
REVISITING NIGERIA'S FOREIGN POLICY AND REGIONAL INFLUENCE IN WEST AFRICA: DYNAMICS, CHALLENGES, AND PROSPECTS

Dr. Nasa'i Muhammad Gwadabe, MNIA

Department of History and International Studies

Yusuf Maitama Sule University, Kano, Nigeria

nasaimgwadabe@yumsuk.edu.ng

+2348065655255

Abstract

This paper critically assesses Nigerian foreign policy and its regional influence within the West African sub-region. The research examines the factors and dynamics shaping Nigeria's influence in neighboring countries and the broader implications for regional stability and development. Employing a multi-dimensional analysis, the methodology incorporates historical reviews, case studies, and diplomatic assessments to comprehensively evaluate the evolution and impact of Nigerian foreign policy in West Africa. The article explores the historical context of Nigerian foreign policy, tracing its development and key milestones. The theoretical framework draws from international relations theories, providing a conceptual lens through which to analyze Nigeria's diplomatic engagements. Determinants of Nigerian foreign policy are investigated, including economic considerations, security priorities, and historical relationships. The study delves into the specific mechanisms through which Nigeria exerts influence in the West African sub-region, considering diplomatic initiatives, economic partnerships, and military engagements. Several case studies offer in-depth analyses of instances where Nigerian foreign policy had significant regional implications, shedding light on both successful endeavors and challenges faced. Challenges and criticisms of Nigeria's foreign policy are discussed, offering insights into the complexities and limitations the country encounters in maintaining regional influence. The article further examines the responses of other West African nations to Nigerian foreign policy, highlighting alliances, partnerships, and occasional frictions. Key findings underscore the multifaceted nature of Nigeria's regional influence, with both positive and challenging aspects. The study concludes with reflections on the future prospects of Nigerian foreign policy in West Africa, considering potential shifts, challenges, and opportunities.

Keywords: Foreign Policy, Nigeria, Regional Power, Strategic Influence, West Africa

Introduction

Nigeria's foreign policy holds significant importance in the geopolitical landscape of West Africa, given its status as the most populous nation on the continent and its historical role as a key regional player. The country's diplomatic engagements within the West African sub-region have far-reaching implications for political stability, economic development, and security. As Nigeria continues to shape its foreign policy, understanding the nature and impact of its influence in West Africa becomes crucial for scholars, policymakers, and regional stakeholders (Moliki & Akanbi, 2024).

Nigeria has often been described as the “Giant of Africa.” Its foreign policy is best understood and assessed in the context of its regional and continental ambitions which have been demonstrated over the course of history. Nigeria's leaders of all political persuasions have come to see their country as the “natural leader” of the African continent. This aspiration to continental leadership manifest since the country's independence in 1960, is central to understanding some of the principal features of Nigeria's foreign policy. It is clear from a historical examination of Nigeria's foreign relations that its hegemonic ambitions have not, however, necessarily led to relevant, coherent and effective policies (Umar, Muiyiwa, Umar & Dung, 2023).

Historical Context of Nigeria's Foreign Policy

During the Cold War Nigeria gained notoriety for its non-alignment policy. Following independence, Nigeria's aim for directing continental and regional progress was consistently reaffirmed by the Tafawa Balewa's administration, which centered its foreign policy around Africa. In order to support this, Nigeria established its first National Development Plan (1962–1968) as part of a larger plan to increase the nation's potential to become "the industrial heart of an African Common Market." (Augustus & Soboyejo, 2022).

Following the Civil War (1967-1970), the administration of Yakubu Gowon (1966-1975) partially realized the goals that the Balewa's administration was unable to accomplish due to its brief tenure. Gowon's diplomatic ties and politics in West Africa led to the creation of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) in 1975 as part of his goal to establish an African Common Market, commencing with an integrated sub-region to make Nigeria an industrial powerhouse (Augustus & Soboyejo, 2022).

But Nigeria has not developed into the economic superpower it aimed to be or the dominant black power it was predicted to be since 1975. Since the year 2000, not only has the economy grown five times more slowly, but investor confidence and foreign direct investment have also declined. In 2021, Nigeria's foreign direct investment (FDI) fell by 69% from \$2.3 billion in 2014 to \$699 million. Also, the value of exports is decreasing. According to Stears, the volume of Nigeria's export in 2021 (\$47.3 billion) was 68 percent lower than the number in 2012 (\$146.4 billion) (Chukwu & Adewuyi, 2024). Nigeria only exports raw materials, not finished goods, and enduring challenges of insecurity, corruption, theft and vandalism have crippled its production capacity and consequently limited its earning potential (Omo-ogbebor, 2017).

Nigeria a Regional Power?

The substantial (economic, demographic, and military) divide that exists between Nigeria and most other African states particularly within West Africa, where it is the most powerful state based on these indicators is the foundation for Nigeria's position as a regional leader. Nonetheless, this disparity conceals Nigeria's material vulnerabilities. Its political strength in Africa derives from the legitimacy it acquired through its acts at the sub-regional and regional levels, in addition to its material power (Adogamhe, 2024).

Nigeria's economy is the largest in West Africa, accounting for around 75% of the sub-region's total economic power.

Nigeria's economy was able to reach its pinnacle of growth in the 1970s. This made it possible for the state to use "oil diplomacy" to establish its authority in the sub-region (Okolo, Efebeh, & Boubai, 2024). At a time, in the early 1990s, when neither the United Nations nor the United States of America were willing to intervene in Africa, it was giving its neighbors oil at concessionary rates, providing economic assistance, funding 70% of ECOWAS budget, and financing and providing the vast majority of the armed forces for the Economic Community of West African States Cease-fire Monitoring Group (ECOMOG) missions in Liberia and Sierra Leone. Nigeria backed various liberation organizations and the struggle against Apartheid in South Africa on a continental scale. As a result, Nigeria became one of the influential nations in Africa in the 1970s and actively leveraged its economic might to uphold its political standing and foreign policy within the continent, earning it prominence on a regional and global scale. (Ogunmola and Badmus, 2009).

Thus, Nigeria was expected to take the lead in influencing reforms throughout the continent. Nigeria has previously met and exceeded these expectations. Nigeria has consistently used its economic and political clout to further regional cooperation, promote African development, and further its own national interests in recent years. The previous Nigerian governments have spearheaded or started a number of regional and continental projects in Nigeria (Odorige, 2024).

Nigeria had a key role in the creation of the African Development Bank in 1964, the Organization of African Unity (OAU) in 1963, which eventually evolved into the AU in 2002, and the ECOWAS in 1975. Through the ECOWAS Monitoring Group, Nigeria sent soldiers and financial support to put an end to civil hostilities in Sierra Leone in 1998 under Sani Abacha's Government and Liberia under Ibrahim Babangida in 1990. Nigeria's goal was to maintain stability throughout West Africa (Odorige, 2024).

In the years following the return to democracy, Nigeria was also in a strong position to protect democracy, peace, and stability throughout the continent, especially under Olusegun Obasanjo's leadership. One such instance occurred in 2003 when Fradique de Menezes, the president of São Tomé and Príncipe at the time, was overthrown in a bloodless coup. When the coup occurred, Menezes was in Nigeria meeting with President Obasanjo to talk about oil development. A week later, Nigeria and its African and international allies fought to reinstate São Tomé's president, and Obasanjo flew him back to his homeland in the presidential plane (Edo & Olarewanju, 2012).

President Muhammadu Buhari demonstrated passion for collaborating with regional leaders during his early years in government. Through the Multinational Joint Task Force (MNJTF), which was established in 2014 with the cooperation of three other Lake Chad nations—Chad, Cameroon, and Niger. He advocated for a multilateral approach to combating insecurity. Following his inauguration in May 2015, he visited Chad, Cameroon, Benin, and Niger, demonstrating his passion for and commitment to regional cooperation. He also distributed \$21 million of the \$100 million in monies that were promised to the MNJTF. His actions then raised the spirits of the commanders and soldiers of the other participating nations in the MNJTF (Folarin, 2024).

Factors Influencing Nigeria's Foreign Policy Decisions

Nigeria's 1999 constitution, which outlines the goals of its foreign policy direction, has oriented the country's foreign policy towards the ECOWAS regional agenda since it returned to democratic rule in 1999. A proactive foreign policy for Nigeria is outlined in Section 19 of the 1999 Constitution through the promotion of peace, security, and unity in West Africa and beyond, as well as economic development. With Olusegun Obasanjo's election as President of Nigeria, the country ended 35 years of military dictatorship and autocratic leadership and reverted to democratic governance on May 29, 1999.

Additionally, it offers ECOWAS protocol on democracy and good governance substance and legal grounding. As the presumed regional leader, Nigeria is expected to set an example, therefore its return to democratic government gives hope and relief to both Nigerians and the international community, particularly the member states of the ECOWAS. "We shall pursue a dynamic foreign policy to promote friendly relations with all nations and will continue to play a constructive role in the United Nations, the Organization of African Unity, and other international bodies," Obasanjo says in his inaugural speech, emphasizing the need for Nigeria to remain active at the forefront of international affairs. We will uphold the terms of the agreements that Nigeria and other nations now have. It is our determination to restore Nigeria fully to her previous position in the community of nations (Kalagbor, 2024). During Obasanjo's presidency, Nigeria's foreign policy toward ECOWAS was proactive and confirmed Nigeria's status as a regional power that is both sustained and expanded in Africa. Based on this idea, Nigerian foreign policy continued to focus on Africa, with a focus on promoting the regional agenda of the ECOWAS, development, peace, and security. Throughout Obasanjo's presidency, Nigeria's foreign policy was proactive. A concerted effort was made to promote Nigerian foreign policy abroad through a variety of initiatives, especially in its involvement in ECOWAS decision-making and programs. Ajetunmobi et al (2011) claimed that the first term of Obasanjo's administration was marked by a strong resolve to convert the nation's comparative and strategic advantages into real benefits and advantages for both the nation and all of Africa.

Nigeria's foreign policy may support and advance democratic values in ECOWAS member nations and other regions due to its newly acquired democratic credentials. By demonstrating strong opposition to non-democratic governments among ECOWAS member states within the sub-region, it aimed to ensure that democratic rule became the norm. For instance, the Nigerian government opposed regime changes brought about by military coups, especially in the cases of Guinea, Niger, Burkina Faso, and Sao Tome & Principe. The peaceful settlement of disputes is another significant development in Nigerian foreign policy under President Obasanjo. By adopting a peace philosophy, the Obasanjo administration helped to rebuild trust and credibility in West Africa. In order to advance toward long-lasting peace in Africa, he promoted four major issue areas that the continent has to solve. Reorienting the mentality, reframing sovereignty, redefining security, and institutionalizing democracy are a few of them (Obasogie, 2024).

Through a number of ECOWAS conventions, Nigeria appears to have demonstrated its leadership in mediating the political unrest in Sierra Leone,

Liberia, and Togo. Nigeria plays a leading role in mediating the Mano River conflict between Liberia, Guinea, and Sierra Leone while also putting an end to the ongoing hostilities in the region. Consequently, Nigeria was able to successfully launch the Gulf of Guinea Commission (GGC) thanks to the diplomatic talents it had developed over the years through its involvement in regional issues (Omo-ogbebor, 2017). In addition to providing a forum for the advancement of cooperative engagements among sub-regional organizations like the Central African Economic Community (CAEC) and the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), the goal of GGC was to fortify political and economic ties among its member states (Flemes, 2007).

In Nigerian political history, the election of President Umaru Yar'Adua and his ascension to office on May 29, 2007, marked a historic moment as it marked the transfer of power from one democratically elected leader to another. Under President Umaru Yar'Adua's administration, Nigerian foreign policy underwent a paradigm shift, straying from the old Afrocentric philosophy and placing a practical emphasis on the Nigerian people at the forefront of diplomatic interactions with other countries. According to Pogoson (2009), in order for Nigeria's government to effectively implement the noteworthy foreign policy position known as "Citizen Diplomacy," it must pay greater attention to the socioeconomic welfare, human rights, and basic needs of its citizens when engaging in bilateral and multilateral relations with other countries. Although it may seem simple, this has significant transformative and normative ramifications (Pogoson, 2009). However, the main focus of the new foreign policy initiative is on the socioeconomic welfare, human rights, and basic necessities of Nigerian citizens in international relations, both bilaterally and multilaterally. It is indisputable that Nigeria's natural base in the international community remains the African continent and the West African region, and this will always be on the country's foreign policy agenda, even in situations where Nigeria's national interest supersedes sub-regional, continental, and international concerns.

In order to guarantee the realization of ECOWAS Vision 2020, which Nigeria adopted with all seriousness, the agenda has been appropriately conceptualized, thoroughly expressed, and the implementation plans have been fully laid out. The majority of Nigerians think that there has never been a true balance struck between the country's foreign and domestic interests. As a result, the nation has gotten very little in return for its vast sacrifices made in continental and regional diplomacy, its ambitious Afrocentric foreign policy, and its generosity (Alao, 2011). Following President Yar'Adua's passing, Nigeria's foreign policy orientation toward ECOWAS was altered.

The Jonathan administration emphasized that Nigeria could only have a strong foreign policy in the presence of a stable political and economic environment. In this context, economic diplomacy is defined as the process by which nations engage with the outside world in order to maximize their national gain in all spheres of activity, such as trade, investment, and other favorable exchanges where they have a comparative advantage through bilateral, regional, and multilateral dimensions, all of which are significant. Nigeria's new foreign policy orientation, which places a strong emphasis on investment and economic cooperation and links foreign policy to the national agenda, is a dramatic shift from the previous one, which places Africa at the center (Augustus & Soboyejo, 2022).

Extent of Nigeria's influence in the West African sub-region.

"Afrocentrism" is the phrase used to describe Nigeria's concession-based foreign policy philosophy. Due to the political will of the United States and Great Britain, Nigeria's initial foreign policy goals which were focused on Africa-oriented policies in the interest of continental unity and the complete decolonization of the African continent were not implemented as planned. Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II, Governor-General Sir James Wilson Robertson, and another Western factor shaped Nigeria's foreign policy during the first republic, which prevented the nation from pursuing the Pan-Africanism goals (Yagboyaju & Akinola, 2019).

Before the second republic was established in 1979, the foreign policy credentials of the Olusegun Obasanjo and Murtala Muhammed administrations were extreme and threatening. Compared to the previous administration, the current one placed greater focus on Africa as the focal point of its foreign policy. For the first time in its political history, Nigeria directly defied the United States and Great Britain by recognizing the People's Movement for the Liberation of Angola (MPLA), and gave a substantial sum of money to the Government of that country which was contrary to the wishes of the West (Adams & Ebegbulem, 2016).

In Nigeria's second republic, the goal of President Shehu Shagari's administration was to make Africa the focal point of Nigeria's foreign policy and to advance and defend Nigeria's cause before the comity of nations. For example, the administration of President Shehu Shagari hosted the first Organization of African Unity (OAU) summit in Lagos, wherein the master plan for the economic recovery of the continent, whose resources had been exploited to the benefit of the West, called for ten years of reparations and reconstruction of the African states. Moreover, Nigeria's economic prosperity was diminished as a result of corruption, inflation, and Western influence, which caused several losses for President Shehu Shagari's administration. Under Shagari's leadership, the primary barrier to Nigeria's foreign policy goals was the influence of the West. Nonetheless, Great Britain was able to meddle in the way Nigeria's foreign policy was carried out because of the framework established during the colonial era (Omo-ogbebor, 2017).

Therefore, President Olusegun Obasanjo's vision which established economic diplomacy, citizenship diplomacy, Nigeria's position as a regional hegemony, and the imperative need for UN reform in the Fourth Republic is largely responsible for the intellectual foundation of Nigeria's foreign policy. In his inaugural speech in 1999, President Olusegun Obasanjo vowed to mend Nigeria's relations with African governments and expressed support for Nigerians both at home and abroad. Nigeria's conceptual foreign policy approach toward African governments assumed a new dimension in accordance with this ruling. Nigeria began mending and bolstering its international and bilateral ties with other African nations. According to Ashiru (2013), Nigeria's foreign policy has had a role in the environmental development of Africa in a number of ways.

Challenges faced by Nigeria in maintaining and expanding its regional influence.

Nigeria's utilization and advocacy of ECOWAS in the realm of security includes fostering security cooperation amongst West African nations and fostering the development of a regional community by developing political and security norms and standards that are endorsed by each and every member state.

Nigeria has exerted significant influence over the development of African Peace and Security Architecture (APSA) at the continental level by using the ECOWAS's achievements as a model for the emerging organization (Şahin & Şahin, 2023). ECOWAS has evolved into a supranational regional organization that significantly meddles in the internal affairs of its member states in West Africa. It has a number of policies, initiatives, and plans in place to address every security concern that the sub-region faces. Though it hasn't been fully developed yet, a new security paradigm is emerging throughout the area that is centered on human security as opposed to the conventional paradigm that refers to nations and the defense of their borders. ECOWAS and its member states have used the practices of sanctions, mediations, and electoral support in order to respond to a variety of circumstances (Birikorang, 2024). It is crucial to remember that regional security governance has significant issues and difficulties as well. Moving forward with transnational security issues like illicit trafficking which call for effective national implementation is actually made more difficult by the member states' inadequate institutional capabilities, lack of financial resources, and poor implementation of regional agreements. The operationalization of the ECOWAS Standby Force, which is still not fully on standby as seen by the deployment in Mali, is also impacted by the lack of capabilities. The commanders questioned at the ESF headquarters claimed that it is not feasible to maintain true military readiness on standby due to the underfunding of member states. Therefore, for regional security governance to be effective, Nigeria's financial resources, armed forces, and political will are required. For example, Nigeria is heavily involved in the new maritime security policy, which is currently being operationalized, whereas the drug trafficking Action Plan has not been executed since 2008. Nigeria runs the risk of using its financial and military might to combat internal security threats, which would limit its ability to fund regional security governance. Nigeria has pulled out part of its troops from the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali (MINUSMA) in order to combat Boko Haram in the country's north (Adela, 2023).

Nigeria and the international community bear some of the responsibility for the region's protection. It is crucial to underline that the majority of AU and ECOWAS security governance projects and programs are supported by extra-regional governments or international organizations. The Community budget in ECOWAS is allotted to the institutions' daily operations. One such example is the European Union (EU), which contributes 119 million Euros to regional security governance through its Regional Indicative Program. Agencies of the United Nations have also taken an active role in aiding African institutions of regional security. Partners like the US and the UK frequently fund programs intended to combat piracy and are highly interested in projects like maritime security and counterterrorism methods. For example, the ECOWAS Commission officer tasked with operationalizing the Maritime Security Strategy is funded by the UK. Similar to this, the German Technical creation Agency is a major supporter of the integration of sub-regional early warning systems into a wider continental network, as well as the creation of continental early warning systems (Oshewolo et al, 2024)..

From one perspective, this makes it clear that Nigeria has constraints that affect both its material might and its standing as a regional leader and actor.

This restriction is demonstrated by the need for French operations in the Ivory Coast and, more recently, in Mali. However, the result of extra-regional involvement is what really shows that ideas and values from outside of West Africa have an impact on regional governance. Nowadays, a number of ideas including "human security," "comprehensive security," and "good governance" are effectively incorporated into West African discourses. Since these proposals appear to address the needs of the region and to the extent that they are constantly in need of finance and support, ECOWAS and its authorities are highly receptive to them (Kalagbor, 2024).

Ultimately, even though Nigeria has pledged to raise the level of security engagement in Africa, this can occasionally be prohibitive because the sub-regional security architectures that make up the APSA's building blocks are at varying stages of evolution. Therefore, it has been challenging to create a fully integrated and functional continental architecture because of the unevenness. The rivalry that exists on the continent between South Africa and Nigeria constitutes a second ban. Since the AU and the APSA rely largely on donations from outside sources, this rivalry exposes a dysfunctional continental architecture to the rest of the world, endangering their sustainability. Clearly, there is a risk to the capacity to oversee security on a continental scale (Adela, 2023).

Regional Responses to Nigeria's Foreign Policy

Nigeria's leadership in preserving the peace and security in the area is undeniable, yet there have been many concerns expressed regarding its unilateral approach. Nigeria, a key player in the area, needs to learn to show respect for its neighbors and dispel the notion that it is pursuing a policy of haughty unilateralism. Nigeria must also push for burden sharing under the 1999 ECOWAS security system, support democratic governance, and work to stop illegitimate regime changes through NEPAD and the African Union. When talking about regional capacities, it's important to emphasize the UN's role in taking on primary responsibility for preserving world peace and security. The UN and ECOWAS need to agree on a fair labor sharing arrangement. A possible example might be UNAMSIL, the UN Mission in Sierra Leone, which was composed of 15,000 troops from outside West Africa and a core of 5,000 regional peacekeepers led by Nigeria (Enyiazu, 2022).

Finally, going back to the original topic, it is evident that addressing Nigeria's internal issues is a prerequisite for considering the country's ability to play a credible role in regional peace and security. Nigeria needs to have a strong economy and stable domestic politics in order for other countries to take its aspirations for leadership seriously. It also needs to supply the military might necessary for maintaining regional peace (Enyiazu, 2022).

Tensions between Nigeria and the West-African Sub-Region

Nigeria and her neighbors had quarreled a number of times over territorial borders. For instance, there was a border conflict between Nigeria and Chad in 1983, and the Nigerian government seriously considered taking military action against Chad. Beginning during the second republic, there was a complex dispute between Nigeria and Chad regarding ownership of islands in Lake Chad. It began formally when Idriss Deby, the then chief of staff of the Chadian Army, who later became the President of Chad, led an army that invaded portions of Borno State, Nigeria.

However, the Nigerian army was able to drive out the Chadians and briefly occupy Chadian land (Ani & Ojatorotu, 2018). Since gaining independence, Nigeria has had conflicting border relations with her closest neighbors, according to Atebi (1992). In a different dimension, in the early 1980s, Nigeria expelled a large number of illegal immigrants, mostly Ghanaians. During a press conference on January 5, 1983 Nigeria expelled almost two million labourers to their countries of origin. Majority of these cases led to brief diplomatic tussles between Nigeria and the concerned nations. Nonetheless, friendliness and good neighborliness remained the cornerstone of Nigeria's regional foreign policy (Daly, 2023)

One of the legacies of colonialism on Africa that resulted from the resolution of the Berlin Conference of 1884-1885 is the creation of boundary lines dividing the people into different territories. Nigeria's borders with its immediate neighbors offer an opportunity for Nigerian leaders and their immediate neighbors to promote and build on existing relations. Belov (2021) reviews the literature on regional identity and tradition in Africa and makes the case that the continent's partition into small sovereign states has contributed to the development of distinct national identities among the populace.

On the other hand, as a result of tensed occasional relations between Nigeria and her neighbors, mistrust and anxiety have been directed at Nigeria due to its size, population, and economic potentials. Irredentism, border disputes, and disagreements over mineral resources found in different border regions have all caused unrest and contention that have hampered cooperation among various African states as Jackson (2017) pointed out. Nigeria has so used the border regions between it and her neighbors as a means of fostering national interest through interpersonal, political, and economic ties. Investigating the problems of border ambivalence between Nigeria and her close neighbors is crucial. Nigeria and its immediate neighbors have experienced both peaceful and turbulent times. Asiwaju (1993) claims that in order to promote political, economic, and security cooperation in the area, the Nigerian government created bilateral relations with its closest neighbors.

To be clear, Nigeria-Niger collaboration was formed in 1971 to address a variety of concerns that both countries faced, particularly those pertaining to communities and boundaries. For example, the nations have hosted multiple meetings of the Joint Commission's Council of Ministers, which has developed ideas for the Border Market, the Bilateral Chamber of Commerce, and Warehouses in Konni and Maradi in Niger Republic.

A Joint Border Commission was established in 1981 by the Republic of Benin and Nigeria to handle matters like border disputes, smuggling, irredentism, etc. The commission was tasked with handling troop invasions from the opposite side of the nation. Following this development, concerns about border demarcation, illegal immigration, and harassment of individuals were discussed at a conference on Nigeria-Benin border cooperation that was held in Lagos.

Nevertheless, in April 1984, Muhammadu Buhari closed Nigeria's land border with its neighbors in the Lower Nile, in defiance of all the agreements made for unrestricted movement of people and goods throughout the area. Nonetheless, it was thought that this choice had cleared the path for the successful execution of the Nigerian currency swap. There was a claim that the border restriction was necessary in reaction to the danger of illicit products entering Nigeria across its borders, which had severely damaged the country's indigenous businesses (Okorn, 2024).

However, the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) strongly denounced Muhammadu Buhari's move to restrict Nigeria's land borders with its immediate neighbors. The ECOWAS protocol, which permits open borders and unrestricted movement of people and products throughout the subregion, was deemed to have been broken. Nigeria's land borders were reopened as soon as Muhammadu Buhari's government ended in 1985, according to Asiwaju (2003).

Relationships between Nigeria and the affected nations were impacted during the border closure period, particularly those between residents of the border communities who had been cohabiting for a number of years. However, President Buhari's new plans for border cooperation do not deviate from his prior plans, which he had both as head of state during his military tenure from 1983 to 1985 and as president of a democratic government starting in 2015.

Another incident included the Bakassi peninsula and involved Nigeria and Cameroon. Questions of self-determination and identity, as well as the legacy of inherited colonial limits, are at the heart of the Bakassi case before the International Court of Justice (ICJ). Based on its inherited title and claim of possession, Cameroon asserted its sovereignty over the lands of the Bakassi Peninsula. The border demarcations established between 1913 and 1931 by the various colonial governments of Germany, France, and Britain served as the foundation for its claim. Nigeria challenged Cameroon's ownership, relying on peaceful occupancy of some Bakassi territories and historical title consolidation as the basis for both its defense and counterclaims. Abuja additionally contended that because of its post-colonial governance, it was the rightful owner of sovereignty over the contested areas. After reviewing the arguments made by both parties, the ICJ issued a ruling in October 2002 that was mainly favorable to Cameroon. The World Court dismissed Nigeria's claim of sovereignty over Bakassi Peninsula, citing a lack of evidence that Cameroon had ceded its title to Nigeria. Most significantly, the Court acknowledged the Anglo-German Agreement that established the border between Nigeria and Cameroon in Bakassi in 1913 and rejected Nigeria's claim over the Bakassi peninsula (Omoogbebor, 2017).

Critics contend that this bilateral conflict serves as a prime example of how individuals in charge of handling Nigeria's foreign policy have frequently behaved without fully considering the implications of their actions, frequently skipping over careful consideration of what is best for the nation. One could argue that Cameroon approached the boundary dispute more consistently, having ratified the Vienna Convention on Law of Treaties in 1991 and acknowledged the International Court of Justice's compulsory jurisdiction in 1994, possibly in preparation for its government's decision to take Nigeria to court. One participant said that Nigeria's officials should learn from this case to always take the instruments they ratify seriously and consider the legal, economic, and political repercussions of doing so.

If Nigeria considers itself a key player in African and global affairs and wishes to be regarded as a significant actor on a global scale, it must also adhere to established international legal norms and standards. It should not be required to follow and enforce ICJ decisions, but rather to comply with accords that it has previously agreed to be binding (Enyiazu, 2022).

Diplomatic Relations between Nigeria and Niger amidst Coup Tensions

The Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) met in Nigeria's capital, Abuja, just hours after the coup that deposed President Mohammed Bazoum and led presidential guard commander General Abdourahmane Tchiani to proclaim himself the leader of a new Military Junta. The conference was chaired by Nigerian President Bola Ahmed Tinubu. ECOWAS has advocated using military force to overthrow the coup in Niger and has activated standby soldiers. Nigeria locked down its border with Niger, cutting off the country's electrical supplies and imposing economic sanctions. Every minute, more Nigerians spoke out against the use of military force. They include security professionals, religious and traditional leaders, as well as ordinary citizens. Nigeria has a border, historical, and traditional relations with Niger. Whatever the future holds, the crisis has significantly altered the relationship between the two countries.

Within days, the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) slapped a slew of sanctions against Niger, the most severe ECOWAS has ever levied on a member state. Members of the fifteen-nation bloc (excluding Burkina Faso, Guinea, Mali, and Niger, which have been suspended since falling under military rule) and the eight-member West African Economic and Monetary Union have agreed to close all borders with Niger, suspend financial transactions, and freeze the country's assets in external banks. ECOWAS also issued an ultimatum to the junta to restore constitutional order and reinstate the expelled president Mohamed Bazoum within one week or face further consequences, including military intervention (Sowale, 2024).

ECOWAS' early reaction to the Niger coup was justified, given legitimate fears about coup contagion throughout West Africa. Nigeria shaped this reaction. Eager to establish himself as a strong leader in the midst of a regional crisis, newly elected Nigerian President Bola Tinubu, who took over as ECOWAS chairman two weeks before the coup, was among the regional heads of state who called for aggressive action to restore Bazoum. Most politicians appeared to agree that Nigeria's army, the largest in West Africa, would lead any military operation.

However, ECOWAS and Tinubu appear to have overshot the point. Although the ECOWAS sanctions conveyed a strong signal of disapproval for coups and probably increased external pressure on Niger's generals, they also backfired in ways that affected both Niamey and Abuja. They have caused severe hardship in Niger, with negative knock-on effects on Nigeria, crippling a thriving cross-border economy straddling the long Nigeria-Niger border, disrupting livelihoods, exacerbating humanitarian challenges, and jeopardizing major rail and gas projects that could boost regional trade. On the political front, the sanctions pose a threat to bilateral cooperation on a variety of critical subjects, including security (Adedire, 2023).

Months after the sanctions were implemented in early August, a policy rebalance would benefit the peoples of Niger and Nigeria while also providing security and economic benefits to the region. While advocating for the restoration of democratic governance in Niger, the Nigerian Government should also utilize its influence with ECOWAS to push for a reassessment of the current sanctions package.

ECOWAS sanctions, in particular, should be revised to focus on the direct interests of junta officials who hold responsibility for returning the country to constitutional governance, rather than punishing the citizens of Niger and northern Nigeria as a whole (Adedire, 2023).

The goal of the ECOWAS sanctions was to put pressure on Niger's de facto military authority to reinstate Bazoum, but this has not happened. Meanwhile, citizens bear the brunt of the broad-based measures' impact. The ECOWAS sanctions have cut Niger off from many of its traditional trading partners, exacerbating chronic food shortages in vulnerable populations. The junta has maintained contacts with neighbors such as Burkina Faso, Chad, and Mali, whom it considers allies due to their military rule. However, the borders with Benin and Nigeria, from where Niger typically buys food and other supplies, remain closed. As a result, inhabitants faced shortages of medicine, cereals, and imported items such as sugar, powdered milk, and vegetable oil. In August, the price of rice surged by 21 percent according to World Food Program (WFP). By mid-October, the price of a 25kg bag of rice had increased by more than 50% in just two months. Prior to the coup, Niger was already experiencing its second-highest level of acute food insecurity since 2014, with 3.3 million (or 13.3 percent) of its 25 million people impacted; the WFP estimates that figure has more than doubled. While worldwide attention has centered on the Nigerien people's plight, the sanctions also affect Nigeria, which shares a 1,600-kilometer border with Niger (Adedire, 2023).

Since August, the restricted border with Niger has exacerbated Nigeria's problems. Millions of people in Nigeria's seven northernmost states who work in agriculture, the informal sector, or rely on cross-border trade have been particularly badly hit. These countries were already in a terrible economic situation before the coup-related sanctions took effect. Earlier this year, the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization projected that 3.3 million people were food insecure in three North East states (Borno, Adamawa, and Yobe), with 2.9 million in acute need in the North West. It further predicted that these figures would grow to 4.4 million and 4.3 million, respectively.

Politically, the ECOWAS sanctions are undermining long-standing relations between Nigeria and Niger. Niger has been Nigeria's most reliable security partner, particularly in the fight against insurgents in the Lake Chad region.

Many Nigerians believe that Abuja must strike a compromise between its adherence to democratic values under ECOWAS and the realities of managing security and humanitarian concerns, which necessitate ongoing participation and cooperation with Niger, even under military administration. They highlight how growing acrimony between the two countries may have long-term consequences for bilateral collaboration for a variety of reasons (Adedire, 2023).

First, recent tensions are already impeding regional stabilization efforts and may jeopardize counterterrorism efforts. Niger and Nigeria are among four Lake Chad basin states combining resources to combat Boko Haram and other armed organizations, most notably Islamic State West Africa Province (ISWAP).

Since 2015, the two countries have collaborated on counter-insurgency measures through the Multinational Joint Task Force (MNJTF), which includes Cameroon and Chad as well.

The force's activities have occasionally included troops from one country crossing into another. That arrangement now appears precarious. Military spokespersons in Niger and Nigeria have openly denied Nigerian media allegations that the Junta had withdrawn from the MNJTF. Nonetheless, collaboration has certainly fallen short of the levels seen before the coup and sanctions. Major General Edward Buba, Nigeria's director of defense media operations, stated that contact between Nigerien forces and the MNJTF headquarters has been hindered by the political situation.

There are also other MNJTF-related concerns. One issue is that Niger has yet to replace the troops it rotated out of MNJTF headquarters in N'Djamena in September, despite having nominated replacements. According to a Nigerien security source, this delay was caused by the need to focus military resources on defending Niamey from ECOWAS's threatened military intervention rather than any intention to withdraw from MNJTF, but it has resulted in a personnel shortage at the MNJTF headquarters for the time being (Adedire, 2023).

Aside from the MNJTF, Niger plays an essential role in Nigeria's security. The two countries have frequently worked together to combat illegal economic activity and cross-border crime, including drugs, guns, and human trafficking. Political instability in Niger may impede bilateral security operations and make young men in both countries more vulnerable to recruitment if jihadists or criminal gangs.

Finally, Niamey has seen Nigeria's decision to stop delivering energy as a particularly hostile move, despite the fact that it was obligated to do so under ECOWAS sanctions. Some analysts argue that the measure contradicts decades-old resource sharing agreements. Others point out that Niger has consistently failed to pay for its electricity, and that the construction of the Kandadji multi-purpose dam and hydroelectric power plant has already broken its agreement with Nigeria for joint usage of the Niger River. Whatever the case, the power disruptions have strained Niamey's relationship with its more powerful southern neighbor, potentially jeopardizing bilateral relations. Ahmed Magaji, former deputy head of Nigerian mission in Saudi Arabia and Nigerian ambassador to São Tomé, stated that "we are losing our longstanding strategic leverage with Niger" (Adedire, 2023).

The Leadership Question

Over the decades, there has been a recurring and continuous criticism that the Nigerian state, like its counterparts in Africa and other developing countries, underperforms due to a lack of state ability to deal with today's challenges of governance. The nature of the state, the public institutions that wield and enforce lawful power, is central to the study of politics in any state (Smith, 2003). As a result, understanding Africa's socioeconomic malaise requires a focus on state capability. Fiseha (2024) emphasizes the inherent obstacles of state maintenance in weak communities and proposes plausible causes for governments' incompetence, particularly during the period of globalization. Of greater significance is his identification of structural and contextual characteristics that increase the vulnerability of most African states, including Nigeria. Olumuyiwa & Isaiah (2023) investigates African sociopolitical and economic realities, attributing state failures to Africa's historical legacy of poor political leadership, corruption, conflicts, and wars. There is no disagreement about the various signs of African state failure and collapse; the subject of contention is the extent of the Nigerian state's incompetence.

The "petroleum-rich" Nigerian state, plagued by sociopolitical instability, high levels of corruption, widespread hatred toward the "public," and bad macroeconomic management, continues to exhibit the characteristics of a crisis (Chidiobi & Ibekwe 2022). Successive Nigerian governments, like many African states, have lacked the political will to undertake or sustain policy or structural transformation, or to embark on sound economic reform to situate the country for greatness (Chidiobi & Ibekwe 2022). Regardless of the rise of globalization and the prospect of a borderless state, the expectation is for states to play a decisive role in economic transformation, growth, and development, and to abandon any act that is detrimental to improved livelihood as well as socioeconomic and political development in the country. With the Nigerian state's weakness and ineffectiveness, it has become difficult to eradicate poverty, engage in infrastructure development, and stem the tides of insurgency and terrorism, which threaten to derail the country's moderate political growth. Without a question, the Nigerian state exemplified both state collapse and failure. According to Orhero, Okereka & Ogbe (2021), the Nigerian state has degraded to the point where it is unable to offer even basic social protection to its disadvantaged populace. This explains why the majority of the population still views a cheap oil pumping price as a form of social security and birthright.

Without a question, leadership plays an important role in all aspects of public administration and societal management. In light of this, Nigeria's inability to achieve effective governance that addresses issues of corruption, human rights, and the mobilization of people and material resources for sustainable development is widely attributed to leadership failure (Olumuyiwa & Isaiah (2023).

Democracy in Nigeria has failed to produce the desired results due to the character of the political elites, who have a poor understanding of what governance entails (Bolarinwa & Osuji 2022). Shanum 2013, on the other hand, argues that "the progress of any nation rests on the stature or standard of its leadership and how they can bring this to bear on the welfare of people of the nation."

As a result, the state is expected to carry out service delivery obligations such as the building of societal infrastructure such as roads, postal, and telecommunications, as well as water, sewage, and energy infrastructures. Ironically, the Nigerian state has failed to live up to these expectations. Indeed, if a political system is governed by visionless politicians, the country would always struggle to achieve peace and progress. Furthermore, "many African governments have remained either criminally blind to, or unable to address, the harsh realities of life for the majority of their citizens. In conclusion, leadership failure is one of the most powerful causes of state incapacity in Nigeria.

The Future of Nigerian foreign policy in West Africa

Political instability has plagued the West African sub-region, with military coups occurring on a regular basis. Mali has lately witnessed two coups, while Niger, Burkina Faso, Guinea, and Guinea Bissau have each experienced one failed or successful coup attempt. In December 2022, The Gambia stopped a coup attempt and charged eight soldiers with treason. There were concerns that Nigeria will face a similar predicament in 2022, but the military promised there were no such plans. Now that the elections, which dominated national politics for nearly a year, have passed, the president must begin to design strategies to spearhead answers to the problems plaguing the West African sub-region.

For starters, the region's volatility and instability necessitate regional support, which Nigeria has expertise providing. The ECOWAS region has enormous potential, but it lacks competent leadership.

Recent reports from the Institute for Insecurity Studies on the AU Peace and Security Council (PSC) have reaffirmed the need for large governments with political and economic clout to take on stronger leadership roles in driving agendas that promote a secure, peaceful, and prosperous continent. When the OAU was renamed the AU, the role of large states in promoting such growth became clear. The PSC was founded, in part, to provide more opportunities for countries to take on leadership positions on the continent. Its members' responsibilities include participating in peace building and conflict resolution initiatives in their region and across Africa. Nigeria is the longest-serving member of the PSC, having served since its inception. The fact that Nigeria is the lone member of this key council for so long highlights the country's strategic importance. It is past time for Nigeria to live up to the expectations placed on it in terms of facilitating defense policy and fostering peace and security in the West African area, and Africa as a whole. While intervening abroad, the government must also address domestic violence. Dialogue with agitators from the Indigenous People of Biafra in the South East is necessary in order to combat banditry and terrorism from groups such as Boko Haram in the North. Unresolved domestic conflicts can cause instability in the sub-region. There should be measures to carry on the already dissatisfied south-east region of the country. The Government should also take deliberate decision to bring all parts of the country aboard; and engage in community-led efforts to address the issues raised.

Unrest and violence may result in an inflow of individuals into neighboring countries that are unprepared to deal with such challenges. Nigeria's incapacity to address existing insecurity challenges has already impacted neighbouring countries. These crises, particularly those involving religious fanaticism and ethnic conflict, cannot be addressed solely through weapons and bullets. Increased collaboration and integration could lead to more innovative solutions. Cultural diplomacy is often overlooked, yet it has the ability to open tremendous amounts of collaboration inside the sub-region and within the country.

Regional endeavors without adequate domestic concerns and objectives may always result in wasted efforts. Nigeria's foreign initiatives would be considered ineffective unless there is domestic stability and stable economic growth. The crucial thing is to avoid emphasizing one over the other. Nigeria needs technocratic and visionary leadership that can handle the local economy while also repositioning the country in the international community (Adedire, 2023).

Conclusion

Since her independence in 1960, Nigeria has desired to take center stage in Africa, using her wealth, influence, and power to achieve this goal and develop national interests, particularly in the West African sub-region. In Nigeria's existence as a sovereign state, the country's influence through the instrument of foreign policy, which strives to promote and safeguard its national interests, may be better judged in the context of regional and continental leadership aspirations.

Aside from playing an important role in West Africa through the contribution of large military capacity and financial resources, Nigeria has also been influential in the majority of conflict settlements and peace accords in the West African sub-region.

This is demonstrated by her champion role in the signing of numerous peace treaties between various governments and insurgents in West Africa. Through the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), the country has given much-needed leadership in the sub-region during times of conflicts and catastrophes. However, it is argued that Nigeria's leadership role and interventions in West African conflict situations do not serve a clear national interest. In terms of value, there is no strong national consensus on the utility of Nigeria's interventions in West African crises, given the scale of leadership failure at home (Obasi, 2023). There has been a nationwide outcry about how successive Nigerian governments have interfered in West African wars at considerable expense to the country with little tangible advantages, while the country continues to face significant socioeconomic and security difficulties at home.

The end of the Cold War marked a significant shift in the dynamics of current world politics. Developing countries, such as Nigeria, with oil wealth, a huge army, and a vast pool of well-educated inhabitants, can now take a leadership role in Africa as the continent's strategic importance to major external powers declines. However, while policymakers and implementers of Nigeria's foreign policy appear to be committed to responding to external demands, pressures, and influences in order to contribute to regional peacekeeping, they must also respond appropriately to domestic pressures and influences, particularly those derived from public opinion.

While Nigeria's enormous potential is apparent based on its demographic scale of over 200 million people, multiethnic population, large oil reserves, and pool of highly talented and educated individuals, the bulk of its people remain impoverished. Similarly, while Nigeria has played an important role in international peacekeeping under the auspices of both the United Nations and the Economic Community of West African States Monitoring Group, the country has also been embroiled in conflict, whether at the level of intra-elite struggles for power or conflicts within the context of its troubled federal experiment. While Nigeria has the capability and institutional mechanisms to develop a vigorous foreign policy, its restrictions are domestic, specifically the composition of the foreign policy elite and Nigeria's economic dependency and fragility. Furthermore, the extent of Nigeria's state incapacity in the face of recent regional uprising tensions caused by several coups in the West Africa sub-region raises the leadership question of whether Nigeria will be able to live up to its goal of becoming the hegemonic power it aspires to be.

References

- Adams, J. A., & Ebegbulem, J. C. (2016). Nigeria's National Interest and Interventions in West African Conflicts: A Critical Analysis. *African Journal of Politics and Administrative Studies* 9(1).
- Adedire, A. (2023). Restoring Nigeria's Foreign Policy towards West Africa. *The Republic*, 7(2).
- Adela, G. (2023). A Force for the Right Purpose? Rethinking Western COIN Interventions in Africa's Sahel. *Journal of Military and Strategic Studies*, 22(3).
- Adogamhe, P. G. (2024). Nigeria in the Region and the World: Diplomatic Challenges in a Multipolar World. In *Diplomatic Strategies of Rising Nations in the Global South: The Search for Leadership and Influence* (pp. 243-272). Cham: Springer International Publishing.

- Ajetunmobi, R.O., Osunkoya, O.A. & T.F. Omotere, T.F. (2011). Impact of President Olusegun Obasanjo's personality on Nigerian foreign policy, 1999-2007. *Pakistan Journal of Social Sciences*, 8, 308-315.
- Akinola, A. O. (2008). Socio-economic reforms and the future of Nigerian State. *International Review of Politics and Development*, 6, 1254-1268.
- Alao, A. (2011). Nigeria and the global powers: Continuity and change in policy and perceptions (Occasional Paper No. 96). South African Foreign Policy and African Drivers Programme. SAIIA.
- Ani, K. J., & Ojatorotu, V. (2018). Realism in Nigeria-Chad diplomatic relations and the need for conflict transformation. *Ubuntu: Journal of Conflict and Social Transformation*, 7(1), 177-198.
- Augustus Olukayode Fisher, & Soboyejo Akintayo Oludemi. (2022). Reassessing Regional Integration in the West Africa Sub-Region: ECOWAS's Prospects and Challenges. *Britain International of Humanities and Social Sciences (BIOHS) Journal*, 4(1), 140–150. <https://doi.org/10.33258/biohs.v4i1.599>
- Birikorang, E. (2024). Eliciting Compliance from Member States: Coups and the Role of African Regional Organisations. In *The Resurgence of Military Coups and Democratic Relapse in Africa* (pp. 203-222). Cham: Springer Nature Switzerland.
- Bolarinwa, O. F., & Osuji, U. C. (2022). Political Elitism in Nigeria: Challenges, threats and the future of citizenship. *Open Journal of Philosophy*, 12(01), 105-122.
- Chidiobi, O. C., & Ibekwe, J. C. (2022). Oil Exploitation, Environmental Issues and Resource Curse in a Post-Colonial Niger Delta Region of Nigeria: The Unending Search for Peace, 1960-2009. *Advances in Social Sciences Research Journal*, 9(11).
- Chukwu, A. B., & Adewuyi, A. O. (2024). Foreign Direct Investment, Sectoral Output Performance and Poverty in Africa: Evidence from Panel Structural Vector Autoregressive and Threshold Regression Models. *International Journal of Finance & Economics*, 29(3), 2665-2698.
- Daly, S. F. C. (2023). Ghana Must Go: Nativism and the Politics of Expulsion in West Africa, 1969–1985. *Past and Present*, 259(1), 229-261.
- Edo, V. O., & Olanrewaju, M. A. (2012). An Assessment of the Transformation of the Organization of African Unity (O.A.U) To the African Union (A.U), 1963 - 2007. *Journal of the Historical Society of Nigeria*, 21, 41–69. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/41857189>
- Enyiazu, C. (2022). Nigeria's Foreign Policy, Regional Obligations and Constant Order Closures. *Journal of Contemporary International Relations and Diplomacy*, 3(2), 541–563. <https://doi.org/10.53982/jcird.2022.0302.04-j>
- Fiseha, A. (2024). The Nation State: Features, Its Pitfalls and Cleavages. In *Federalism, Devolution and Cleavages in Africa* (pp. 1-71). Cham: Springer Nature Switzerland.
- Flemes, D. (2007). Conceptualising Regional Power in International Relations: Lessons from the South African Case (GIGA Working Papers No. 53)
- Folarin, S. (2024). Nigeria's Roles in Africa under Civilian Rule, 1999–2022. In *Declining Hegemonical Foreign Policies of Nigeria: A Historico-Political Analysis* (pp. 291-405). Cham: Springer Nature Switzerland.

- Kalagbor, S. B. (2024). Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS): A Retrospective Analysis of the Roles and Contributions of Nigeria. *International Journal of Development Strategies in Humanities, Management and Social Sciences*, 14(1).
- Lopez Lucia, E. (2012). 'A Tool for Security Governance: How is the Shaping ECOWAS Security and Defence Regionalization Process. GREEN Working Paper, no. 17. Available at: http://www2.warwick.ac.uk/fac/soc/csgr/green/papers/workingpapers/gem/no1._elisa_lopez_luica.pdf
- Moliki, A. O., & Akanbi, N. A. (2024). Transnational Threats and Foreign Policy Shifts: Investigating the Impact of Globalization on West African Countries. *Wukari International Studies Journal*, 8(5), 32-42.
- Obasi, N. (2023). ECOWAS, Nigeria and the Niger Coup Sanctions: Time to Recalibrate. Crisis Group. Website: https://www.crisisgroup.org/sites/default/files/2023-12/ecowas-05xii23_0.pdf.
- Obasogie, H. M. (2024). Nigeria's Foreign Policy in a Democratic Setting: An Appraisal of the Fourth Republic. *NIU Journal of Social Sciences*, 10(1), 51-55.
- Odorige, F. O. (2024). Coups, Regional Security Complexes and the Impact of Nigeria's Peacekeeping in West Africa, 1960–2022. *Hadmérnök*, 19(1), 177-195.
- Okolo, P. O., Efebeh, V. E., & Boubai, J. J. (2024). Political Economy of Africa: A Comparative Analysis of Nigeria and South Africa. *EBSU Journal of Social Sciences and Humanities*, 14(3).
- Okorn, F. T. (2024). Examining Border Relations and Nation-Building: Nigeria and its Neighbors from 1960 to 2002. *GNOSI: An Interdisciplinary Journal of Human Theory and Praxis*, 7(1), 91-102.
- Olumuyiwa, A. T., & Isaiah, A. O. (2023). Political Leadership, Corruption, and Insecurity in Nigeria: Issues, Challenges, and Way Forward. *African Renaissance*, 20(2), 331.
- Omo-ogbebor, D. O. (2017). Nigerian Foreign Policy Approach towards ECOWAS. *Journal of Human Sciences*, 14(4), 4015. <https://doi.org/10.14687/jhs.v14i4.4656>
- Orhero, A. E., Okereka, P. O., & Ogbe, H. E. (2021). Corruption and Threat of State Failure in Nigeria. *EBSU Journal of Social Sciences and Humanities*, 11(1).
- Oshewolo, S., Azeez, A., Adesanya, O., Oladipo, T., Olaleye, O., & Ade-Ibijola, O. (2024). Nigeria in ECOWAS Politics: Major Contributions, Dividends and Setbacks. *Insight on Africa*, 16(2), 127-145.
- Pogoson, A.I. (2009). New dimensions in Nigeria's foreign policy, 1999–2009. *Journal of African Culture and Civilization*, 2, 58-73.
- Şahin, S., & Şahin, M. O. (2023). African Missions of the European Union in the Context of Security Strategy. *JOEEP: Journal of Emerging Economies and Policy*, 8(2), 31-56.
- Smith, B. C. (2003). *Understanding Third World Politics: Theories of Political Change and Development*. New York, NY: Palgrave Macmillan.

- Sowale, A. O. (2024). The Military Coup in Niger Republic: Anti-democracy or Pro-autocracy, and Ominous Conflict Trend Implications for Nigeria in West Africa. *Africa Review*, 1, 1-23.
- Umar, A., Muyiwa, O. O., Umar, M., & Dung, K. L. (2023). Nigeria's Foreign Policy Objectives and National Question: Assessing Implementation and Challenges. *Kashere Journal of Politics and International Relations*, 1(2).
- Yagboyaju, D. A., & Akinola, A. O. (2019). Nigerian State and the Crisis of Governance: A Critical Exposition. *SAGE Open*, 9(3).
<https://doi.org/10.1177/2158244019865810>