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OIL AND THE NIGERIAN FOREIGN POLICY 1970 – 1999

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ABSTRACT
This research examined the impact of oil on Nigerian foreign policy from 1970 to -1999, spanning a thirty years' period. The research adopted historical and explanatory research approaches, anchored on a triangulation of role theory and realism theory. Data were sourced from secondary sources and analyzed via descriptive statistics. Findings revealed that from 1970–to 1980, the impact of oil transformed the conservative foreign policy inherited from colonial era to a dynamic and vibrant one, with the central thrust remaining afro-centricism. The decline in Nigeria's diplomatic status within the context of the vibrancy of her foreign policy could be traced to the country's weak and struggling economy due to vagaries of global oil price fluctuations from 1983 to – 1999. This paradigm shift resulted in the adoption of economic diplomacy and shuttle diplomacy. This development resulted in Nigerian foreign policy jettisoning its dynamic and assertive posture which the impact of oil sustained on her foreign policy relations. The paper recommends among others, that Nigeria should diversify her economy to make other sectors like; agriculture and mining sectors more productive and revenue generating to reduce over dependency on oil and sustain her dynamic and assertive foreign policy posture.

KEYWORDS; ***Foreign policy, Oil-boom, Afro-centric, Economy, diplomatic-status***

Introduction

Nigeria was an agrarian monolithic society until 1970s. According to Mbakwe and Chukwu (2016), 75 percent of Nigerian revenue came from natural resources such as cocoa, groundnuts, cotton, palm fruits, maize among others. Oil was first discovered in Oloibiri in present day Bayelsa State in 1956, making Nigeria the first oil producer in Africa. Out of a total 126.847 billion barrels of oil reserves held by the African continent, Nigeria currently holds 37.2 billion barrels which translates to 29.3 percent of the continents reserves. This record makes Nigeria, the largest oil producer in Africa (Fayomi et al, 2005). Statistics from the Central Bank of Nigeria, shows that Nigeria's oil production capacity was 2.53 million barrels per day and shares 2.95 percent of world production with a daily crude oil export of 1.02 million barrels to the United States of America alone (Ezirin, 2011). In addition, within the same period, Nigeria's natural gas reserves were estimated to be 180 trillion cubic feet (Garba, 2017).

The 1970-1973 Arab-Israeli, Yom Kippur War marked a watershed in Nigeria's oil production and revenue and its impact on national development and foreign policy. The Yom Kippur war and the resultant oil embargo imposed by OPEC lead to 100 percent increase in global oil price and increased revenue for Nigeria from 1971. According to Aboje et al (2016) between 1970 and-1999, Nigerian earnings from oil stood at USD 104.05 billion, making Nigeria a wealthy nation.

At independence in 1960, and at his first address to the global community at the UN Prime Minister Abubaker Tafawa Balewa outlined the direction of Nigerian foreign policy thrust when he made his famous "Nigeria's Africa, Africa's Nigeria" speech. He declared in his UN address that

"*On the question of colonialism and racial Discrimination in Africa, I am afraid that we in Nigeria will never compromise"*
(Nwanuole and Iwohe, 2012).

The Nigerian first Prime Minister was informing the global community that Nigeria was taking responsibility to support Africa, making African liberation and unity the center of Nigerian foreign policy and development initiatives. Since then Africa has remained the cornerstone of Nigeria's foreign policy because with the significant impact from oil revenue, Nigeria possessed the needed resources which placed her in position to fill identified gaps in other black African states. For instance, Nigeria uses its oil resources to play a vital role in the independence of countries such as Zimbabwe, Namibia and South Africa among others. Nigeria also made significant financial contributions to the frontline states of Zambia, Tanzania and Mozambique.

Nigeria buoyed by her financial resources from oil states, took up the crucial leadership role as continental hegemony, as well as directs her foreign policy initiatives to fight colonialism, racism, apartheid, combat conflict and assist African nations to build stronger institutions and promotes African unity. Nigeria's foreign policy has thus far been interpreted along these lines (Ezeolisa, 2015). As a result of this foreign policy thrust, Nigeria has continued to play decisive and active roles in African crucial issues such as participation in peace-keeping operations in Congo, Liberia and Sierra Leone under ECOMOG. Earlier, Nigeria had contributed substantially to the establishment of the OAU now African Union (AU), ECOWAS among several contributions through financial resources accruing from crude oil. The primary objective of this study is to investigate the impact of oil in Nigeria's foreign policy between 1970 and-1999.

Methodology

The objectives of this paper includes

The primary objective of this study is to investigate the impact of oil in Nigeria's foreign policy between 1970 and-1999. Other intermediate objectives include to;

- Identify the role of oil in driving Nigeria's foreign policy initiatives between1970 and-1999.
- Evaluate Nigeria's foreign policy objectives between 1970 and-1999.
- Evaluate the results of the impact of oil in Nigeria's foreign policy initiatives in African and global context.

Inline, with these objectives the paper, adopted the Ex- Post- Facto research design involving the use of secondary sources of data obtained from published- books, peer-reviewed scholarly works, academic internet sources, journal, newspapers and official documents. Since the focus of the paper is anchored on international relations perspective, data generated were analyzed via content analysis to answer the following research questions.

1. What are the foreign policy objectives of Nigeria?
2. In what ways can we say oil revenue shaped the direction of Nigeria's foreign policy between 1970 and-1999?
3. What are the outcomes of the impact of oil in Nigeria's foreign policy between 1970 and-1999?

Theoretical Framework

The study is anchored on a triangulation of Role Theory and Realism theory. Role theory postulated by Banton (1965) provides the platform for understanding the relationships that exist at different level of society. The theory examines the linkages between organization, culture and human performance in the course of interaction. According to Martin and Janelie (2005) proponents of this theory, social structures and class division were propagated in Africa through colonialism, apartheid and racism. The authors highlighted that the late 1980's-2003 West Africa was overwhelmed by conflicts which threatened the regions foundations and aspirations. These conditions called for concerted efforts which Nigeria responded to. Nigeria subsequently assumed a leadership role where the elite class,

bureaucrats and institutions responsible for external relations and populace contributed (Folarin, 2010).

Realism theory was propagated by Morgenthau (1985), holds that the desire for power as a distinctive element for international politics constitute the root of evil in human actions. The theory also focuses on the role of the state, security and importance of power. The application of Role Realism theory shows that Nigeria's decision making process in responding to fill the leadership gap represents her ideological, political orientations, behaviors and harmony that shaped the conception, formulation and implementation of Nigeria's foreign policy within the African continent overtime.

Conceptual Analysis

Analysis of the Concept of Foreign Policy

According to Ujo (2019) conceptualized foreign policy as a coordinated strategy with which institutionally designated decision makers seeks to manipulate international environment in order to achieve certain national interest. For Adedeji (2004) foreign policy is a projection of the country's national interest into the transnational arena and the consequent interaction of one with the other. Wallace also conceptualized foreign policy as "that area of politics which bridges the boundary between the nation-state and its international environment". The foregoing definitions show that foreign policy to large extent is conditioned by a country's domestic goal which is the achievement of national interest.Muhammed-zaki (2011) asserted that all foreign policy activities are usually targeted towards the attainment of national interest.Aluko (2018) observed that what is imperative in a nation's foreign policy is the promotion and sustenance of her national interest. Lancaster (2017) noted that although national interest of a country is not clearly defined in specific terms, it is seen from a subjective and objective perspective. The subjective perspective maintained that national interest is not an objective truth that prevails whether or not it is perceived by members of a nation. On the other hand Morgenthau who ascribed to the objectivist school noted that "the best interest of a nation is a matter of objective reality". Aluko (2018) corroborates, this position that policies which are designed to serve some interest in one period, under particular circumstances may become irrelevant in another period during which different conditions prevail.

Hill (2013) in his definition sees foreign policy as a set of objectives with regard to the world beyond the borders of a given social unit and a set of strategies and tactics designed to achieve these objectives. From power perspective foreign policy is said to be the use of political influence by one state to induce other states to exercise power in the manner it desires (Northedge, 2012). Northedge further argued that foreign policy decisions and actions are products of environmental factors both internal and external. He said foreign policy conceptualized as a measure of state capacity to influence the behavior, shapes, decisions or alter goals and objectives of other actors. A good example of the power perspective within the context of foreign policy is the ideological rivalry that existed between the then western Bloc lead by the United States of America and the Eastern bloc represented by former Soviet Republic. In the light of the foregoing, foreign policy can be defined as a measure of a state's capacity to influence the behavior, to shape the decision or alter the goals and objectives of other states. According to Akinboye (2016) foreign policy is an extension of domestic policy.

Within the context of Nigeria's foreign policy, Aluko (2018) viewed Nigeria's oil resources as an important factor that led to its radical foreign policy stance. The oil boom according to Aluko made it possible for the government to embark on radical foreign policy. He noted further that the personal charisma and perception of leaders influenced Nigeria's foreign policy. From the foregoing analysis, it can be seen that the foreign policy of any country is the product the people's domestic circumstances and as well as a function of the people's aspirations in external environment. It is a dynamic process which takes into consideration the changing circumstances of the people pitted against the demands and sensitivities of the external environment.

Egbo (2003) maintained that the foundation of Nigeria's foreign policy was laid before independence. He argued that the organization and administration of the country's foreign policy machinery was planned prior to independence, while the training of those who services have had the most profound effects on the conduct of Nigeria's foreign policy took place during pre-independence era of the 1950s.

Analysis of the Concept of National Interest

The concept of national interest means different things to different people. For instance, conceiving a nation's power as the source of what is best for it and as the basis of making its value preferences and the range of conceivable interest is a broad view (Alkali, 1997). National interest according to the author is the key concept in foreign policy. In essence, Alkali went further to state that foreign policy amount to the sum total of all national values. For Osita (2010), an ideal foreign policy should contain a systematic formulation of national interest in which inconsistent interests have been weeded out and such interest judge against one another in terms of priorities and also the interest as a whole, budgeted against the power of state to achieve those interests. According to Okoro (2014), once the process of molding national interest into an overall foreign policy is completed the state is ready in its dealings with other states to pursue a logical and consistent policy. To pursue and achieve these interests, Alkali (1997) posited that a country must give serious consideration to the sum total of all tangible and intangible instruments of power available to a country in relation to other states. In this regard, the tangible determinants of the state power include the size of the population, its demographic configuration, natural resources and their distribution, the level of development, its military capacities and technological development.

The Impact of Oil in Shaping Nigeria's Foreign Policy Objectives

Nation states by their nature must interact with one another. The interaction can take different forms and influenced by different motives. Oluwatosin (2016) noted that foreign policy can be seen as a reaction to external stimuli while reflecting on domestic realities. Crude oil right from the 19th and early 20th century has been of prior importance particular to states. One of the importance of oil today us due to the fact that it's a source of energy which is of great interest to industrial and technological advanced nations to fuel their industrial manufacturing processes and provide heat, light and air conditioning for homes and businesses. Another importance is that oil serves as lubricants for machines; lubricants are products of oil and since the late 19th century, more that 90 percent of all lubricants have been obtained from oil. Crude oil is also a revenue source for states. For instance, the discovery of oil in the Arabian Peninsula, the Niger Delta of Nigeria and the Gulf of Mexico has increased external revenue accruing to these states. According to Oluwatosin (2016), the possession of oil contributes to national interest at the international arena. He noted that the impact of oil in foreign policy is that it is an important tool in interstate relations. A common technique in oil politics at the international level is manipulation of the resource. For instance, the nation state that possesses oil as a resource which is essential for the survival or well-being of another, the threats of withholding it is a weapon. In 1960, five of the world largest oil-producing nations established the Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC), since then OPEC nations have exacted numerous concessions from various industrial nations by manipulating both the supply and price of crude oil as well as imposed trade embargo. As a result of this, Adeniyi (2012), noted that oil is used as an instrument of coercion in foreign policy for political reasons or to protect or promote national interest. For example, the US has historically imposed oil embargoes than any other nations, such as the oil embargoes on Japan before World War II, on the Soviet Union in the 1960s and on South Africa, Burma, Serbia Libya, Iran and Iraq in the last two decades (Adeniyi, 2012). The author further observed that a number of Arab oil producing states used oil as an instrument to coercion against Western countries in 1956, 1967 and 1973. Their objectives especially in 1967 and 1973 was to force countries that support Israel to change their foreign policies and put political pressure on Israel to withdraw from territories it occupied during the 1967 war (Oluwatosin, 2016).

Abiodun (2011) noted that the determinant of the vibrant foreign policy is the consequence of relations among powerful economic nations and their coercive power among comity of nations in the world. Coercion he asserted can be through the use of threats to influence another's behavior by making it choose to comply rather than directly forcing it to comply. Coercion can also involve the use of deterrence, made to cause a target state not to take particular action or compelling a target state to stop a current action or to undertake another. For example, since there is no central authority in the world, Oluwatosin (2016) pointed out that each nation retains the ability and right to use coercion against any other nation with which it has a dispute based on the level of power they possess. An example of such coercive actions is the restriction or imposition of fines in oil as was the case when the United States resupplied Israel with weapons during the Yom Kippur war of 1973. In response, Arab oil producing countries cut back their exports of oil to the US and other Western nations. In this

way, oil as an instrument of coercion involves the use of oil as a tool for power by a supplier country or countries that make a concerted effort to utilize the embargoing of oil to affect the foreign policy of the target country or countries through economic sanctions. Adeniyi (2012) observed that oil as an instrument of coercion in foreign policy is effective if it results in a substantial alteration in the targets policy consistent with the initial stated goals. Against this backdrop, it is worth noting that Nigeria could not sanction any erring nation due to its dependence on oil as a source of revenue.

The discovery of oil in Nigeria like in other nations impacted directly the country's foreign policy direction and shaped its design in such a way that it ensures continuous supply of oil to the global market thereby catering for her short term and long-term goals. In Nigeria not only did oil revenue fueled the economy as a major source of Nigeria's foreign exchange earnings especially during the oil boom of the 1970 and 1980s it also impacted positively as well as shaped the direction of Nigeria's foreign policy thrust and objectives.

The Impact of Oil on Nigeria's Foreign Policy Between (1970 and-1980)

The research findings showed that the Yom Kippur War, oil windfall and the liberation struggle in Africa shaped the tone of Nigeria's foreign policy articulation within this period. At the beginning of 1970, Nigeria was coming out from the Biafra-Nigerian Civil War which started in May 30th 1967 and ended on January 1979. The research findings showed that an estimated one to two million Nigerians died in this war (Adebayo, 2003). The foreign policy thrust under General Gowon was war diplomacy, geared towards countering succession by the Biafrans from Southeast and preventing other countries from recognizing Biafra (Effiong, 2012).At the international level, Gowon established closer diplomatic relationship with Eastern block to support the war and built awareness of the communist ideals in Nigeria.

The financial assistance to the liberation movements and Non-African Nations and to fight droughts in some part of Africa were positive highlights of his foreign policy as a result of impact of oil revenue that boosted the Nigerian economy. Other impacts of oil revenue in Nigeria's foreign policy between 1970 and 1975 when Gowon was overthrown by General Buhari's coup include the establishment of ECOWAS in 1975, Niger and Chad Basin Development Authorities and the appointment of two Nigerians into two prominent international organizations boosted the international image of Nigeria.

The oil boom and increased revenue from it provided more stimuli to the dynamism of Nigeria's foreign policy under Gowon from 1970 to – 1975 in line with the theoretical frame work, elements of Marist and realism characterized Gowon's retaliation foreign policy in post-war Nigeria which targeted countries that supported Biafra during the war. From the analysis the research can established that Gowon against the backdrop of impact of oil revenue drastically altered the landscape of Nigeria's foreign policy as well as expanded Nigeria's contacts at the international level.

The highlights in General Murtala's brief tenure as Head of State against the background of oil revenue impact on Nigeria's foreign policy the research can establish include the establishment of the Adedeji Foreign Policy commission whose report provided a well defined foreign policy direction for the country. The public disclosure of the context of President Ford's letter and the recognition of MPLA and the financial support to the liberation movement are positive points for Muritala's foreign policy achievement.

The military government of General Olusegun Obasanjo that took over from Murtala continued the Murtala dynamic foreign policy thrust by providing space for the liberation movement to set up mission in Nigeria and mobilized external resources for the liberation struggle. Within the context of the theoretical framework of this research,this development fits into the theory of realism and the use of power and resources as political weapon to fight colonialism. Other notable foreign policy achievements recorded due to the impact of oil revenue under the Obasanjo military administration from 1976 to – 1979 that this paper established from findings include the sponsoring of the World conference for actions against apartheid in 1976 in Nigeria,which prompted the united nations security council to declare a mandatory Arm Embargo against South Africa in 1978. Another successful boycott of major international sporting events, namely the summer Olympics and common

wealth games in Montreal and Alberta are remarkable movements for Nigeria's foreign policy as a result of the impetus from oil revenue. In addition, the refusal of the Obasanjo's government to trade crude oil with South Africa and the amount of foreign exchange deliberately lost in the process demonstrated, Nigeria's distaste for apartheid, while the Nationalization of British companies are other positive foreign policy highlights due to impact of oil on Nigeria's foreign policy. Other notable foreign policy success as a result of the impact of oil between 1970 and 1980 that constitute the first phase of this analysis, the research finding established include the sponsorships of FESTAC, the establishment of Nigerian Trust Fund in addition to ECOWAS compensation Fund. These Foreign policy achievements served as positive interactive force in West Africa (Barnes, 2014).

The impact of oil on Nigeria's Foreign Policy between 1981 and – 1990

This period marked the return to democratic governance in Nigeria. A general election was held 1979, which was won by Alhaji Shehu Shagari, a candidate of the National Party of Nigeria (NPN). From 1st October to December, 31st 1984, constitute Nigeria's second democratic experience. Like the previous administration before it, Alhaji Shehu Shagari's administration relied solely on oil revenue which accounted for 92 percent of Nigeria's export earnings (Mbakwe and Chukwu, 2016). The Global oil crisis and debt overhang marred any progress in the economy. According to Mbakwe and Chukwu (2016), agriculture which contributed 75 percent to the national revenue in the 1960, between1979 and – 1985, agriculture contributed only 7.5 percent of revenue. Shagari's Government foreign policy unlike during the military era was non-radical.

This can be seen from his administration response to the Bakasi conflict between Nigeria and Cameroon over land and maritime boundary, including the Bakasi peninsula. While public opinion expected a military approach, Shagari adopted a diplomatic option and peaceful resolution (Baye, 2010) at the global level Shagari's foreign policy thrust was Afro-centric. Under Shagari's administration, Nigeria joined the OAU peacekeeping force in the Chad conflict and provided USD 82 Billion dollars of the OAU logistic budget for the peace keeping operation code named "Operation Harmony" (Adoba, 2014).

In the economic scene, the research found, competition and rivalry among political parties led to economic mismanagement. An unexpected fall in the global oil prices led to severe economic crisis. This development the research found led to balance of payment deficit, rising unemployment, debt overhang and food insecurity. Shagari government consequently resorted to external borrowing from multi-lateral institutions and international banks, supplier's credit and contractor finance (Effiong, 2012).

Nigeria's sustained pressure against apartheid and protest against Britain for its sporting links with South-Africa are positive highlights for Nigeria's foreign Policy. The expulsion of African immigrants notably Ghanaians during this period are considered double standard against backdrop of Nigeria's Afro-centric foreign policy stance.

Buahri's government adopted concentric circles as foreign policy thrust making national economic and security interest of immediate priority before the regional. The recognition of Saharawi Arab Republic (SADR) in protest against Morrocco's occupation of the region was a positive foreign policy achievement while the closure of Nigerian borders with Chad and Cameroon were negative points including General Idiagbon's uncompromising posture that hindered diplomacy and relationship building.

Babangida's foreign policy era between 1987 and-1993 was characterized by economic diplomacy led to new relationships, bilateral agreements and increased capital flows from loans and Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) in the face of declining oil revenue Babangida also secured a foreign policy point when he spearheaded a total Africa boycott of commonwealth games in Edinburg in 1986 and also secured two prominent international appointments at the Commonwealth of Nations and United Nations for Nigeria to boost her reputation.

Another landmark foreign policy achievement against the backdrop of oil revenue impact on Nigeria's foreign policy during this period was the establishment of ECOMOG, including an endowment Fund

to support the war and an increased in Nigeria's contribution to ECOWAS from 32 percent to 40 percent to assist the peacekeeping efforts. Another positive point in Nigeria's policy thrust during this period is the establishment of the Technical Aid –Corp (TAC), which helped to bridge the man-power gaps in many newly independent African, Caribbean and pacific nations till date. The establishment of TAC challenges the nation that Africa is only a recipient of aid.

The Third phase of analysis in this research from 1991 to 1999,which focuses on the shift from the Afro-centric foreign policy posture that had won Nigeria respect internationally to an economic diplomacy, which was a country centered policy by the Babangida was the major highlight during this period. This paradigm shift indicated that the Nigerian government now operated in the interest of the capitalist world. This development reflects Marxist and realist's theory of the state, the consequences of this foreign policy shift meant that because of the expected economic assistance from the West, Nigeria remained silent on many issues in the activities of the West to avoid alienation.

General Abacha stepped in to replace Babangida and sustained the peacekeeping mission in Liberia, Abacha's foreign policy thrust was reactive and isolationist mission in Liberia. A negative highlight in Abacha's foreign policy was his refusal to pardon the Ogoni 9 against widespread international and domestic clamor for their release on humanitarian consideration as well as the continued incarceration of Moshood Abiola. In response many diplomatic missions in Nigeria shut down, sanctioned were imposed on Nigeria by Western powers led by the common wealth Nations and Nigeria became a pariah State.

The Impact of Oil on Nigeria's Foreign Policy between 1991 and - 1999.

During the Third phase of analysis in this research from 1991 to 1999, the shift from the Afro-centric foreign policy which had won her respect internationally to an economic diplomacy which was a country centered policy by Babangida was the major highlight during this period. This paradigm shift indicated that the Nigerian government now operated in the interest of the capitalist world. This development reflects Marxist and realist's theory of state, the consequences of this foreign policy shift meant that because of the expected economic assistance from the West, Nigeria remained silent on many issues in the activities of the West to avoid alienation.

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Though General Abubakar that replaced Abacha made efforts to reverse the battered image of Nigeria's foreign policy between 1998 and 1999 through his shuttle diplomacy and attendance of international events, the submission drawn from the research findings revealed that Nigeria was viewed as an emerging power between 1970 – 1983 due to the impact of oil revenue that provided impetus and dynamism to her foreign policy articulations during the oil boom However by 1999 Nigeria was viewed as belonging to a group of poor under-developed countries with a dependent and weakened foreign policy due to unexpected fall in global oil prices which led to severe economic crisis in Nigeria.

Conclusion and Recommendations

With the impact of oil revenue, Nigeria pursued a dynamic foreign policy from 1970 to -1983, especially under the military governments, starting from General Gowon in 1975, which used war diplomacy to protect Nigeria's sovereignty. Under the impact of oil windfall, the government expanded Nigeria's international contacts, provided grants to the Caribbean and pacific black nations. The military government of Murtala Mohammed pursued an assertive stance in its southern Africa foreign policy and rejection of Western Interference in African Issues. Nigeria Successfully led Africa to boycott high profile sporting and International events. FESTAC was hosted that brought in over

500,000 Africans from the Diaspora. Foreign policy initiatives using educational and soft loans for African nations were uniting and integrative mechanism.

The research established from the findings that oil played major roles in how each military and democratically elected government articulated Nigeria's foreign policy objectives. Oil boom experience during the military regimes promoted dynamic and assertive foreign policy thrust while the oil shocks experienced from 1983 left the country with debts and a dependent and weakened foreign policy.

The paper recommends the following as a way forward;

1. Nigeria should diversify her economy to make other sectors like agriculture, mining and others sectors more productive and revenue generating to reduce dependency on oil.
2. In line with the demand of the globalization process it is recommended that Nigeria under the current administration embark on economic diplomacy and vibrant foreign policy in order to regain Nigeria's status of African Spokesman at the international level.
3. It is also recommended that since the liberation struggles have been successfully concluded, Nigerian Government should now focus more on domestic policies which would translate to external policies instead of exerting effort on its moribund Afro-centric foreign policy

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