoting the pre-eminence of state institutions' (Putzel and Di John, 2012: 16). Indeed, Uganda also regularly appears on the lists of fragile states and was ranked 24th the previous year (Fragile States Index, 2020).   All these factors indicate that this country has arguably been in a condition of structural weakness, leaving it, in reality, with limited avenues for securing agency in the international realm. Hence, this could very well be a case study that admits the triumph of material conditions over discursive ones in influencing actions.

METHODOLOGY

The case study of Museveni's regime in Uganda

CDA is any analysis of discourses that takes a politically motivated perspective in identifying the utilisation of discourse in maintaining ideologies and structuring meaning (Fairclough, 1995: 32). By examining the power relations and social situations that language contributes to and reproduces, this approach works to uncover the 'order of things' as the 'order of discourse' (Foucault, 1972: xi). CDA will be utilised in the case study of Uganda to systematically uncover how the 'failed state' discourse provides an opening for Ugandan elites to express socio-political reality in accordance with their agendas and ambitions of regime maintenance.

The most popular criticism levelled against CDA is that the approach easily allows for researchers to 'cherry-pick' fragments of texts/speeches that confirm their preconceived conclusions (Stubbs, 1997: 7), making it possible for them to read 'meaning *into*, rather than *out* of texts' (Widdowson, 1995: 164). This paper admits that the quantity of discourse material out there is sometimes too vast to precisely identify manipulations and make definite claims. Therefore, the purpose of the ensuing discursive analysis is not to examine the 'real' causal relations or to produce the 'right' story. Rather, my intention is to look at Uganda-foreign relations (in the field of aid deployment and military assistance) and bring forth discursive evidence that will render ambiguous the prevailing view that discounts African agency. After all, 'critical' in CDA implies exploring 'connections and causes that are *hidden'* (Fairclough, 1992: 9) in order to demonstrate that our reality could, in principle, be perceived differently.

Aid for the weak Uganda

African leaders often require sufficient resources to feed their patron-client networks. In this circumstance, the ideal solution is extraversion. Bayart and Ellis (2000, p.21) describe extraversion as the process whereby state- elites access 'resources from their relationship with the external environment'. For African states, this extraction of resources from the international community is made easy through the utilisation of prevailing discourses that render African states as weak. For instance, Museveni (2016) report on *the bottlenecks facing Africa's development* was utilised by the AU (hereafter African Union) to navigate their highly mediatised international conference on the continent's problems (Daily Monitor, 2016). The leading bottleneck mentioned by Museveni (2016: 3-4), and concurred by other leaders, was the existence of a 'weak state exemplified in a weak army'.

More recently, in January 2018, Museveni conceded to Trump's (alleged) description of African states as 'shithole countries' by tweeting that '[Trump] talks to Africans frankly. It is the Africans' fault that they are weak…we are 12 times the size of India, but why are we not strong?' (The Washington Post, 2018). These remarks illustrate Museveni regime's active participation in re-enforcing the image of African states as weak. A direct consequence of such discursive activity is the invitation of aid. Indeed, resources can be more easily extracted from external sources when states reproduce and reinforce their status as fragile states (Fisher and Anderson, 2015: 143).

Aid packages obtained in this fashion have been vital in buying political support for sustaining the neo-patrimonial networks required for avoiding regime breakdown in Uganda. Political elites (top civil servants and army officers) are given the autonomy to utilise these resources for their own personal interest in return for loyalty to the regime (Tangri and Mwenda, 2008: 182). As Barkan et al. (2005: 14) put it, since the 1990s, Museveni started to 'look increasingly like a neo-patrimonial ruler […] at the helm of a clientelist state,' making Uganda one of the world's top aid recipients (OECD, 2019). Moreover, to guarantee that aid keeps coming, a considerable portion of the state's function becomes directed towards outside. With donor-friendly programs in place, Ugandan state now has limited reasons for finding a more consistent source of income- through taxation or domestic production (Mwenda, 2006: 5). As a result, not only is the government incapable of increasing its own fiscal base, but it also fails to install a 'tradition of providing goods and services in exchange for taxes and fees' (Goldsmith, 2001: 127), thereby hindering the growth of the bureaucratic structures required for suitably extracting reserves from the populace. This situation, therefore, ironically furthers Uganda from the ideal form of state that deployment of aid is supposed to nurture, while also strengthening the regime's ability to further capitalise on Uganda's fragility to invite these aid flows.

While it would certainly be interesting to observe in depth the utilisation of fragile state discourses by Ugandan officials for acquiring aid, at present, I've been unable to locate sufficient discursive evidence for this. There is, however, still scope for further exploration in this line of research since the very act of accepting aid from donors logically requires the Ugandan government to participate in the processes (including discursive) that affirms Ugandan state's dependent and weak position in the world. More importantly, since resources previously allotted for development aid are now primarily re-directed to securitisation efforts (Duffield, 2001: 120-122), the Ugandan government's attempts to attain agency through the means of fragile-state discourses manifests most clearly in their dialogues with donors over matters of counter-terrorism. Therefore, the subsequent section will explore Uganda's efforts to reinforce concerns about 'war on terror' maintained by western actors, especially following the events of 9/11, in order to secure military support for regime maintenance.

The self-securitisation of Uganda

Uganda's peripheral zones have, to varying levels, endured continuing instability at the hands of many rebel organisations. Since the 2000s, western Uganda is held by the Allied Democratic Forces (ADF), an anti-Museveni Islamist movement that has mercilessly terrorised the region (Prunier, 2004: 373-374). Meanwhile, Northern Uganda has become a base for the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA), a Christian coalition that has carried out numerous bombings in Kampala (the Capital of Uganda) (Tripp, 2010: 169-171). Additionally, al-Shabaab, an offshoot of the Somali terrorist group called the Islamic Courts Union (ICU), has also conducted suicide attacks in Uganda to demonstrate their objection at the Ugandan involvement in the AU peacekeeping mission (AMISOM) that intends to neutralise ICU (Tripp, 2010: 172). Over time, Museveni's government has made great use of this ongoing

insecurity to push a narrative of Ugandan fragility.

For instance, during negotiations with western partners, Museveni continues to justify his government's soaring military expenses by citing the ongoing fragility in the peripheries. It was claimed that Uganda could turn out like 'Somalia [post-1991] or Cambodia [after Khmer Rouge rule]' if military assistance was reduced (Quoted in Tripp 2010, p.141). By drawing parallels to conditions in other failed states, the Ugandan regime succeeded in making patrons drop any efforts to introduce a cap on the military budget (Fisher 2013: 16-17). That is, conscious compliance with traditional knowledge on 'fragile' states became a rhetorical tool employed to wear down sponsors into ultimately satisfying the regime's demands. This also indicates that securitization is not a thing that western actors did to Africa, but it is instead a position that African states like Uganda readily welcomed.

Indeed, in public addresses, Museveni and senior army spokespersons have repeatedly described peripheral areas, especially in the North, as territories of 'lawlessness' and 'insecurity' that are constantly threatened by rebel groups (Daily Monitor, 2009; New Vision, 2010). In other words, by characterising certain zones of Uganda as dangerous and ungoverned spaces, Museveni is able to emphasize that the state is incapable of securing dominance over its entire territory, thus 'securitising' Uganda himself. Moreover, the Ugandan government organised many state-managed crisis briefing trips to fly-in donor officials and western state leaders into provinces attacked by rebels in order to systematically reinforce narratives of Ugandan instability and chaos (New Vision, 2001a; Rosenblum, 2002: 195).

In private bilateral meetings and public speeches for foreign donors, Museveni consistently represented the peripheral area as a place tormented by 'bandits', 'criminals' and 'lawbreakers' (Tripp, 2010: 171). Following 9/11, however, the language employed to describe these insurgents shifted. They were no longer bandits or (as Museveni described LRA prior to 9/11) 'ordinary lawbreakers' (Doom and Vlassenroot, 1999: 20) but instead *terrorists*. In his interviews and public addresses post 9/11 (Canada TV, 2002; Integrated Regional News Agency, 2005; Daily Monitor, 2007), Museveni portrayed the victims of LRA attacks as 'victims of terrorism' and described both ADF and LRA insurgent groups as terrorists. The regime has also been keen to stress the connection between these organisations and the al-Qaeda. For instance, in the weeks following 9/11, Museveni declared to reporters that '[Osama] bin Laden took [LRA and ADF] for terrorism training in Pakistan and Afghanistan' (New Vision, 2001b) and that the Al-Qaeda, through the ADF, had planned his assassination in 1999 (Marchesin, 2003: 4).

By directly combining Ugandan regime's enemies (LRA and ADF) to that confronted by the West (al-Qaeda) and by demonstrating the state's commitment to the Global War on Terror, Uganda has been able to elicit more military assistance. For instance, Ms Whitaker, the CEO of the US lobbying agency employed by the Ugandan state, managed to extract millions of dollars-worth military equipment for Uganda by expressing to the US secretary of state for African affairs that the country is supporting the US 'by fighting a war against terrorism' (Whitaker Group, 2003: 17). In reality, however, the extent to which LRA and ADF are 'directly linked to world terrorism' (as argued by Museveni during his interview for Canada TV, 2002) remains uncertain. While there is certainly some proof that ADF was trained by Al-Qaeda's networks (Prunier, 2004: 375), LRA is a group that arose primarily due to local grievances with at-best tenuous associations to Islamist fundamentalism (Fisher, 2013: 17-18). Yet, in 2001, Museveni's regime successfully managed the inclusion of both groups in the American 'Terrorist Exclusion List' (Integrated Regional News Agency, 2001). This development indicates how African elites are able to penetrate and manage internal state affairs of western countries in a fashion comparable to the ongoing foreign involvements in African political affairs.

Over time, Barack Obama, former US present, declared that eliminating the LRA was in America's direct 'national security interests' (White House, 2011). Washington has since actively backed Uganda, with the Obama's administration providing intelligence support and nearly one hundred military specialists to assist the Ugandan soldiers in their fight against the LRA (CNN, 2011; The Guardian, 2011). The Ugandan government is able to portray their local rivals as terrorist threats to the US and the rest of the world precisely because this same logic was previously (and continues to be) employed by many western governments in justifying their interventions into Africa.

Indeed, Ugandan regime officials have frequently emphasised that these rebel groups continue to threaten Ugandan and by extension international stability. For instance, in 2005, when the ADF was removed from the Terrorist List (due to its inactivity for nearly a decade), Ugandan officials insisted that ADF 'was never annihilated and ... [was] now regrouping' (Tripp, 2010: 156-157). Later, in 2008, Uganda's ministry of internal affairs declared, without any real proof, that they had 'neutralised' a supposed ADF attack that was planned to happen in Kampala during the Commonwealth Heads of Government summit in which the Queen was in attendance (The Daily Telegraph, 2008).

Later, when ADF moved their operations to Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) in 2010, the preventive doctrine, previously professed by western donors, was cited by the Ugandan officials as a justification for invading into DRC to continue chasing this organisation. Over the years, DRC has played host to many insurgent groups against Museveni's rule, including the LRA and ADF. In reality, therefore, DRC itself was a threat that Uganda wanted to address for reasons of regime maintenance. Scholars have also argued that the Ugandan invasion of the Eastern DRC was at least partly fuelled by economic motives. Indeed, this mediation has provided the Ugandan government with the ideal situation to profit from Congo's enormous mineral wealth (Reno, 2000: 6-7). This was a long-term regional goal that was formed outside of Uganda's relationship with donors. The intervention itself, however, was justified by linking ADF rivals with global terrorism and by employing the same preventive strategy utilised by western securitisation missions. In his speech, for instance, Museveni declared that the intervention was necessary 'in order to secure Uganda's security interests' (The Observer, 2014). More recently, the Ugandan military spokesperson Brig Richard Karemire claimed that '...in a *pre-emptive move*, UPDF conducted attacks on [ADF] camps in Eastern DRC' (Daily Monitor, 2017) indicating that military operations carried out by Uganda in DRC are preventive in nature.

Unsurprisingly, the regime's justification for continuing AMISOM operations in Somalia remain that it is necessary for preventing the global terrorist threat posed by al-Shabaab. In February 2007, for example, the Ugandan defence minister Crispus Kiyonga stated that Ugandan soldiers had a '*moral obligation* to undertake [Somalian intervention] for the good of the region' (Parliament of Uganda Proceedings, 2007). Similarly, Museveni also wrote in Foreign Policy (August 2010) that '...the support of the international community remains critical ... in this *common* endeavour'. Ugandan regime's efforts to portray itself as an ally in the global war on terror have enabled it to extract external funding and logistical assistance and thereby subsidise larger militaries in the AMISOM intervention (Eriksson, 2013: 36; New Vision, 2009).

Once something (here Africa) becomes securitized, it becomes difficult (even for the ones who established it) to roll back on the securitisation process (Buzan et al., 1998: 24). Borrowing the title of Appadurai's (1986) book, discourses have a 'social life', making it possible for African elites to appropriate and reproduce them as they please for meeting their own goals. Moreover, it becomes increasingly challenging for sponsors to oppose or even withdraw support for such interventions when the Ugandan administration tactfully align their goals with the western objectives and make strategic appeals to the norms and discourses initially advocated by

the West. If donors attempt to refute these actions, they delegitimise their own involvements in Africa. As a result, the US created a legal framework and lobbied neighbouring African governments into cooperation arrangements for legitimising and facilitating Uganda's cross-border pursuits in the region. Western governments also facilitated an agreement between Uganda and DRC, enabling the former's military to legally enter the DRC territory (Atkinson, 2009: 13-16).

Other countries also employ similar strategies to justify their regional interventions and destruction of regime rivals. For instance, Ethiopia justified intervening in Somalia as part of AMISOM by constructing ICU (their regime rival in Somalia) as the 'Taliban of Africa'. Former Ethiopian Prime minister Zenawi also frequently highlighted that the 'US and Ethiopian interests converge…due to the *global* threat posed by Islamists' (The Washington Post, 2006). Meanwhile, Deby, the president of Chad, recently said that 'Chad is a small country…[and] it is the duty of those who have more means to help it'. By converging with donor discourses that encourage the notion of state weakness, Deby was able to crush rebellions in 2006 and 2008 with the direct assistance of French troops (BBC News, 2008).

Using the logic 'our enemy is your enemy', African regimes have, therefore, become successful in framing certain organisations hostile to their regime as 'international' security threats, thus prompting donors to believe that defeating these groups is somehow in their direct security interest. This plan, when successful, has brought with it large quantities of military resources, equipment and cooperation, resulting in the entrenchment of illiberal state-building policies and the long-term hegemony over the securitization agenda by African elites. Ultimately, this demonstrates that African states are not as weak or fragile as they are made out to be.

DISCUSSION

As observed, Kampala's efforts to ensure that foreign sponsors view their country through the lens of 'state fragility' is primarily motivated by reasons for preserving the regime–to sustain Museveni's authoritarian and neo-patrimonial rule and to eliminate local rivals and rebellions. This problematises existing notions of agency that rely solely on state institutions' capacity for action. Indeed, this case study demonstrates a calculated attempt on the part of African state actors to subtly secure agency in their interactions with international actors through particular acts of self-constitution in compliance with existing perception of Africa. Indeed, it is not the case that Ugandan state elites are simply refraining from contesting the failed state label. Instead, they actively participate in its articulation and amplification. The Ugandan case also calls into question analyses of fragile states that portray the discourse entirely as a foreign intrusion upon African states. It becomes evident that both western and African actors mutually utilise discourses on failed states to operate and further their individual agendas (reception of resources for African states and justification for intervention for western donors).

More importantly, it is not true anymore that western actors are the only legitimate speakers, whose discourses African elites then hijack. In recent times, for defending their actions, western donors have utilised narratives that *commenced* in Africa, indicating that African elites also have the authority to speak (and be heard) now. Indeed, soon after Museveni described local insurgents as 'terrorists', US officials repeatedly made reference to 'home-grown terrorism' in their discussions about Uganda and the rest of Africa. They cited Museveni's speeches as evidence for furthering the 'securitization' of Africa from their part (United States Congress, 2005). In the end, both sides have constantly worked to reinforce discourses of state failure in Africa, making it a vicious cycle that is hard to break away from.

It would, however, be erroneous to conclude that *every* country in Africa employs these strategies of securitisation and extraversion. Therefore, generalisability over many cases is not the intent of my singular case study. The aim is instead to observe discontinuity and breaks within naturalised discourses. Discourses that construct and normalise the social world are 'themselves also open, inherently unstable, and always in the process of being articulated' (Doty, 1996: 6). Often the mechanism and means of dominant discourses and the actions they enable can only be seen clearly in instances of disruption or fracture. This case study is one such instance of breakage. By putting forth evidence from Uganda that the prevailing 'truth' fails to acknowledge, the contingent nature of the failed state discourses is revealed, thereby opening the actions and activities it facilitates to scrutiny.

Material reality

African elites continue to require external help (in the form of aid and military assistance) to sustain neo-patrimonial links and suppress local rivals. Thus, there is certainly an undeniable difference in material capacities between African and western states. However, this is not to mean that African elites are agency-less and weak. Although existing discourses were established by western actors (perhaps due to their material strength), knowledge, once constructed, becomes somewhat autonomous, thereby *impartially* providing the context for further actions from *all* actors to transpire. Therefore, neither African elites nor western actors are now capable of functioning and furthering their preferences outside the influence of these discourses. Indeed, the extent to which western governments are able to intervene in Africa relies on the extent to which they can effectively portray the image of a failed Africa as an objective reality. That is, regardless of their material capacities to intervene, they are still required to legitimise it through discourses.

Therefore, although I am not denying the presence of what is usually thought of as a 'material reality', such a reality remains inseparable from the construction of social reality through discourses. As Foucault (in Hall, 1997, p.45) wrote 'nothing has any meaning outside of discourse'. Discourses substantiate the otherwise inert material realm (Laclau and Mouffe, 2001: 105). Even

though African actors did not previously have the agency to securitize matters they wanted, once influential international actors stabilised a certain understanding of Africa, elites found their own ways and voices for profiting from this situation. This means that African governments do not have to depend on hard power, such as military strength or economic might, to achieve their goals (of regime maintenance), but can instead draw on discourses to gain from their interactions with western governments.

Mutual constitution of structure and agency

So far, in my accounts of African (elite) agency, I have been careful to mind that these elites are also bearers of the pre-existing structural setting in which they act. At every point in time agents meet with already given social contexts that are the outcome of actions undertaken in the past (Hay, 1995, pp. 198–200). In the case of African elites, they confront (and draw upon) the ready-made discourses that categorise Africa as a failed state. However, it is not the case that these structures determine actions. They, while constraining agents, also enable certain actions (Sibeon, 1999: 141-142). Here, the context still enables African elites to comply with and utilise existing discourses for their own purposes. Therefore, through compliance with dominant understandings about Africa and statehood, elites have, over time, amassed more agency and managed to negotiate, influence and even drive their engagements with western donors. In other words, we have seen the role of structures in influencing actions undertaken by African elites.

Another detail that seems to emerge from the case study is the subsequent impact on structures made by ensuing actions. Indeed, actions taken by Ugandan elites re-produce and strengthen the ideational structures that they initially rely on. In other words, agents also exert influence on existing structures and play a part in assembling the context for the next set of actions to occur (Sibeon, 1999: 143). In the case of Uganda, agents will have to continually articulate the African fragility as long as they rely on them, thereby renewing the weak state narrative time and again. What becomes evident here is that the events from Uganda occur due to the dialectical interplay between structure and agents. That is, while the failed state narrative provided a pre-existing context within which elites could act, in acting, agents subsequently re-produced these structures, thereby once again becoming constrained by the discourses on fragile states in their future actions. Therefore, the relationship between agency and structure can be interpreted as an inherently historical affair 'in which structures and actors stand in temporal relations of priority and posteriority towards one another' (Lewis, 2002: 19).

Conclusion

As this paper has demonstrated, the fragile state label is a normative tool that is co-produced by African and western agents for legitimising their objectives in foreign policy. On the donor side, the concept is primarily used to justify interventionist policies. Indeed, providing aid and military assistance is rarely an act of generosity, but instead presents sponsors with economic and political advantages. Meanwhile, actors in these 'fragile states' have not stayed inert during the foreign dissemination of this discourse. Although there are instances where this framing is opposed, it is also usually allowed, made use of and reproduced in occasions where there is a potential for profit.

The case study of Uganda demonstrates how seemingly fragile and aid-dependent states are able to obtain important foreign assistance to maintain the regime by positioning themselves inside western devised discourses. By drawing on the popular understanding of what a state is, and by emphasising (and sometimes exaggerating) its failure in Uganda, officials have managed to convince western governments that it remains worthy of their support. Military support obtained in this manner has served to strengthen the coercive capacity of the state, which is then instrumentalised to repress insurgencies and perceived threats to the regime, thus allowing tyrannical rulers to remain in power. This approach has enabled Ugandan state-based actors to carve out agency at various levels in their involvement with western actors, whose material capacities would otherwise render African states subordinate.

The most self-evident deficiency of the concept of state failure is the ahistoricity and rigidity surrounding the understanding of state, combined with its inability to accept alternative modes of governance. The fact that this label can be so easily manipulated casts doubt upon its usefulness and integrity. Therefore, following Call (2008: 1491) and Nay (2013: 330), who reprimanded the 'incoherent' and 'imprecise' character of the fragile state theory, this paper also calls for the abandonment of this concept due to its lack of any true analytical use. It should be clarified that this paper is not aimed as a defence for 'fragile' states to continue functioning as it is. Such states could very well, in some cases, threaten international stability and allow terrorist networks to operate due to its poor security apparatuses. However, the point here is that providing aid and securitising Africa is not the answer. Unfortunately, these solutions only work to shield illiberal states and maximise the political position of Africa's ruling elites while leaving the welfare of the citizens seriously compromised.

Lastly, following the constructivist logic, the social world is relativistic, making the evidence generated by this discourse analysis at best one possible perception of the social world that competes with other dominant understandings (Seidman and Wagner, 1992: 173).

However, as a discourse produced in an academic context- which is a main site for the production of knowledge that lends to the common senses of this world (George, 1994: 35); this dissertation contributes to the articulation of an alternative Africa, one which is a site for the emergence of African agency rather than fragility.

CONFLICT OF INTERESTS

The author has not declared any conflict of interests.

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The politics of the coronavirus and its impact on international relations

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Pandemic outbreaks are not a new phenomenon globally. There is plethora of evidence to substantiate this view. However, each epidemic has its own defining features, magnitude, and discernible impact. Societies are affected differently. The coronavirus or COVID-19 is not an incongruity. Although it is still active, thus making detailed empirical data inconclusive, it has already impacted societies in many ways - leaving indelible marks. Regarding methodology, this paper is an analytic and exploratory desktop study which draws evidence from different countries to advance certain arguments. It is mainly grounded in political science (specifically international relations) and history academic disciplines. Firstly, the paper begins by looking at how the coronavirus has affected international relations – both positively and negatively. Secondly, using examples from different countries, it argues that the virus has exposed the political leadership by bringing to bear endemic socio-economic inequalities which result in citizens responding differently to government regulations meant to flatten the curve of infection. Thirdly, in the context of Africa, the paper makes a compelling argument that some of the socio-economic situations found within the continent are remnants of colonialism and apartheid. But it also proceeds to aver that these situations have been sustained in Africa due to factors like leadership deficit, nepotism, party politics, inefficiency, corruption and ineptitude. Lastly, the paper recommends that political leaders should refrain from making reckless statements and join hands with their citizens if the war against the virus is to be won.

Key words: Coronavirus, international relations, pandemic, political leaders, socio-economic inequalities.

INTRODUCTION

The official announcement on the outbreak of the coronavirus or COVID-19 in Wuhan city in the Hubei Province of China set the world on a new pedestal. Although the first cases were reported in December 2019 (hence the name COVID-19), it was only in January 2020 that WHO set up the Incident Management Support Team (IMST) across all its three levels of operation, that is headquarters in Geneva, regional headquarters[1] and country level. This action immediately placed WHO on an emergency footing. In no time, the virus had quickly

spread across the globe. Countries such as Italy, America and Spain recorded hundreds of infections and fatalities. Even countries like Comoros and Lesotho which did not have any cases up to March 2020 started reporting their first cases between late April and early May 2020. This sent a clear message that no country and no one is immune to this deadly virus.

But while this is evidently a global health tragedy, it is regrettable that some political leaders are using this pandemic to settle political scores. As this happens, international relations are affected both positively and negatively. At the same time, social inequalities within regions and individual countries have become even more

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[1] The six regions are: Africa, Americas, Eastern Mediterranean, Europe, South-East Asia and Western Pacific.

glaring. While some of the citizens are able to cope with the National Lockdown regulations and abide by the health regulations encouraged by WHO and promulgated by national governments, other members of society find it almost impossible to comply. It is important to briskly state upfront that the leadership of Dr. Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus, the Ethiopian national who is the current Director General of WHO has been remarkable. He has been transparent and objective.

Against this backdrop, the paper looks at the politics of the COVID-19 pandemic and discusses how it has affected international relations. The submission is that while this is a health problem, its impact is discernible in the realm of politics. Drawing from desktop research, the paper argues that the virus has exposed social inequalities. One of the findings is that what started as a global health challenge has transcended into politics and shaped international relations. Linked to that is the conclusion that some leaders have resorted to using this pandemic for political expediency. One recommendation is that the political leadership across the globe should desist from using a global pandemic of this magnitude to settle political scores. This is deemed to be both disingenuous and foolhardy with potential long-term negative political consequences. Immediate gains could come back to haunt countries in the long run. It is argued that lessons could be drawn from previous experiences.

Reflections on the history of pandemics from a global perspective

Pandemic outbreaks are not a new phenomenon in the modern world context. There have been a number of them but they all passed and societies recovered. Pandemic outbreaks date back to prehistory – some date back to circa 3000 B.C. What has changed is the magnitude of the damage they caused to societies. A brief look at history uncovers a number of these pandemics. Interestingly, China, which is the source of the coronavirus, has not been spared from previous pandemics. About 5,000 years ago, there was an epidemic which literally wiped out a village in prehistoric north-eastern China, killing people across all ages. The magnitude was so severe that dead bodies were piled inside a house which was set alight. Consequently, the archaeological site which exists to-date was called 'Hamin Mangha' (Samal, 2014).

Again, it was around 430 B.C. soon after the war between Athens and Sparta had begun that an epidemic struck Athens. Conflicting views call it typhoid fever while others call it ebola. It is believed that overcrowding made the situation worse. For the next five years, the country was in disarray. By the time this pandemic subsided, no less than 100, 000 people had died. As Thucydides, the Greek historian later put it, "people in good health were all of a sudden attacked by violent heats in the head, and redness and inflammation in the eyes, the inward parts, such as the throat or tongue" (Thucydides, Translated by Crowley, 1914; Biello, 2006).

In A.D. 165-180, when soldiers returned to the Roman Empire from a lengthy campaign, they brought with them the antonine plague (some call it small pox). An estimated 5 million people are said to have succumbed (Pudsey, 2017). But, despite this tragedy, the Roman Empire recovered. Other pandemics included: Plague of Cyprian (A.D. 250-271), Plague of Justinian (A.D. 541-542), Japanese smallpox epidemic (735-737), Black Death (1346-1353), cocoliztli epidemic (1545-1548), American plagues (16th century), Great plague of London (1665-1666), Russian plague (1770-1772), Great plague of Marseille (1720-1723), Philadelphia yellow fever epidemic (1793), Flu pandemic (1889-1890), Sixth cholera pandemic (1910-1911), American polio epidemic (1916), Spanish flu (1918-1920), Asian flu (1956-1958), Hong Kong flu (1968), AIDS pandemic and epidemic (1981 to-date), SARS (2002-2004), H1N1 Swine flu pandemic (2009-2010), West African ebola epidemic (2014-2016), and Zika virus epidemic (2015 to-date) (Murphy, 2005; Bielo, 2006; Samal, 2014).

During the Plague of Justinian, some sources claim that the damage was so severe to the extent that no one was left to die. The Black Death is said to have killed between 25 and 200 million people in four years. Smallpox was dubbed 'a European disease' and it ravaged the New World since the people there were not used to it. Cholera is acclaimed to be a victory for public health research due to the amount of research that was done on it in order to find a cure (Murphy, 2005; Bielo, 2006). All these examples prove that pandemic outbreak is not a new phenomenon. Secondly, they show vividly that the impact of each pandemic is different. Therefore, the coronavirus fits into this trajectory and should be looked through the same lens even though it has its own characteristic features which might distinguish it from the ones enumerated above.

METHODOLOGY

Given the currency of this topic, the paper adopted and analytic and exploratory desktop study approach. It drew from history in order to understand how pandemics broke out, their impact, and how they were dealt with. Through an analytic approach, the paper looked at how the Coronavirus has affected international relations - both positively and negatively since its outbreak. In an attempt to

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understand the feasibility of complying with government regulations meant to lower the curve of infections, the paper focused on the socio-economic situations of different communities which would determine their compliance level. Although the main focus of the paper is on Africa, other countries were considered for comparison.

RESULTS

The impact of covid-19 on international relations

History reminds us that pandemics have had political connotations which affected international relations in different ways. For example, the Spanish Flu (1918-1920) mentioned above did not start in Spain as the name suggests, but in America. The first case was reported at a military base in Kansas in March 1918 (Vaughan, 1921). For political reasons, this pandemic was credited to Spain so that America could look innocent. The flu broke out during the course of WWI. As such, no country reported its cases in order to protect their political image. Since Spain was not active in the war, it was transparent in its reporting and thus reported many cases. This resulted in the disease being accredited to Spain, thus being named the Spanish Flu (Erkoreka, 2009). Other countries that were associated with this disease were China, Britain and France. Therefore, it should not come as a surprise that the COVID-19 pandemic has affected international relations and invoked the blame game. The game has been played before. There is no doubt that the coronavirus has both sustained and also reconfigured international relations – depending on the country that is being subjected to a cogent analysis. Within this context, as some of the relations have been good and have actually been consolidated by the outbreak of this pandemic, others have worsened in instances where countries had pre-existing political differences. For ease of reference, it would be ideal to discuss these different impacts separately.

Positive impact

It is an irrefutable fact that the coronavirus has left many countries devastated – with some even struggling to respond to it appropriately. But it is equally true that other countries have used this tragedy to wittingly and unwittingly consolidate their international relations. Cuba, for example, has a long history of assisting other countries with medical support. This is what is referred to in the realm of international relations as *medical internationalism* (Hammett, 2007). Drawing from this experience, Cuba has sent out doctors to over 22 countries across the globe to lend a helping hand. One of them is South Africa where more than 200 doctors who specialise in different areas have landed on the South African shores. It should be noted that the plane that was dispatched by the South African Government to bring the Cuban doctors into South Africa was filled with medical supplies which the South African government gave to

Cuba, despite having shortages internally. In that sense, the COVID-19 pandemic has sustained relations between South Africa and Cuba.

Bilateral relations between Cuba and South Africa have deep roots. Following the decision by the African National Congress (ANC) to officially launch the armed struggle by establishing its military wing Umkhonto Wesizwe [Spear of the Nation] on 16 December 1961, the ANC and the Communist/Socialist world came closer. This also included strong relations with Cuba which was one of the proponents of the socialist order. In the 1980s, effective and ineffective sanctions were imposed on apartheid South Africa ((Levy, 1999; Jones and Müller, 1992; Lipton, 1989). Among the countries that the ANC relied on in achieving this goal was Cuba. Before assuming power in a post-apartheid state, the ANC which was still in exile strengthened its relations with the late Cuban President Fidel Castro. Some of the liberation fighters obtained their military training in Cuba. These relations continued until the ANC came to power in 1994. President Castro was one of the dignitaries that graced the historic inauguration of Nelson Mandela as the first President of a liberated South Africa. The warm reception he received on his arrival served as confirmation of these strong ties. During the same year (1994), Cuba opened its Embassy in Pretoria. In the following year (1995), South Africa returned the favour by opening its Embassy in Havana, Cuba. Over the years since then, the post-apartheid South African government has pursued a number of co-operation agreements with Cuba. Among the areas covered by these agreements are trade, health, and sports (Mamoepa, 2001).

Since 1994, successive presidents in South Africa have maintained good ties with Cuba. As mentioned above, one area of cooperation has been in the medical field. In fact, in 1993 two Cuban doctors established a primary health care system in Botshabelo in Bloemfontein, which is part of the Free State Province (Hammett, 2007). This gesture showed early signs that Cuba would forge strong relations with post-apartheid South Africa in the medical sphere. Indeed, in November 1995, "the first official health care co-operation agreement was signed between Cuba and South Africa by the then Health Minister Nkosazana Dlamini-Zuma" (Hammet, 2007: 66). The agreement was renewed and expanded in 1997 and 2001, respectively (Department of Foreign Affairs[2], 2002). Many South African students have since been trained in Cuba as doctors. Previously, Cuban doctors have also come to lend a hand in South Africa. Recently, former President Jacob Zuma travelled to Cuba for medical purposes. This was another demonstration of South Africa's embracing of Cuba's medical internationalism policy. The arrival of over 200 Cuban doctors in South Africa following the outbreak of the COVID-19 demonstrates continued relations between the two

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[2] This is now known as the Department of International Relations and Cooperation (DIRCO).

countries.

While it is true that Cuba and South Africa have strong relations which date many years back and transcend the health sector, Cuba has used its strength in the medical profession to forge and strengthen relations with other countries. Venezuela is one of those countries. Under President Hugo Chavez, Venezuela had strong ties with President Castro's government. The current global pandemic has afforded Cuba the opportunity to take its medical internationalism project to more than twenty other countries across the globe. Among them is Qatar and Italy.

Other countries have also used the COVID-19 to strengthen their diplomatic ties. Following its announcement that it has an effective remedy for COVID-19, Madagascar experienced good reception in other African countries such as Tanzania, Guinea-Bissau and Congo-Brazzaville. South Africa on the other hand offered to assist with the medical testing of this remedy. These are some of the instances where the COVID-19 has created a space for countries to interact more closely. Various countries have been sharing information, material and financial resources as well as expertise. For example, the US Government donated 1000 ventilators to South Africa (Madiba, 2020). These are commendable efforts which improve and sustain international relations. But while it is true that the COVID-19 pandemic has positively affected international relations, there are instances where these relations have been negatively affected. Some examples are discussed below to buttress this assertion.

Negative impact

Some examples show that the COVID-19 has negatively affected international relations. It is, however, important to hurriedly state that some of these relations were poor anyway even before the pandemic outbreak. But what has happened is that they have worsened during the COVID-19. For example, Cuba's good gesture or medical internationalism has not been welcomed by all countries. If anything, it has actually contributed to the further deterioration of relations between Cuba and some of the countries. As South Africa and Qatar celebrated the arrival of Cuban doctors on their shores and gave accolades to the Cuban government (with some medical professionals and politicians disapproving this move), America sang a different tune. President Trump's administration was critical of those countries that accepted Cuban doctors. Mike Pompeo, US Secretary of State, was quoted making a scathing attack on South Africa and Qatar for accepting medical doctors from Cuba. He accused Cuba of "profiting from the pandemic" and appealed to other countries to refuse to accept these Cuban doctors. Pompeo complained that "We have noticed how the regime in Havana has taken advantage of the Covid-19 pandemic to continue its exploitation of

Cuban medical workers" (Africanews, 30 April 2020). While this accusation was coined as a demonstration of solidarity with the Cuban workforce, the reality is that the American government was simply pushing its old political agenda which strives for the ostracisation of Cuba. Since President Trump assumed office after the 2016 American election, he has reversed all the gains made by former President Barak Obama in mending the wall with Cuba. So, his actions are not new.

Another diplomatic concern is the accusation levelled by President Trump's administration against both China and Russia, accusing them of "stepping up cooperation to spread false narratives over the coronavirus pandemic." Lea Gabrielle who is the coordinator of the state department's global engagement centre mandated to track global propaganda claimed that "even before the Covid-19 crisis we assessed a certain level of coordination between Russia and the PRC [People's Republic of China] in the realm of propaganda." She continued to state that "But with this pandemic the cooperation has accelerated rapidly." (The Guardian Weekly, 9 May 2020). This was in response to a propaganda message attributed to the two countries (China and Russia) which claimed that the source of the Coronavirus was a US lab located in China. According to this claim, Washington had resorted to this strategy with the aim of killing China from within.

While this claim could not be authenticated, it was given currency by President Trump's counter claim which he repeated on different media platforms. He claimed that his intelligence sources told him that the virus originated from a Chinese lab. When asked by a journalist on Aljazeera if he had information to this effect, he answered the question in the affirmative. The question was: "Have you seen anything at this point that gives you a high degree of confidence that the Wuhan Institute of Virology was the origin of this virus?" His response was emphatic: "Yes, I have. Yes, I have" (Aljazeera, 4 May 2020). When asked for more detail in this regard, President Trump argued that he was not allowed to divulge such detail.

The truthfulness of these claims is not as significant as their impact on the international relations between Washington on the one hand and Beijing and Kremlin on the other. Given the debilitating nature of the Coronavirus, one would have expected global leaders to put their political differences aside and work together towards finding a cure while keeping the infection rate to a bare minimum. The war of words or the mudslinging is unfortunate and not helpful. Flowing from the above, there were reports indicating that thousands of Americans are signing onto a class action lawsuit against the Chinese government. China was being accused of covering up COVID-19 during its early stages in 2019. Therefore, Beijing was expected to pay out billions of dollars to compensate Americans for things such as personal injuries, wrongful deaths, property damage and many other things linked to the COVID-19 pandemic.

What is concerning is that other countries also individually and collectively contemplated suing China large amounts of money in damages. The Jackson Society [the Conservative British Think-tank] reported that G7 countries could sue Chine no less than 3.2 trillion pounds ($6.3 trillion) in damages. Australia alone was said to be planning a $58 billion claim. The German Tabloid Bild Newspaper published what it called "an invoice" for China. Contained therein was a figure of 24 billion euros ($41 billion) said to be for the loss of tourism revenue in March and April 2020 alone. The bill for small business stood at 50 billion euros ($86 billion). In the event that Germany's GDP fell by 4.2 per cent in 2020 (which is what projections said), China would be expected to compensate Germany by giving the country no less than 149 billion euros ($255 billion) (Bild Newspaper, 20 April 2020). An Open Letter addressed to President Xi Jinping of China read thus:

Your Government and your scientists had to know long ago that corona [virus] is highly infectious, but you left the world in the dark about it.
Your top experts didn't respond when Western researchers asked to know what was going on in Wuhan (Bild Newspaper, 20 April 2020).

Such developments did not augur well for diplomatic ties. While it is a known fact that there is a power struggle between America, China and Russia, one would not have expected leaders to use a deadly pandemic like COVID-19 to fight their battles for political expediency. There was another timed bomb which was set by a study carried out by University College London (UCL). According to this study, Black, Asian and Ethnic minority groups are more likely to die from COVID-19 compared to their white counterparts (Time, 6 May 2020). The identification of Africans, Bangladeshis and Black Caribbeans as the most susceptible groups to the pandemic could affect Britain's international relations. In fact, this study, together with the reported high numbers of deaths among African-Americans in the US compared to their white counterparts could trigger a different debate. For example, are these groups really susceptible to the COVID-19 or is it their socio-economic situations that render them vulnerable to the virus? If the latter is the case, what is the British government (and the US government) doing to address this social inequality? These are some of the questions that bear resonance to the discussion below with regard to socio-economic inequalities in Africa.

DISCUSSION

COVID-19 and the legacy of colonialism and apartheid in Africa

Colonialism and apartheid left an indelible mark on the African continent. The outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic and its impact on the African continent has invoked the assertion made by Guyana born historian Walter Rodney in his book *How Europe underdeveloped Africa* (1973). The thrust of Rodney's argument was encapsulated in the title of his book. He argued that were it not Europe's calculated actions to plunder the African continent, Africa would not have been impoverished as is the case today. According to this trajectory, in the South African context, had it not been for the apartheid regime, the country would have progressed in a different path with citizens showing upward social mobility based on their abilities, not the colour of their skin as things turned out to be. Pillay (2000: 17) avers that the first democratic government in South Africa inherited a nation which was characterized by high levels of poverty which was reflected *inter alia* in its racial dimension.

Decades after the demise of colonialism and apartheid, their impact is still conspicuous in all spheres of life. Such negative impact presents itself in different forms discussed below, albeit in a tantalising manner. What is worth noting is that the COVID-19 pandemic has made the impact of colonialism and apartheid even more glaring to the extent that the political leadership is embarrassed to see evident socio-economic inequalities.

One such impact is spatial arrangement. Coupled with that is social inequality. As the pandemic makes its inroads into the African continent, these two factors expose the bifurcation of African states into the binary of what Mamdani (1996; 2018) calls "citizen and subject." Under colonialism and apartheid, whites lived an affluent lifestyle while their black counterparts languished in poverty, squalor and deprivation. Those in the middle class (both black and white) could afford basic life necessities at different levels. On the contrary, those who were at the bottom of the social hierarchy were left to fend for themselves. Government-initiated social *classification* and social *stratification* (Mngomezulu, 2010) ensured that social inequalities were not only sustained but that they were also entrenched and deeply ingrained in people's minds. Through the 'divide and rule' strategy, some educated blacks were exempted and allowed to do certain things or own certain items not allowed to black people. Africans called this group *amazemtiti* [the exempted ones].

The advent of democracy brought with it a glimmer of hope that things would change for the better. In a way, this dream was partly realised as race dwindled although it did not totally disappear. However, class ensured that social inequality remained a reality. The binaries of urban/rural, rich/poor, educated/uneducated, men/women, young/old kept societies polarised. To this day, these inequalities remain (Shimeles and Nabassaga, 2017; Akadiri and Akadiri, 2018; Woolard, 2002). Commenting about this theme, Woolard, 2002:1) noted that "The extreme inequality evident in South Africa means that one sees destitution, hunger and overcrowding

side-by-side with affluence." This situation was true then as it is true now. Importantly, it has replicated itself across the African continent, albeit in different scale.

With the outbreak of COVID-19, African governments have been exposed. Some of the regulations they impose on society in line with the dictates and recommendations of the WHO are impractical on the ground. For example, citizens are expected to wash their hands regularly with soap and running water. Alternatively, they are urged to use hand sanitizers. This makes sense from a medical point of view. However, it poses a serious challenge to the 'African poor', to borrow John Iliffe's title (Iliffe, 1987). This challenge presents itself in many ways.

Firstly, not all Africans have access to running water. They struggle even to get their drinking and cooking water. Some have to travel for many kilometres to fetch water, which they share with their animals. Given this distance, they have to use water sparingly so that it lasts them a bit longer. If they were to wash hands regularly without having to pour water into a basin or dish, this would mean that they would have to walk to and fro the rivers several times than they used to do before this pandemic outbreak.

Secondly, soap might look like a basic commodity. Those who think so could be pardoned because that is what is supposed to happen under normal circumstances. However, the reality is that this is not actually the case with many communities. The alternative (the sanitizer) is even more difficult to get since one needs money to buy it. Related to that is the government's regulation that everyone should cover their mouth and nose with a mask. This poses yet another challenge. On average, a mask costs anything between R10 and R25, depending on the quality of the mask and the location where it is sold. Truth be told, even if a mask were to cost R3, not everyone would afford it. Being mindful of this reality, some governments (including South Africa) told their citizens that if they cannot afford a mask they can use anything that would serve the same purpose.

This is a noble gesture. But its downside is that it exposes the gap between the 'haves' and the 'have nots'. While some citizens can afford a scarf or a handkerchief, others cannot. The moment they use a jersey or any other item which draws the eyes of the onlookers, their dignity is adversely affected and yet they are expected to comply with government regulations. This is a sad reality which poor communities have to contend and wrestle with. For someone who has never experienced this life, it is easy to accuse these communities of defiance.

Thirdly, citizens are urged to maintain social distancing. This, too, makes sense from a medial point of view. The space of one-and-a-half to two metres is to ensure that people do not get too close to one another so that if one is already infected s/he cannot infect others – including family members. But for someone who lives in Kibera slum in Nairobi, Kenya with an estimated population of

700, 000 or Khayelitsha in Cape Town, South Africa with a population of around 400, 000, this regulation is impossible to comply with. The shacks are too close to one another. Inside each shack, there is no space to create social distance. In the final analysis, the residents of these slums fail to comply, not because they are defiant, but because their social situation makes it impossible for them to do so. Even townships struggle to abide by these regulations. Unlike suburbs which have big spaces and big houses, the four-room township houses or the Reconstruction and Development Project (RDP) houses make it difficult to comply with these government regulations (Figures 1 and 2).

Surely, these African slums have lesser populations compared to others elsewhere in the world. For example, the Indian slum, Dharavi in Mumbai has an estimated population of 1,000,000. Neza slum in Mexico boasts of an estimated population of 1,200,000. While all these figures are higher than those recorded in Africa, they do not come anywhere close to the population of Orangi Town in Karachi, Pakistan, which is estimated at 2,400,000 (Mahabir et al., 2016).

The examples cited above lead to the conclusion that slums transcend the geographical divide. But local situations might not be exactly the same to what obtains elsewhere. There could be other compounding factors such as the country's GDP, government efficiency, etc. Therefore, even if situations were similar, the contexts might differ. In any case, the focus of this section is on Africa, which means that only African cases are used to expound the points made. Cross-referencing could be useful for future studies. But for now, this paper restricts itself to the African context in terms of illuminating certain points.

Fourthly, those who have been infected by the coronavirus are urged to self-isolate. This point is related to the one above. In a home which has several bedrooms and/or a couple of houses within the yard or compound, this is possible. But for someone who lives in a one-room house with five or six other family members or more, the issue of self-isolation does not apply. To be fair, some African governments have offered to take those who need isolation and keep them somewhere safe (such as in public hospitals, hotels, lodges or tents). This option might work for some but not all – depending on one's family situation and whether or not such a person has someone who would look after his or her property and children while in isolation.

Fifthly, citizens are encouraged to eat healthy food and wear warm clothes, especially in winter. This is because scientists say that the virus is more active in cold weather. At a glance, this is good advice. But for those who live below the poverty line, neither healthy food nor warm clothes can be accessed easily (if at all). In the process, the COVID-19 virus continues to expose social inequalities on the continent.

There are also secondary factors that have a negative

Figure 1. Kibera slum in Nairobi, Kenya.
Source: Google photos

Figure 2. Khayelitsh slum in Cape Town, South Africa.
Source: Google photos

impact on the African poor more than they do on those who are well-off. Access to shops poses a challenge of its own. This affects the poor in more than one ways. Firstly, it means that they cannot go and stand outside the shops to beg as they usually do since the lockdown regulations would not allow them to do so – especially without putting their masks on. Secondly, those who normally buy extra items to share with their poor neighbours find it hard to do so under the lockdown period. Being mindful of the difficulty in accessing shops,

most of them tend to buy what would be sufficient for their families for a certain period of time so that they do not have to go back to the shops regularly. In the process, the poor bear the brunt.

Another factor is that some of the people who have employment do not work during the lockdown period. This means that they also struggle to survive. As such, they cannot afford to help their needy neighbours who normally rely on them for their survival. Linked to that is the opportunity for the poor to get piece jobs. Firstly, with their 'employers' not working during the lockdown period, they cannot get piece jobs from them, either because they are at home and can do those piece jobs for themselves, or simply because they do not have the money to pay their poor 'employees'. Even those who are currently working either because they are considered essential workers or have their places of work allowed to operate, they cannot welcome part-time employees. The social distance regulation prohibits people from moving up and down or outsiders coming in and out of other people's homes. Indirectly, the African poor are disadvantaged as they cannot find employment which allows them to put bread on the table.

It is a known fact that not all unemployed Africans live by begging. A number of them fend for themselves. There are people who collect used materials for recycling and sell them to recycling companies or individuals so that they could make some money. Under the lockdown regulations, such businesses close down and thus leave the African poor stranded. Meanwhile, those who are on the upper class are not affected by this as they do not engage in this business anyway even if there is no national lockdown. This, yet again, exposes social inequalities.

All of these factors demonstrate that while it is true that the COVID-19 pandemic affects everyone, there is enough evidence to confirm that the African poor are the worst affected. Moreover, within each African country, people are affected differently depending on their socio-economic situation. It should be noted that African regions and countries are also affected differently. As mentioned earlier, this is due to the fact that these countries differ in terms of the general infrastructure, GDP, resources, medical supplies and the entire health system. Within individual countries, the internal differences highlighted above lead to individuals being affected differently. For example, despite its better infrastructure and better resources and health system, when considering global trends, South Africa regrettably emerges as the most unequal society (Gelb, 2003; Van der Berg, 2011; Orthofer, 2016; Statistics South Africa, 2017; Mering et al., 2018). Not surprisingly, COVID-19 has exposed these social inequalities for all to see.

While it is true that apartheid is to blame for the current situation in South Africa, it is equally true that the post-apartheid government could have reduced this gap drastically had it not been derailed by other factors.

These factors include but are not limited to: corruption, nepotism, inefficiency, ineptitude, party politics and overall leadership deficit (Mngomezulu, 2018). These are some of the impediments towards changing the current status quo.

The way forward

The COVID-19 pandemic is a reality the world has to contend with. Whether the virus is man-made or came on its own is immaterial. The fact remains that the entire globe has been affected by it. We need to join hands in dealing with the pandemic and in finding its cure. In so doing, we could derive inspiration from the Tanzanian proverb which says that 'two ants never fail to pull a grasshopper'. But if we pull towards different directions as countries like America, China, Russia and others are doing, no one will win. Meanwhile, the virus will continue to destroy the globe.

The first thing that needs to happen is for the political leadership across the globe to show political sanity. Playing cheap politics or resorting to populism in order to score quick political points would be detrimental to the political image of the leaders concerned and the globe. What is needed is astute leadership, empathy, a macro approach to politics and preparedness to serve wider audiences. So, pre-existing political feuds and confrontations should be put aside. Importantly, flexing a financial and/or political muscle should be discouraged. The decision by President Trump to withhold financial support to WHO epitomises political parochialism. Such tendencies might win fame in the short-term but have long-term disastrous consequences. It is through such actions that international relations could be safeguarded, improved and sustained even beyond this pandemic.

COVID-19 has exposed glaring socio-economic. While this is a tragedy, we can learn from it. The onus is on national governments to up their game in bridging the gap between the rich and the poor. As this paper has demonstrated, societies are not affected in the same manner by the pandemic. This is because they occupy different levels in the social hierarchy. In the African context, colonialism and apartheid are mainly to blame for the current situation. But post-colonial and post-apartheid administrations should also shoulder the blame. They could have reduced this inequality if they did not invest their energy in doing things that derailed the promises made during the liberation struggle. Colonialism and apartheid could not be used as justification for social ills like corruption, inefficiency, party politics, nepotism, and leadership deficit.

Members of the society need to join together as one. Where the political leadership derails, the onus is on the electorate to rise up and put the train back on its line. When the French philosopher Michel Foucault talked about governmentality, he meant that people agree to be

governed (Li, 2007; Sokhi-Bulley, 2014). This is true of representative democracy. But the same electorate should decide how they should be governed. If the leaders they elected fail to deliver, they should be recalled. This is one of the dictates of democratic practice. In a nutshell, COVID-19 should be used as a springboard to initiate change that would lead to a better world. As demonstrated above, pandemics have happened before. We should learn from the lessons they bequeathed to us as a human race. COVID-19 has given the world a rare opportunity to do self-introspection and to prepare for similar situations in future. If we fail to learn from this tragedy, future generations will spit on our graves for having failed them. We can still make the best out of the worst situation created by the coronavirus. Each one of us should be the agent of change, then victory is certain.

Conclusion

The COVID-19 pandemic has reconfigured the world immensely. The issues ventilated in this paper have demonstrated its devastating impact. Apart from the tragic loss of life globally, the disease has also negatively affected regional and national economies. International relations have also not been spared. While it is true that the COVID-19 has enabled certain countries to strengthen their diplomatic ties, other countries have used this tragedy to bolster their political image and further worsened the already weak international relations. Actions taken by America have demonstrated inconsiderate leadership on the side of President Trump. Not only did he announce that he will stop financing the WHO, he also sustained the power struggle between Washington and Beijing while also adding Russia and Cuba to the list.

It cannot be repudiated that the coronavirus has caused devastation, but it has also provided governments the opportunity to do self-introspection. As discussed above, it is not the first time that the world has faced a pandemic. There have been others before but the world resurrected. This resurgence is expected even this time around. What is needed is for governments to draw lessons from this tragedy and improve their systems going forward. The social inequality that has been highlighted in this paper means that a lot needs to be done in order to narrow the gap between the affluent and the down-trodden. Under the democratic ethos, freedom is for all, not for some. In the same vein, the fruits of freedom should be enjoyed by all, not a selected few.

It is a shame that some communities are unable to obey government regulations not because they are defiant but due to their socio-economic situation. Political leaders should be ashamed of themselves for not delivering on their promises. Lastly, this pandemic has shown us that we need one another. If we are to win the war against COVID-19, we need to pull together as one.

This includes international and regional institutions, countries or national governments as well as their people. The fact that there have been pandemics before means that we could use them as a source of reference. Our resurgence will depend on how far we are prepared to find a point of convergence among ourselves as opposed to exposing our divergence.

CONFLICT OF INTERESTS

The authors have not declared any conflict of interests.

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Review

Transformations in Nigeria's foreign policy: From Balewa to Obasanjo

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This article re-examines and reassesses Nigeria's foreign policy from 1960 to 1979. From independence in 1960, all the administrations in Nigeria had similar foreign policy objectives until 1975 when General Murtala Mohammed became the Head of State. General Mohammed was killed in a failed military coup d'état and General Olusegun Obasanjo, his deputy, became the head of state; hence, the usage of Mohammed-Obasanjo administration. The administration of Mohammed and Obasanjo witnessed the first time that Nigerian broke away from her traditional-moderate way of pursuing foreign policy objectives to a new style with emphasis on action, rather rhetoric. The aim of this review article was to re-examine and reassess the transformations in Nigeria's foreign policy and diplomacy during the administration of Mohammed and Obasanjo. This review article discovers that Nigeria's foreign policy truly transformed from reactionary, conservative, static, and lacklustre nature to inspiring, progressive, radical, and dynamic during the administration of Generals Murtala Mohammed and Olusegun Obasanjo. The article concluded that the Mohammed-Obasanjo's foreign policy was the best in Nigeria from independence in 1960 to 1979 when Obasanjo handed power to President Shehu Shagari.

Key words: Nigeria, foreign policy, diplomacy, international relations, security.

INTRODUCTION

According to Ibrahim and Kabir (2018), 'Nigeria's external relations with other African nations since independence in 1960 seem to reveal a consistent pattern'. This statement is true except for Mohammed-Obasanjo's administration from 1975-1979. This review article is necessitated by the need for the current foreign policy framers of Nigeria to take a lesson from the approach and success of the Mohammed-Obasanjo administration in implementation of the country's foreign policy objectives and the framing of what should be the national interest of the country. The

article re-examines the changes, dynamism, merits, and weaknesses of Mohammed-Obasanjo in the realm of foreign policy and their impact on Nigeria and Africa in general. The article also re-investigates the difficulties encountered by many in understanding the foreign policy of Mohammed and Obasanjo administration. The article will also serve as an important informant as well as enlightening material for those with interest in foreign policy and diplomacy. The arguments here are structured under domestic and foreign factors. The two factors have

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different impact on the foreign policy of Nigeria during this period. The framework of this article emphasizes on the dynamism, focus, changes, and failures of Mohammed–Obasanjo administration in foreign policy and diplomacy. The article addresses the actions of the Mohammed and Obasanjo on decolonization in Africa especially Angola, Zimbabwe, and South Africa. It examines the administration and its relations with international organizations such as the Organization of African Unity (OAU), Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC), Commonwealth Organization, United Nations Organization (UNO), and scrutinises the Nigeria and the Arab–Israeli conflict. Finally, this work assesses Nigeria's relations with the Western and Eastern blocs in terms of economic and military collaborations.

METHODOLOGY AND DATA COLLECTION

The descriptive analysis was the methodology used in writing this article. The study re-examines and reassesses the books and articles of experts and decision makers in Nigeria's foreign policy such as Bolaji Akinyemi, Olajide Aluko, Ibrahim Gambari, Joseph Garba, George Obiozor, Alaba Ogunsanwo, G.A. Olusanya, R.A. Akindele, Akinjide Osuntokun, Mahmud Tukur, Joseph Wayas, and many others. The opinions and expertise of these players and experts were analysed and contextualised in relation to the success of the Mohammed-Obasanjo administration in the realm of foreign policy and diplomacy. Contemporary opinions of other experts on Nigeria's foreign policy were also utilised to further re-establish the success, progress and dynamism introduced into the country's foreign policy between 1975 and 1979. Newspaper articles and editorial opinions were also employed to further support the arguments.

REVIEW OF NIGERIA'S FOREIGN POLICY 1960 - 1975

Before independence on 1 October 1960, Britain, as Nigeria's colonising power, represented its interest in foreign and defence matters (Ogunsanwo, 1985). Even after independence, Britain continued to influence the country's foreign policy because of the colonial influence on the new ruling elites who inherited Nigeria's foreign policy from Britain. This is the reason why there were no immediate visible changes in Nigeria's external relations after independence (Ogunsanwo, 1985). After independence, the Prime Minister, Sir Abubakar Tafawa Balewa, presented some cardinal points to represent the principles and objectives of Nigeria's foreign policy with Africa as its centrepiece (Gray, 1965; Tukur, 1965). These principles and objectives mentioned above are still relevant today, and most Nigerian leaders have pursued them one way or the other with variations only in style of

leadership and implementation.

Under Balewa, Nigeria accepted and honoured all the treaties and agreements signed by Britain; this further increased the British influence on the country's foreign policy. Although Balewa declared Nigerian a non-aligned nation, like most of its members, he never respected the principle behind it because it was clear that he was pro-West, certainly because Nigeria was economically tied to Britain and the Western Bloc. When Nikita Khrushchev, in 1960, the then Prime Minister of Soviet Union demanded that Nigerian should permit them to establish its embassy in Lagos, Balewa replied that 'Application for diplomatic exchange would be considered in order of receipts and would be judged on their merits.'However, the same request was immediately granted to the United States of America (Gray, 1965).

Balewa was anti-communist who turned down scholarship awards to Nigerians from the Soviet bloc and delayed opening of diplomatic relations with them. Balewa invited apartheid, South Africa, to Nigeria's independence celebrations. He was an advocate of a gradual approach to Africa's decolonization. He also rejected the Organization of African Unity's (OAU) plan to break diplomatic ties with Britain because of Rhodesia's (Zimbabwe) Unilateral Declaration of Independence (UDI). Only Balewa also supported the unpopular Moise Tshombe during the Congo crisis (Tukur, 1965).

Balewa's administration believed that the West and Britain were the best friends of Nigeria. This is seen in his independence speech: 'We are grateful to the British officers whom we have known first as masters and then as leaders and finally as partners but always as friends' (Tukur, 1965, 24). Balewa's foreign policy was weak, inconsistent, and contradictory. His government was overthrown in the first military coup on 15 January 1966 (Olusanya and Akindele, 1986).

Major General Thomas Aguiyi Ironsi became the head of state after the assassination and overthrow of Balewa following the failure of Major Chukwuma Nzeogwu's bid to take power with his co-plotters. Ironsi was killed in a coup d'état on the 29 July 1966, leading to the emergence of Lieutenant Colonel Yakubu Gowon as the new Head of State (Ogunsanwo, 1985). Foreign policy under Gowon was quite different from that of Balewa, but Gowon still maintained some of the essential characteristics of the Balewa government. For example, Gowon maintained a moderate view towards foreign policy but strongly believed in 'Personal diplomacy', which is personal involvement or intervention in resolving diplomatic issues. His administration moved closer to the Western Bloc and Britain (Olusanya and Akindele, 1986). The civil war of 1967 – 1970 brought Nigeria close to the Communist bloc because Britain and the USA refused to supply Nigeria with arms to fight the Biafran rebels, which the USSR did (Ogunsanwo, 1985).

Gowon also immediately normalized relations with Gabon, Tanzania, Zambia, Côte d'Ivoire, and France in

1971 despite the recognition and support they gave to Biafra during the civil war. With the support of President Gnassingbe Eyadema of Togo, Gowon rallied round other West African countries to form the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) in 1975 (Memos of Federal Ministry of External Affairs, 1991).

The leadership role Gowon played at the first Lome Convention, which was a precursor to ECOWAS, was quite commendable. However, Gowon who ruled Nigeria for more than nine years had the opportunity more than any other Nigeria ruler before him to make the foreign policy dynamic, because of the enormous resources and goodwill at his disposal (Akinyemi, 1980).

Even though Nigeria received fighter jets and other weapons from the Communist bloc, the relations did not go beyond that because, after the war, Nigeria reverted to her old friends, that is, Britain and the West (Akinyemi, 1980). Gowon performed better than Balewa in foreign policy. He increased aid to the freedom fighters like South West Africa People Organisation (SWAPO) in Namibia, African National Congress (ANC) and Pan African Congress (PAC) in South Africa and others in Zimbabwe and Angola. His commitment to anti-apartheid, decolonization, ECOWAS and OAU is commendable (Akinyemi, 1980).

At the eight summits of the OAU in Kampala, Uganda, in 1975, Gowon suggested the formation of the African Task Force to handle Military problems in Africa. He warned that: 'Let it be known to friends and foes that the historical tide is irreversible. From now on, we can only move forward. Those countries still under control of foreign powers must be liberated' (The Sunday Guardian, 2 October, 1988). Unfortunately for Gowon, he did not have the chance to prove his words because he was overthrown in a coup d'état before the end of the summit. General Murtala Mohammed became the new head of state on 29 July 1975 (Aluko, 1977).

The advent of the Murtala - Obasanjo regime

The administration of Mohammed witnessed a progressive change in Nigeria's foreign policy implementation. The regime put more emphasis on Africa as the centrepiece of its foreign policy than any other government. Chukwuemeka Ojieh argues that:

Nigerian regimes have always professed an Africa cantered foreign policy. This was mostly demonstrated during the Murtala/Obasanjo military regime 1975 to 1979, manifesting largely, in financial and material supports for liberation struggles in Africa. Studies have shown that the huge wealth which the oil boom of the 1970s and 80s in particular provided was leveraged by regimes to make great foreign policy strides because oil had become a weapon in Nigeria's diplomatic arsenal (Ojieh, 2018).

Mohammed pursued a focused and dynamic foreign policy. Unfortunately for Mohammed, he did not live long to execute his plans entirely. He was killed in a failed coup-d'état on 13 February 1976 (Akinyemi, 1980). General Olusegun Obasanjo, Mohammed's deputy, succeeded him and continued with the administration's policies. The most important achievement of this administration was decolonization in Africa. The efforts of the administration in decolonization are commendable and have never been matched by any other regime before and after it (Obiozor, 1985). It is argued that 'No nation can have true guide as to what it must do and what it needs to do in foreign policy without accepting its national interest as guide' (Obi, 2019). The regime contributed immeasurably to the independence of Angola, Zimbabwe, and the struggle against apartheid South Africa. It supported ANC, PAC, and SWAPO in Namibia (Akinyemi, 1980). The administration for the first time in Nigeria's diplomatic history took unilateral decisions without support from most African states (Garba, 1987).

In 1976 the administration directed the Nigerian Institute of International Affairs (NIIA) to develop a new guideline for foreign policy. A committee was also set up known as Adedeji's committee, chaired by Dr Adebayo Adedeji the then federal commissioner for Economic Development. The committee was setup to provide a complete overhaul of Nigerian foreign policy system, substance, and apparatus (Anglin, 1964). The final report submitted in May 1976, gave the following as the country's permanent interests:

1. The defence of our sovereignty, independence, and territorial Integrity.
2. Creating of the necessary political and economic conditions in Africa and in the rest of the world, which will facilitate the defence of the independence and territorial integrity of all African countries, while at the same time fostering natural self-reliance and rapid economic development.
3. Promotion of equality and self-reliance in Africa and the rest of the world.
4. The promotion and defence of social justice and respect for human dignity especially the dignity of Black man.
5. The defence and promotion of world peace 9. The Murtala - Obasanjo regime accepted and followed recommendation of the Adedeji's committee in the execution of their foreign policy (Akinyemi, 1980).

DECOLONISATION IN AFRICA AND LIBERATIONS MOVEMENT

This section examines the policies of Nigeria with regard to decolonization and liberations movements in Angola, Zimbabwe, and South Africa. One of the most important achievements of the Mohammed-Obasanjo's regime's

foreign policy was in decolonialisation in Africa. The efforts of the regime on decolonialisation in the African Continent are quite commendable. It has never been marched by any other government up till today in Nigeria. The regime for the first time in the history of Nigeria's external relations changed its policy and took decisions on its own without support from majority of the African countries.

Angola

The first foreign policy decision to be taken by Nigeria was on Angola. Angola for a long time was a colonial territory of the Portuguese. The Portuguese were very much reluctant to give the colonies under them independence, one of them was Angola. But everything changed in Portugal in 1975, when the Military overthrew the civilians and took overpower, the new military rulers also did not hesitate to declare all the colonies under Portugal as independence (Akinyemi, 1980). Before independence there were three main liberation groups fighting for the independence of Angola. These three groups were the Popular Movement for the Liberation of Angola (MPLA), with its headquarters in Luanda under the leadership of Augustinho Neto. The other two were the National Front for the Liberation of Angola (FLNA) led by Holden Roberto, with its headquarters in Huambo. The third group is the National Union for the Total Independence of Angola (UNITA) led by Jonas Savimbi, with its headquarters also in Huambo (Akinyemi, 1980). The MPLA was supported mainly by the communist bloc and Soviet Union in particular. But the UNITA was supported by the United State of America. South Africa was the main backer of FLNA (Garba, 1979: xviii). Shortly before independence, an area called Cabinda seceded from Angola; this was led by the Cabinda Enclave liberation front (FLEC) rebels. Nigeria condemned the secession as rebellious (Garba, 1987).

During the time of Gowon Nigeria had assisted the liberation movements together. This was in continuity with the O.A.U resolution of finding and establishing National government of unity by the liberation movements. This government of National Unity was proposed by the OAU conciliation commission on Angola. In the report of the commission it was suggested that "A government of national unity can be immediately formed by the liberation movement for the propose of leading Angola into independence" (Garba, 1987). It is important to note that despite the fact that the OAU agreed on the governments of National Unity by the three groups, some African countries were backing one group or the other, for example, Zaire was barking UNITA, Senegal and Zambia were backing FLNA (Garba, 1987).

In view of all these developments in Angola, as well as the activities of the countries in OAU, Nigeria decided to recognize the MPLA government of Augustinho Neto on

the 25 November 1975 as the legitimate government of Angola. To prove the genuineness of the support by the Nigerian government, the new Luanda government was given about 14 million dollars as aid. It is important to know that recognition of MPLA by Nigerian is partly because only the MPLA truly represented the true aspiration and interest of African people. Moreover, it was also because the other two freedom fighters were supported mainly by the western capitalist bloc led by the United States of America and South Africa which they did to prevent the coming of a radical and socialist government in Angola. In fact, the immediate reason for Nigeria's declaration and recognition of MPLA was the South African support for the puppet Democratic People's Republic of Huambo, formed by FLNA. It was also due to a plan of military action by FLNA and UNITA against the MPLA government in Luanda that Nigeria supported Neto and his party (Garba, 1987).

This was a surprise to many African countries who believe that Nigeria would support either UNITA or FLNA. But the recognition of MPLA government by Nigeria does not mean total recognition for the new government by other Africa States. This was because some countries were still supporting UNITA and FLNA. The matter was taken to the OAU Extra Ordinary summit in Addis Ababa 13th of January 1976, where Nigeria led by General Murtala Mohammed and Colonel Joseph Garba, the then External Affairs Commissioner, declared again her support for the MPLA (Garba, 1987). Nigeria's delegation also tried, through lobbying and persuasion to pull other countries to the support of MPLA. But the final voting ended twenty/twenty-two (20-22) against MPLA. This prevented the admission of Angola that day and more over it almost led to the split of OAU. After that Submit, the Nigerian government continued to lobby for the support of the MPLA. Until when most African countries supported MPLA, which eventually led to its admission into OAU the same year (Akinyemi, 1980).

Even though Angola, with the effort of Nigeria was admitted into OAU, some countries like Zaire and Senegal refused to recognize the MPLA government. Instead they continued to support the UNITA and FLNA financially and militarily against the Angolan people. Because of this Nigeria had to scout around, lobby and persuade other countries to normalize relation with Angola. But with all the troubles Nigeria encountered because of supporting the MPLA, such as condemning the letter written by President Gerald Ford of USA to African countries, urging them not to recognize the MPLA government, which caused a setback in the relations between Nigerian and USA, Angola did not show gratitude (Akinyemi, 1980).Even after independence when Augustinho Neto was thanking those countries that helped Angola to independence, Nigeria was not mentioned. Even when Neto was paying official visited to countries that helped Angola to archive independence, Nigeria was among the last to be visited. Angola was

very ungrateful to Nigeria after her independence. Angola signed trade and bilateral agreements with other countries but ignored Nigeria. Garba summed it up when he says, 'In the bilateral terms which after all, is the core of relations between states, we gave and gave to Angola, and in return we got nothing" (Garba, 1979).

But even though Nigerian did not gain anything bilaterally from Angola, the issue of its independence was a great occasion for the country. This is because the decision to recognize the MPLA for the first-time portrayed Nigeria as a country pursuing decisive, good, and radical foreign policy without control or influence from any of the two warring ideological blocks. The Angolan issue raised the tempo and respect Nigeria had abroad and according to Sunday Guardian 'Showed how dynamic Nigeria's foreign policy could be if properly executed' (Sunday Guardian 2 October, 1988). It was the support given to the MPLA that had many people to regard General Mohammed as a communist. Even Colonel Bukar Sukar Dimka accused Mohammed of being a communist and gave this reason as responsible for their attempt to ever throw him. According to Dimka 'The government was going communist and we intended to re-establish the policy of non-alignment' (Ojiako, 1979). However, the first time in the history of Nigerian foreign policy, the country disagreed with the western bloc led by USA. This even led to verbal exchange between the two countries. Henry Kessinger the then American Secretary of State was disallowed from entering Nigeria in 1975. In fact, this was a great time for Nigeria and its foreign policy because of its resolve to pursue its interest without dictation from the western bloc (Sunday Guardian 2 October, 1988).

It was also the first time, Nigeria and Soviet Union took side on a major foreign policy issue. Femi Aribisala described Nigeria's action as 'An act which became one of the most gratifying achievements in the history of Nigeria's diplomacy (African Concord, 14 June, 1988). Apart from this, Mohammed also closed the Foreign Broadcasting Information Service of America (F.B.I.S.) in Nigeria because of its anti-government activities and anti-Angolan broadcasts. Nigeria's action was also described as 'Singularly the most daring and responsible foreign policy decision taken by the Nigerian government since independence' (Sunday Times Lagos, 1 February 1976). Shortly after the Angolan issue, General Mohammed was assassinated in an abortive coup d'état led by Colonel Dimka of the Nigerian Army Training Corps, on the 13 February 1976. General Obasanjo the deputy of Mohammed immediately became the head of state. The first major foreign policy issue to be handled by Obasanjo was the Rhodesian problem or independence. It is important to note that with the coming of Obasanjo, there was no major change in the foreign policy of the country. This is because many Nigerians including Obasanjo himself claimed his government is a continuation of that of Mohammed.

Zimbabwe (Rhodesia)

Obasanjo therefore continued with the dynamic and action oriented foreign policy started by Mohammed. The Rhodesian crisis started shortly after Obasanjo settled down as the new head of state. Rhodesia for many years had been under the control of the British. But surprisingly in 1961, Ian Smith one of the white settlers in the territory, with the support of other whites declared Rhodesian independent under the so-called Unilateral Declaration of independence (UDI). Many African countries condemned the UDI, more over the Blacks in Rhodesia did not see the UDI as independence but as continuation of white rule. This made the freedom fighters intensified their struggle (Ajala, 1986).

In 1961, there was leadership struggle in the main liberation movement Zimbabwean African People Union (ZAPU). Some of the members led by Ndabiningi Sithole and Robert Mugabe were not satisfied with the way Joshua Nkomo was handling the affairs of the ZAPU. So Sithole and Mugabe formed the Zimbabwean African National Union (ZANU) with Sithole as the leader. Both ZAPU and ZANU continued to fight the white regime in Rhodesia up to 1970s. It was in 1978 that the freedom fighters also intensified their struggle for independence. And that was where Nigeria and OAU in general became involved in the issues (Ajala, 1986).

The western bloc wanted to install a puppet government in Zimbabwe. So, they decided to bring about an internal settlement and agreement between Abel Muzorewa and Ian Smith. This government made Muzorewa the puppet prime minister. But the proposal was opposed by Nigerian officials that suggested the idea of the patriotic front, which emphasized on joint effort by the ZAPU and ZANU to gain independence for their country. But unfortunately, the joint effort failed because they could not agree on who to become the prime minister. In April 1979, there was an election and Muzorewa won the election. Margret Thatcher, the prime minister of Britain, and the western block declared it 'free and fair' (Ajala, 1986). Nigeria condemned the election. General Obasanjo believed that it was stage-managed by the British and western bloc to install Muzorewa as prime minister. This made Obasanjo to reject all British tenders for the Apapa port project, declaring that 'until the British government clarify its stands on Rhodesia, no proposal from any British Company would be considered' (Ajala, 1986).

Obasanjo went ahead to nationalise the British Petroleum (BP) and changed the name to African Petroleum (A.P.). Barclays Bank and Standard Banks were also nationalised, and their names changed to Union and First Bank, respectively. This was all in bid to show the British and the western world, that Nigeria would not accept the puppet Muzorewa's government in Zimbabwe (Ajala, 1986). Nigeria also threatens to use oil weapon against the American government if it recognized

the Muzorewa's government. Nigeria also promised to continue the nationalization of British companies until Thatcher stopped recognizing the Muzorewa's government at the Lusaka Commonwealth Summit held in August 1979. This led to the Lancaster House Constitutional Conference in 1979, which was to draw up a new constitution for Zimbabwe (Ajala, 1986). Nigeria continued to support both ZAPU and ZANU, because Nigeria wanted a one man, one vote, free and fair election in Zimbabwe. The Lancaster House Conference drew up a constitution and fixed up a date for the independence of Zimbabwe. After the election, ZANU worn it and Zimbabwe became independence on 18 April 1980, with Robert Mugabe as the prime Minister (Ajala, 1986). The issue of Zimbabwe also marked another important occasion or episode for the portrayal of the dynamism and action oriented foreign policy of the Mohammed-Obasanjo regime.

South Africa

The issue of South Africa was not a new thing in the history of Nigeria's foreign relations. Right from independence, the country under different government had condemned the apartheid - regime in South Africa, as well and aided the freedom fighters and liberation movements fighting for freedom and independence in that country. The Balewa government was very moderate on this issue. These can be seen in a situation when the Balewa government even invited South Africa to Nigeria's independence celebrations and suggested a gradual approach to the issue of decolonialization and apartheid in South Africa (Gray, 1965; Tukur, 1965). Gowon improved over Balewa's policy. It was during Gowon's time that Nigeria started to give aid to the freedom fighters and the liberation movements in Southern Africa (Ogunsanwo, 1985). Despite this, the effort of Gowon was inadequate. The coming of Mohammed changed everything. There was a new approach to the issue of apartheid in South Africa. Nigeria started a more radical policy in the issue of apartheid in South Africa.

Nigeria started to give aid to freedom fighter in a way quite different from that of Gowon's era. More money was given to several groups rather than just African National Congress (ANC). For the first time history, Nigeria was more serious about the issue of apartheid. Nigeria started to play an important role, more than rhetoric and condemnation of South Africa that had characterized our foreign policy under Balewa and Gowon (Ogunsanwo, 1985). Nigeria first declared its recognition for the two main freedom fighters in South Africa that is the African National Congress (ANC) and Pan Africans Congress (PAC). Nigeria gave financial and military aid and support to these two-organisations fighting the South African apartheid regime (Ogunsanwo, 1985). Nigeria succeeded in isolating South Africa from trade and participation in

international organisations. For examples in October 1975, Nigeria was one of the first countries to condemn the creation of South African home lands, otherwise known as the Bantustans Nigeria and the African countries also succeeded in persuading the United Nations General Assembly in 1975 to refuse the recognition of the Bantustans and all countries agreed except the USA, which obtained from condemning the Bantustans as 'A Sham and invalid independence' (Ajala, 1986).

Nigeria also made use of the Federal Radio Corporation of Nigerian, External Service to beam programs to South Africa to enlighten the people about the evil of apartheid and the need to fight it. The National Committee for Action against Apartheid (NACAP) was also established in 1975. This was also founded to inform Nigerians and Africa in general about the evils of apartheid (Garba, 1987). The South African Relief Fund (SARF) was established by the Federal Government in 19 December 1976 to raise fund for the freedom fighters in South Africa. In June 1976 Nigeria spearheaded another resolution in UN which condemned the South African regime and apartheid. The resolution revealed that 'Apartheid seriously disturbs international peace and security' (Garba, 1987). Nigeria also used the politics of sport against South Africa. Nigeria boycotted the Montreal Olympics in Canada in 1976. This is to protest the issue of apartheid. This led to a situation whereby many countries put embargo on sports links with South Africa. After the Soweto massacre of 1976, Nigeria offered refuge for the children of Soweto (Ajala, 1986). South African students were given Nigerian Scholarship to Study overseas and in Nigerian higher institutions of learning. Nigeria offered to train the freedom fighters in Nigerian Defense Academy (NDA). Many recognized the effort of Nigeria and Nigeria was termed as 'the Meccan of liberation movement' (Ejiofor, 1981).

Mohammed and Obasanjo allowed the liberation movement to open their offices in Lagos. All exiles from South Africa could come to Nigeria. Substantial amount was raised in 1975 for South African Relief Fund (SARF) in Nigeria both from the government and private sector. This generally had nothing to do with the Nigeria's Contribution to the OAU liberation fund, which the regime increased in 1975 (Ejiofor, 1981). Nigeria also urged the freedom fighters in South Africa to unite as a front to fight apartheid. Nigeria attempted to unite the ANC and PAC and sponsored South African Youth Revolutionary Council (SAYRC). The ANC and SAYRC planned the Soweto uprising which led to Soweto Massacre in 1976 (Ejiofor, 1981). As part of Nigeria's effort against apartheid, Nigeria also hosted the United Nations World Conference for Action against Apartheid (WCAAA) in 1976 in Ibadan. A resolution was reached to nationalise all foreign investment with business connections in South Africa. The International Conference against Apartheid was held in Lagos in August 1977, which condemned

businesses and western countries that sustain the South African apartheid government (Ajala, 1986). Nigeria also contributed a lot financially and materially to the South West African People's Organisation (SWAPO) which is the main freedom group fighting for the independence of Namibia. Nigeria allowed SWAPO under Sam Nujoma to open its office in Lagos in 1978 (Ajala, 1986).

International organisations

This part of the work examines Nigeria's activities in Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), Organisation of African Unity (OAU), Organisation of Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC), the Commonwealth Organisation and the United Nations (UN). It is important to note that the above regional and international organisation were not the only ones Nigeria belonged to during Mohammed - Obasanjo regime. But they were the most important with regard to the country's foreign policy.

ECONOMIC COMMUNITY OF WEST AFRICAN STATES (ECOWAS)

ECOWAS was the idea of General Yakubu Gowon, the former Nigerian Head of State and General Gnassingbe Eyadema of Togo. The two persuaded and lobbied the rest of the West African countries to join the organisation. The charter of the organisation was signed on the 28th of May 1975 about two months before Gowon was overthrown. Gowon had the intention of using the organisation to open market for Nigerian goods and increase economic development in the West African sub-region (Olaniyan, 1986). In the first instance many thought that since it was Gowon and Eyadema who started ECOWAS, Mohammed and Obasanjo would withdraw Nigeria's membership because of their differences with Gowon. But surprisingly they supported the organisation to the maximum. They encourage the Nigerian business community to support ECOWAS. The same encouragement was given to West African Chamber of Commerce and Industry Mines and Agriculture (NACCIMA) (Olaniyan, 1986).

As soon as Mohammed came to power, he succeeded in persuading Eyadema to allow the ECOWAS headquarters to be sited in Nigeria. This was because Gowon already conceded the ECOWAS headquarters to Togo as a compensation for being a co-founder of the organisation (Olaniyan, 1986). However, Mohammed argues that Nigeria should have the headquarters since the country contributes a third of the ECOWAS budget (Olaniyan, 1986). Mohammed and Obasanjo also succeeded in persuading the francophone countries in West Africa led by Senegal and Ivory Coast, to forget about the proposal that Central African Countries like

Zaire should be included in the organisation. This was intended to prevent Nigeria's domination in the organisation. This almost prevented the signing of the five crucial protocols that hold the ECOWAS together. But with Nigeria's persuasion, it was signed at the second summit - meeting in November 1972 (Olaniyan, 1986).

The organisation also gave Nigeria a lot of opportunity to market its crude oil in the regional market because most of the countries import their already processed oil product from overseas countries. Another achievement of Nigeria was over the signing of non-aggression pact. Nigeria has always exercised a leadership role in the organisation (Dokang, 1980). Nigeria has succeeded in retaining the chairmanship of the organisation up till today. Nigeria has also succeeded in spreading its trading activities in form of crude oil, petrol chemicals, agriculture, and mineral resources. Trading agreements were also signed with countries like Senegal, Ivory Coast and Ghana. Nigeria 'offended creative and effective leadership aimed at maintaining the integrity of the union and guiding its goals, thus enabling it to adopt to new and exchanging need and circumstances' (Dokang, 1980). Ebenezer Oni and Abayomi Taiwo have argued that 'Nigeria's foreign policy is conducted on the pedestal of "Big Brotherism" without concomitant and lucidly wrapped economic agenda that benefits the people and government in Nigeria' (Oni and Taiwo, 2016). However, this was not the case with Mohammed-Obasanjo because they demonstrated that the continuation of Nigeria's membership of ECOWAS was strictly to harness the economies of the West African Sub-region to the advantage of Nigeria.

ORGANISATION OF AFRICAN UNITY (O.A.U)

The participation of Nigeria in the OAU during the time of Mohammed and Obasanjo was quite different from what Nigeria had done before. Before the coming of this regime, Balewa and his successor Gowon pursued a very conservative and moderate foreign policy. They adhered too much to the final decisions or resolutions of the OAU, which in some cases were not favourable to the interest of the country. At that time, Nigeria hardly executed any independence action out of the general agreement of the organisation. But Mohammed and Obasanjo changed to more active, leadership and dynamic way of doing things. Nigeria contributed a lot to OAU financially, materially as well as morally. And the regime of Mohammed Obasanjo even did better on that matter. Nigeria pays the highest of dues in the continental body about a third (Aluko, 1981). Nigeria always pays her dues on time. Nigeria in its foreign policy objectives and aspiration ration followed the Article II of the OAU charter which was for the promotion of African Unity and solidarity of African states. Nigeria has never done anything to under - mine the importance of this charter. Nigeria also adhered strictly to

the section that emphasizes on peaceful settlements of disputes by negotiation, meditation, conciliation, and arbitration (Aluko, 1981).

A good example was the case of Nigeria and Equatorial Guinea. In 1975, there were more than 20,000 Nigerians in Equatorial Guinea serving and working as industrial workers on cocoa plantations. They were the people sustaining the country's economy because the country depended entirely on the exportation of cocoa (Ofoagbu, 1979). Under the leadership of President Macias Nguema, with military and police brutality and terror, many Nigerian citizens were killed and brutalised (Osuntokun, 1978). The Nigerian populace complained to the Federal Government. Many advised Nigeria to annexe with Equatorial Guinea, but Mohammed refused, instead he ordered all Nigerian to come back home. This directly crippled the economy of the country because the cocoa plantations were all abandoned. By taking these economic measures Nigeria dealt with Equatorial Guinea at the same time but did not violate the charters of OAU, which is against military aggression as well as interference in the affairs of other state (Osuntokun, 1978). It is important to note that, had Nigeria attacked and annexed with Equatorial Guinea, it would have generated ill feeling for Nigeria in OAU and the world in general. Nigeria is described as 'The largest exporter of peace in Africa' (Obi, 2019). Some countries would have used the aggression of Equatorial Guinea to invade and annex the country.

Another foreign policy achievement of Nigeria in the OAU was the Angolan issue. Nigeria succeeded in persuading other OAU member states to recognize the MPLA as the legitimate government of Angola. Wayas argues that it is 'The most generally acclaimed act of the OAU in its history' (Wayas, 1979). Nigeria showed a lot of diplomacy in the August 1976 OAU Extra Ordinary Summit in Addis Ababa, on the Angolan independent. On the independence of Zimbabwe, the effort of Nigeria is commendable both in the OAU's Libreville and Khartoum Summits in 1979. Nigeria tried so much, to see that peaceful settlement was reached through the patriotic front of ZANU and ZAPU, which later led to the independence of Zimbabwe.

With the support of Nigeria, assistance to freedom fighters was increased. The South African Relief Fund was established with the support of Nigeria, the OAU liberation fund was also established to raise fund for the freedom fighters in Southern Africa. Apart from this, Nigeria also gave financial and technical aid to many poor African countries in the OAU; such countries include chard, Niger, Togo, Republic of Benin, and Sudan. Countries bordering South Africa were also aided. These include Mozambique, Angola, Zimbabwe, Botswana, and Zambia, all suffering from military aggression and destructive activities of the apartheid South Africa (Ajala, 1986). Although Nigeria has been a member of many committees for long time, these were increased

tremendously. Nigeria was a member of almost all the OAU Committees. Some of the important ones were the Ad-hoc Committee on Western Sahara established in 1977, Implementation Committees of OAU on the Western Sahara 1977 and the Liberation Committee also of 1977. Obasanjo also tried to solve the Chadian conflict which led to civil war and the problems of Morocco and Western Sahara (Akinyemi, 1980).

ORGANISATION OF PETROLEUM EXPORTING COUNTRIES (OPEC)

Nigeria joined the organisation in 1971, during Gowon's regime. The objective was to enable Nigeria to earn more from its petroleum products and crude oil export. Nigeria obtained 95% of its revenue from oil during the Mohammed - Obasanjo regime. The regime, just like any other Nigerian government could not have a permanent influence in the organisation because it was heavily dominated by the Arab Countries. But nevertheless, OPEC became a key organ for the promotion of Nigeria's oil interest. At this time, Nigeria's oil depended entirely on the bargaining power of OPEC in the world oil market. And it is the revenue derived from Nigeria's crude oil that enables the regime to pursue its foreign policy objects and aspirations. It further proved Nigeria as a black power and justified the leadership role of Nigeria in Africa as well as in the black world. It is important to note that Nigeria's oil revenue increased during Murtala - Obasanjo regime because of its number membership of OPEC (Akinyemi, 1980).

Oil revenue enables Nigeria to contribute more financially and materially to ECOWAS, OAU, and OAU liberation funds. Nigeria's membership of OPEC enables the country to develop internally by undertaking many development plans, and of course internal development is very important for a radical foreign policy. During Mohammed - Obasanjo regime, oil prices rose to about forty dollars per barrel, which was the highest in history at that time. Nigeria then, was producing about two million barrels per day, (Akinyemi, 1980).

Nigeria also used oil weapon to achieve her foreign policy objectives and aspiration. This was done with the solidarity and help of OPEC member countries, who mostly are third world countries. For examples in 1978, Obasanjo threatened to use oil weapon against USA and Britain because of the Zimbabwean independence (Akinyemi, 1980). During President Jimmy Carter's visit to Nigeria in 1978, he demanded for help from Obasanjo to use Nigeria's oil influence as OPEC member to reduce world oil prices which was very hard on the western block (Akinyemi, 1980).

This shows the importance attached to Nigeria by the western powers. At that time, after Saudi Arabia, Nigeria was the second highest supplier of crude oil to USA. Lastly, Nigeria made an important achievement in the

OPEC. Nigeria succeeded in influencing the organisation to barn and put embargo on oil export to apartheid South Africa (Akinyemi, 1980).

THE COMMONWEALTH ORGANISATION

Nigerian joined the Commonwealth Organisation after independence in 1960. The British monarch is recognized as the 'The symbol of the free association of its independent member nations and as such the head of the Common Wealth' (Olusanya and Akindele, 1986). The Commonwealth Organisation was an extra - attraction to the new independent states, compared to the United Nations. Commonwealth served many purposes which the United Nations could not do. Nigeria for example obtained assistance and aid after independence from the Commonwealth member countries like Canada, Australia, and New Zealand that have developed economies (Olusanya and Akindele, 1986). Nigeria used the Commonwealth in many ways to further its foreign policy objectives and aspirations. It was in the Commonwealth summit in London in 1977 and Lusaka in 1978 that Obasanjo threatened to withdraw Nigeria's membership from the Organisation, if Britain recognized the puppet Muzorewa's government in Zimbabwe (Olusanya and Akindele, 1986).

Nigeria also used the Commonwealth front and solidarity to fight against apartheid. Nigeria pressed Britain to impose economic sanctions on South Africa, because of the in human apartheid system. Nigeria used Commonwealth forum to pursue anti - colonial and anti-imperialist objectives. Nigeria also gains form of receiving scholarship from commonwealth universities. The country derived good relationship with other members. Nigeria gained from Canada, Australia, and New Zealand, who are the developed members of the Commonwealth. Moreover, it opened markets for Nigerian goods to all the members of the organisation (Olusanya and Akindele, 1986).

Lastly, Commonwealth during Mohammed - Obasanjo regime served as a means of popularizing Nigeria in world polities. This earns more respect for the country throughout the world. For examples, if Nigeria had withdrawn in 1978, it would have led to the breakup of the organisation, because many countries, African, would have followed the examples of Nigeria (Olusanya and Akindele, 1986).

THE UNITED NATIONS (UN)

The activities of Nigerian started in the world body in 1960 shortly after independence. Under Balewa and Gowon, Nigeria pursed a very moderate or conservative foreign policy or activities in the world body. But with the coming of Mohammed and Obasanjo regime in 1975,

there was a total change in foreign policy posture. There was changed from the moderate policy based on rhetoric to practical and action-oriented policy in the world body. Nigeria's contributions in the world body were quite impressive. For the first time in the history of Nigeria, the world recognized the importance of Nigeria in the world body.

One of the most important achievements of Nigeria in the organisation was the election of Nigeria, for the first time in history as a member and African representative into the Security Council in 1977 (Obiozor, 1985). This achievement was a great one for Nigeria's government, because Nigerian won the election with only five out of the forty - nine African Countries that voted. Although this was not the first time a Nigeria was elected into a high post in the world body, the Mohammed - Obasanjo regime recorded a great increase in this aspect. The Security Council seat was discussed at the Libreville OAU summit in Gabon in 1977 when the member nations were deliberating on the two countries that would replace Mauritius and Republic of Benin as African representatives (Obiozor, 1985). Nigeria had made public her intention of occupying one of the posts. Nigeria went ahead to place its candidate for the Security Council. Eventually, when the election came up, in November 1977, Nigeria won the election against Republic of Niger which received most of the African votes. But at the end of the day Nigeria won the election. This shows the importance attached to Nigeria by non-African states in the world body. It was a great achievement for the country and more importantly, again Nigeria was elected as the President of the Security Council (Obiozor, 1985).

Nigeria also contributed a lot in peace keeping force, both within and outside African Continent. Although right from independence in 1960, Nigeria has been contributing to peace keeping forces, but it was intensified during the time of Mohammed and Obasanjo. For example, shortly after the breakout of hostilities between Israel and Syria, a United Nations Emergency Force (UNEF) was organized and sent to the area to maintain peace in which Nigeria contributed troops for peace keeping (Obiozor, 1985). Nigeria very much participated in the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL) in 1978 (Obiozor, 1985). The objective was the withdrawal of Israel from Southern Lebanon, the re-establishment of a Lebanese government and authority in the area as well as the restoration of peace (Garba, 1987).

Nigeria also because of its importance in the world body at this time belonged to many commissions and committees. For example, Nigeria was appointed in 1975 as a member of the Commission on Transnational Cooperation (TNC); she was also elected as a member of the Special Session on Development and International Economic Cooperation (SSDIEC) (Garba, 1987).Nigeria made use of the world body extensively to pursue her decolonization policy and anti-apartheid campaign

resolutions were sponsored against apartheid South Africa, decolonization, and Namibian independence. Nigeria was also elected as a member of U.N Commission on Namibian Independence (Garba, 1987). All these explain why Nigeria retained her chairmanship of the Anti-Apartheid Committee until apartheid was abolished in South Africa. Nigeria also gained a lot economically and financially from the world body. Nigeria gained immensely from the U.N, specialized agencies such as, World Health Organisation (WHO), United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural organisation (UNESCO), United Nations Internal children Emergency fund (UNICEF), Food and Agricultural Organisation (FAO), International Labour Organisation (ILO), United Nations Industrial Development Organisation (UNIDO) and many others (Obiozor, 1985).

NIGERIA AND THE ARAB ISRAELI CONFLICT

The Arab Israeli conflict has been an important issue in the Nigeria's foreign policy since independence. Nigerian leaders have always tried to avoid direct involvement and even comment on this issue. The Arab Israeli conflict of course is one of the issues, that is, very controversial in Nigerian people. There was never an agreement among the Nigerian people on this issue. Northern part of the country is always going against normalizing diplomatic relations with Israel; whereas the Southern part is always supporting the idea of normalizing relation with Israel. The only reason that could be attributed to this is the religious factor. The North is predominantly Muslim and supports the Palestinian cause while the South is predominantly Christian and supports Israel because of the religious ties of Christianity to the Jewish state.

From the beginning, Tafawa Balewa said that Nigeria would be neutral, but it was clear later that he was supporting the Arabs (Gray 1965; Tukur, 1965). For example, Nigeria refused to send an Ambassador to Tel Aviv even though, Israel sent ambassador to Lagos. Similar request was granted to the Arab states without problems (Gray 1965; Tukur, 1965). Gowon, just like Balewa tried to be neutral on this issue, but he too ended supporting the Arabs against the Israelis. The support given to the Biafran rebels, by the Israeli government further strained the relationship with Nigeria. Under Gowon, Nigeria broke diplomatic relations with Israel in 1973 (Bukarambe, 1986). This was over Israel occupation of Arab and Egyptian territories. Nigeria like the rest of OAU states regarded this as an invasion of Africa.

Even after the Camp David accord in 1978 between Menachem Begin and an Anwar Sadat, which normalized relations between Egypt and Israel, Nigeria refused to change its attitude towards Israel (Bukarambe, 1986). The situation did not change during the period of Mohammed and Obasanjo. Both Mohammed and Obasanjo refused to normalize relations with Israel despite the many attempts made by the Israel government to normalize the relationship (Bukarambe, 1986). Many people had argued that, Nigeria has a lot to gain from Israeli and from the Arab, pointing at the neglect of Africa by the Arab rich countries. But the Mohammed - Obasanjo regime claimed that it did not renew diplomatic relations with Israel because of the country's cooperation with South Africa (Bukarambe, 1986).

The Northern group supports these arguments, but the Southern group condemned it, saying that many western countries led by the U.S.A, Britain, Japan, Western Germany, France, and Canada have links with South Africa (Bukarambe, 1986). This made the argument of Nigerian government hypocritical. It shows that the Northern group are having their way on this issue. In 1977 Israel made another attempt at renewing diplomatic relations with Nigeria, through the meeting of Joseph Garba, Nigeria's External Affairs Commissioner and Yigal Allon the then Foreign Minister of Israel in New York (Garba, 1987). In their meeting Garba stressed the fact that Israel has military and economic ties with the racist regime in South Africa, and more over Israel showed its closeness to South Africa by allowing Prime Minister John Vorster to visit Israel. Yigal Allon also described Nigeria as 'a very important Africa country which held the key to the solution to Israel and Black African estrangement (Garba, 1987). The state of Israel believed that if Nigeria resumed diplomatic relations with Israel majority of the African countries would follow suit. But Garba insisted that Israel must stop her collaboration with South Africa and 'to show positive signs of movement towards a resolution of the Middle East crises and to the question of home lands for the Palestine people' (Garba, 1987). But to be sincere, since the western block has economic, military, and diplomatic ties with South Africa Nigeria too should have end relations with them. Nigeria should realize that the Arabs are just using African countries to satisfy their own Interest. The Arabs also have their first allegiance to the Arab league. This can be seen in the writing of Late Colonel Gamal Abdul Nasser that 'The first circle in which we must resolve is the Arab Circle' (Abdul Nassar, 1959). Arab countries have no concern for Africa unless when they need Africa for something. For example, when the Arab members of OPEC increased oil prices, it affected poor African countries move than the western powers it was meant for. The special arrangement made to reduce prices for African countries was not implemented (Bukarambe, 1986). It is important to know that no Arab Leader came to the Black African Festival of Arts and Culture (FESTAC) in Lagos in 1977. Also, no Arab representative attended the First Extra Ordinary Council of Ministers of the OAU in Kinshasa, Zaire in December where intra African economic corporations and problems were discussed (Garba, 1979: 83).

In terms of financial assistance, the Arabs just made promises without results. Aid is only given to the Arab Muslim countries, in North Africa, and not through Africa Development Bank (ADB) but through Arab Bank and other Arab and Muslim Institutions (Bukarambe, 1986). Apart from Algeria and Libya no Arab country in and outside Africa had contributed anything to the OAU liberation fund to help independence of Angola, Zimbabwe and to fight apartheid in South Africa (Bukarambe, 1986). There is little or no trading activities between Nigerian, Africa, and Arab world in general. From 1975 some Arab countries like Bahrain, Saudi Arabia, United Arab Emirates (UAE) started to trade with South Africa in gold and diamond (Bukarambe, 1986). Many of them violated the oil embargo by selling crude oil to South Africa. In 1974 Jordan sold military equipment, including centurion tanks and missiles to South Africa (Osia, 1981).

Despite all this, Nigeria continued to support the Arabs against the Jewish state and Nigeria also refused to renew diplomatic ties with Israel. But Israel never relented in its effort to renew ties with Nigeria. Although there were no diplomatic ties between Nigeria and Israel, there was a strong economic and commercial tie (Bukarambe, 1986). Israel has more than forty companies in Nigeria. By 1985 Nigeria owed Solel Boneh, the largest Israeli constructing company in Nigeria, 120 million pounds sterling, and about 2,000 Israeli's are residing in Nigeria, the largest in Black Africa (Bukarambe, 1986). Nigeria is also the largest trading partner of Israel in Africa including Egypt which has diplomatic ties with the Jewish states. Nigerian's trade with Israel is more than the whole of Nigeria's trade with the Arab countries combined (Bukarambe, 1986). For example, Nigeria has always voted against Israel in the UNO and other international forums. Nigeria even supported the U.N. Resolution of November 1976 that 'Zionism is a form of racism and radical discrimination' (Obiozor, 1980).

Later, the Mohammed and Obasanjo regime particularly after the death of Mohammed, decided to be a bit neutral about the issue. Obasanjo realized that to get the support of western capitalist countries against apartheid South Africa, Nigeria needs to reduce her support for the Arabs (Ojo, 1980).This could be seen at the United Nations Economic and Social Council Conference held in Abidjan in 1978. Nigeria withdrew her earlier support for the notion that 'Zionism is a form of racism' and tended to 'destabilise the UN system and to demobilize our effort against racism' (Ojo, 1980). Nigeria with the backing of Ivory Coast and other African countries did not allow the Arab representatives at the conference to pass anti-Israel resolutions. Obasanjo also refused the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) under Yasser Arafat to open an office in Lagos in 1978 (Ojo, 1980). But unfortunately, all these did not pave way for renewal of diplomatic relations with Israel.

NIGERIA'S RELATIONS WITH THE EASTERN AND WESTERN BLOCS

This part of the work examines Nigeria's relations with the western and eastern blocs. Here, trade and economic relations with the western and eastern blocs were analysed. The military relationship with the two ideological blocs was discussed. Right from the time of independence, Nigerian government under Sir Abubakar Tafawa Balewa, declared Nigeria as non - aligned in her foreign policy. That is, the country did not belong to any of the two ideological camps, capitalism, and communism. When General Yakubu Gowon also came to power, he too re-established Nigeria's commitment to the non-aligned movement. But these two leaders did not pursue the policy of non-alignment to the core. They were only non-aligned by speech and rhetoric. Their economies were perpetually tied to the western capitalist Economic system. When Mohammed and Obasanjo came in the case was not all that different, except the disagreement on Angola, Zimbabwe, South Africa, and decolonisation in general.

At this time, more than 70% of Nigeria's external trade and Economic activities was tied to the western bloc (Akinyemi, 1979). Many even believe that the issue of Angola, Zimbabwe, and decolonization in Africa including Apartheid would even bring Nigeria and Soviet Union as well as the eastern bloc closer, both politically and economically (Akinyemi, 1979). But the case was not so, Nigeria was not ready to go communist in Nigeria's relations with the western block. This can be seen by the state visit by the American president Jimmy Carter, the first of its kind by any American President. Nigeria during the time of Mohammed and Obasanjo sent Nigerian students to study in western block rather than eastern bloc (Akinyemi, 1979).

It is important to note that the western government USA particularly has no permanent policy toward Africa. According to Henry Kissinger, the American Secretary of State, when Joe Garba and Leslie Harryman, Nigeria's permanent representative to UN him, Garba accused 'America of not having a policy towards Africa' (Garba, 1987). Kissinger replied, 'You are right we don't have a policy on Africa, we would like to have one, what do you think the policy should be' (Garba, 1987). The election of Jimmy Carter as the new American President and his appointment of equally liberal people of the Democratic Party, such as Cyrus Vance and Andrew Young as Secretary of States and United States Permanent Representatives to the U.N. changed the US attitude towards Nigeria and Africa in general (Garba, 1987).

In case of the Soviet Union, the relationship with Nigeria was little above that of their predecessors. The Mohammed - Obasanjo regime for sure was not a communist government, and moreover, they did not preach socialist ideology. Many believed that the issue of Angola, Zimbabwe and South Africa would make Nigeria

to move much closer to the communist bloc. But that was not the case, the relationship of Nigeria and the Eastern bloc and Soviet Union particularly was not encouraging and also the unconcerned attitude of the then Soviet Foreign minister, Andrew Gromyko to African affairs was a hindrance (Aluko, 1981). Also, during the 1975 - 1979 period, no Soviet Senior official visited Nigeria despite the fact that Joe Garba visited Moscow in 1979 and Major General Shehu Musa Yar'adua, the deputy to Obasanjo led a presidential delegation to Moscow in 1979 because of the Ajaokuta Steel Complex, (Garba, 1987). But it is important to note that Nigeria and the Union of Soviets Socialist Republic (USSR) agreed even if not verbally about the actions taken by Nigeria over the issues of Angola, Zimbabwe, apartheid, and decolonization in Africa. The Soviet Union as well as the Eastern bloc always voted with Nigeria and Africa on these issues, (Garba, 1987).

Nigeria during Mohammed-Obasanjo regime did not have any major divergence from the western bloc to the eastern bloc. In case of economic relations, there was a remarkable improvement in trade likes with the west. Although there were such links with the eastern bloc, but they were very insignificant. In fact, Akinyemi was right to describe Nigeria's foreign policy under Mohammed and Obasanjo as 'political non-alignment and economic alignment' (Akinyemi, 1969).

Trade and economic relations

Nigeria's economic and trade relations with the western and eastern bloc during Mohammed and Obasanjo were one sided. It was a fact, that despite some political misunderstanding between Nigeria and western bloc they continue to be Nigeria's largest training partner. Although trade and economic relations with the eastern bloc expanded, this was very little and insignificant compared to that of the west. In this period, Britain also ceased to be largest trading partner of Nigeria and was replaced by USA (Aluko, 1981). Nigeria also diversified her foreign reserves, but not all from the Britain pound sterling to other currencies. But even this diversification was done within the Western Capitalist economic system (Aluko, 1981). This affected the value of the pound sterling, which was already weak as of 1978; the US was buying about 60% of Nigeria's crude oil, making her the highest trading partner of Nigeria in the world (Aluko, 1981).

Nigeria during this period, witnessed what S. Olofin called the 'Ultra import blazed taste in Nigeria's external trade relations' (Olofin, 1980). It was during this period that demand for foreign goods, western goods particularly rose. Canned food, processed food, poultry, dairy products, beer etc were imported indiscriminately (Olofin, 1980). Nigerians regarded the local products as inferior to the imported ones. The investment of western countries in Nigeria was worth more than $5.5 billion

naira during that period. But the investment of the eastern bloc in the same period was not up to $1 billion (Olofin, 1980). The total export and import trade of Nigeria was highly dominated by western bloc. For example, from 1975 to 1979 western bloc, including Western European countries, USA, Canada, Japan represented 81.08% of Nigeria's total export trade, compared with the Eastern bloc including Soviet Union and Cuba who represented only 0.54%, in the same period. In the period of 1975 to 1979, Nigeria's total import from the western block was 87.9%, whereas Eastern bloc represented only 2.4% (Olusanya and Akindele, 1986). This shows clearly the economic and trade relations of Nigeria as highly in favour of the western power.

In fact, the trade between Nigerian and Eastern bloc including the Soviet Union was very small. But despite this, one cannot say there was no trade or any form of economic cooperation. For example, in June 1976 an agreement was signed between Nigeria and Soviet Union for the construction of Iron and Steel Complex at Ajaokuta in Kwara State (Olusanya and Akindele, 1986). It is the largest of its kind in Africa. This contract was given to Tiajpromoxport (TPE) of Soviet Union (Olusanya and Akindele, 1986). The Soviet Union also constructed two oil pipelines for the nation's wide range distribution of crude oil. In case of other countries of eastern Europe such as Bulgaria, Czechoslovakia, Poland, East Germany, Romania, and Hungary, there was very little trade and economic relation with Nigeria, compared with countries like France, Britain, Japan, Italy, Spain and Canada all in western block (Olusanya and Akindele, 1986). This one-sided affair of Nigeria's external trade and economic activities could be attributed to the capitalist orientation of Nigerians in general and the influence of Britain as the former colonial master in the country. Moreover, Nigeria's major export commodity, which is crude oil, is not all that needed by the eastern bloc, because USSR was the highest crude oil producer in the world at that time (Bank of the North Annual Diary, 1988).

Lastly, one can see that, during the period of 1975 to 1979, economic activities and trade between Nigeria and western block were good, despite some policy differences because of Angola, Zimbabwe, Namibia, South Africa, and decolonisation in Africa. However, relations continue to be stagnant with the eastern communist bloc even with the cooperation with regards to decolonisation.

MILITARY RELATIONS

During the time of Mohammed-Obasanjo regime, there was no military alliance of any kind with any of the two military groupings. That is the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO) formed by the western powers and the Warsaw Pact formed as counterbalance to the NATO

by the eastern powers. Only Balewa signed the unpopular Anglo-Nigerian defence pact of 1960 - 1962, which was later cancelled because, majority of Nigeria protested against it (Gray, 1965; Tukur, 1965).Apart from this, we cannot say that Nigeria did not have any sort of military deal with NATO and Warsaw Pact. During the time of Mohammed and Obasanjo the countries in NATO supplied more than 90 percent of Nigeria's military weapons and hardware. For example, Britain continued to be the largest arm supplier of Nigeria. Nigeria also continued to send her officers for training to British military schools such as Royal Military Academy Sandhurst, Royal Staff College Camberley, British Defense Academy Shrivenham, and many others in Canada and USA (Ofoagbu, 1979).

In 1976, before he was assassinated, General Muhammad received Major General Mora from the British Royal Staff College to help establish a military college, known as the Nigerian Army Command and Staff College, Jaji, some few kilometres from Zaria. Later, Colonel T.A. Boam led some British officers to Nigeria in late 1976 as part of the trainers in the new military institution (Ofoagbu, 1979). For the first time, military ties between Nigeria and USA increased. In 1977 the USA government sold to Nigeria seven CH - 47C military transport helicopters at 45.5 million dollars (Aluko, 1981). This is about four times the total amount of the US Military sales to Nigeria from 1960 to 1975, which amounted to 12.6 million dollars (Aluko, 1981). However, there was little of no major military transaction between Nigeria and the Warsaw Pact countries. In fact, right from independence, Nigeria has always obtained its military weapons from Britain, which is a member of the NATO. Except during the Nigerian civil war when Britain and USA refused to supply Nigeria with military weapons and equipment, which the Soviet Union supplied (Aluko, 1981).

In this case, Nigeria's defence policy was pro-west under Mohammed - Obasanjo regime. That does not mean Nigeria did not buy any military equipment from Soviet Union during the period of 1975 to 1979. Soviet Union supplied Nigeria with MIG 21 fighter jets, but this was little compared to what the western block supplied (Aluko, 1981).

CONCLUSION

This study has reemphasised the fact that Nigeria's foreign policy during the time of Mohammed and Obasanjo was a departure from the moderate and conservative system of pursuing foreign policy, to a radical and action oriented foreign policy. According to Adaora Osondu-Oti and Ifedayo Tolu 'It is through foreign policy that a nation will state its interest as well as terms and conditions of relations with other states' (Osondu-Oti and Tolu, 2016). Only Mohammed-Obasanjo administration

has done this. Although, there was much radicalism in the foreign policy, that did not actually change Nigeria's relationship permanently with the world powers. The action taken by Nigeria on liberation movements in Angola, Zimbabwe and South Africa was quite commendable and impressive. It showed Nigeria for the first time taking independent action in foreign policy. At this time Nigeria declared itself a member of the frontline state to apartheid South Africa, joining other countries like Zimbabwe, Angola, Namibia, Zambia, Botswana, and Mozambique that bordered or are close to South Africa. However, it was all rhetoric because Nigeria was not capable of taking military action against South Africa. The activities of Nigeria in international organisations were an improvement over Balewa's and Gowon's administrations. In the area of Nigeria's relation with the world powers, Nigeria was obviously pro-west. The relationship with the eastern block was quite negligible compare to that of western block.

The Mohammed - Obasanjo regime had a sort of radical and militant style in the execution of foreign policy, with such emphasis on speedy response to external problems and issues arising from them. In comparison to Gowon and Balewa, Mohammed and Obasanjo were not afraid of confronting the western bloc when it was necessary. But Balewa and Gowon refused to have any confrontation with the western powers. It is a fact that Balewa's and Gowon's governments were more diplomatic than that of Mohammed and Obasanjo. Gowon and Balewa were very much moderate, humble, patient and always searching for compromise. But Mohammed and Obasanjo were thought to be inflexible, uncompromising, speedy, and radical. Likewise, Jaja Wachukwu, Nuhu Bammali who served Balewa and Okoi Arikpo who served Gowon as foreign ministers were just like their respective heads of state. They were always looking for a diplomatic way to solve issues. In contrast, Major General Joseph Garba, a soldier shares the same idea with Murtala and Obasanjo. In fact, many regarded him as the most undiplomatic person Nigeria has ever had as a foreign Affairs Minister. Overall, the Mohammed-Obasanjo foreign policy was far better than their predecessors because for the first time according to Ibrahim Gambari 'Foreign policy was moved out of the realm of the regime's first interest and personalized decision making into one of national debate guided by a sense of national interest' (Gambari, 1980).

The current situation of Nigeria's foreign policy is even worse than the period before Mohammed and Obasanjo's administration. Nigeria's foreign policy today seems to be in the wilderness and lark focus. The current situation of Nigeria's foreign policy requires more research by both government, non-governmental organisations, and independent scholars. For a suitable and sustainable foreign policy, Nigeria must reduce her reliance politically, military and economically on the western. Nigeria must be neutral in issues that are not directly related to her and

Africa. A good example is the Arab-Israel conflict. Propaganda and performance of the diplomatic corps missions must be improved. Internal political situations must not hinder the performance in foreign policy.

Emphasis should also be placed on action rather than rhetoric. The action must primarily be in the interest of Nigeria first and secondarily in the interest of Africa, especially sub-Saharan Africa. According to Amuwo (2016) 'Nigeria's power and influence have remained largely potential, begging for focused and committed leaders to be actualized'. Nigeria must harness all its resources and utilise them to be able to archive its foreign policy aims and objectives.

CONFLICT OF INTERESTS

The author has not declared any conflict of interests.

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