

FOREIGN POLICY AND DOMESTIC POLITICS OF NIGERIA: A CONTEMPORARY DISCOURSE

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ABSTRACT

Since gaining political independence in 1960, the Nigerian state continues to face myriads of politically-related challenges. Inequitable social structure, injustice, high-rate poverty and inequality, among other woes, characterize the political space. What impacts do the politically-linked snags have on the actualization of the country's foreign policy? This is what this paper set out to investigate. The study relied on Social Constructivist Theory as framework of analysis. Data was collated from secondary sources while qualitative descriptive technique was used for analysis. The paper found that the internal politics of Nigeria produces negative outcomes which devalue the geo-political space and hinders the country from firmly pursuing its outlined foreign policy goals. It therefore recommended opening up of the political space by way of ensuring fair treatment for all sections of the country. It equally recommended strong political will in building a virile economy to drive a strong, stable and consistent foreign policy.

Keywords: *foreign policy; domestic politics; justice; poverty; inequity.*

INTRODUCTION

The domestic politics of Nigeria is today enmeshed in lots of contradictions. Almost 60 years after gaining political independence, Nigeria has witnessed zero or little success in the task of harnessing political and economic potentials for prosperity of citizens, on one hand, and for power in the international community, on the other hand.

For instance, despite the fact that Nigerian economy is growing, poverty in the country remains real, high, ravaging, abject, pervasive and ever increasing (Asogwa and Okoli, 2008; Okoye,

2002; National Bureau of Statistics, 2010; World Bank, 2019; Dangana, 2011). This is an obvious failure to deploy political tools for prosperity of the populace. Thus, politics of exclusion, injustice, ethnicity, inequity, social and economic inequality and other societal ills remain rife in Nigeria.

It is a truism that domestic politics shapes foreign policy of states. Ojukwu (2015) agrees to the fact that the setting in which foreign policy is made is pivotal, suggesting that domestic politics impacts on international relations. Unarguably, international politics and domestic politics are engaged in an inseparable marriage of sort, such that whereas international politics influences domestic politics, the latter equally impacts on the former. In other words, there exists a harmonious juxtaposition between domestic political circumstances of states and their foreign policy outlook. It is in that same line that Okeke (2018), quoting Egbo (2003) asserts that foreign policy formulation and implementation always take into account the changes in the political cum economic system, both at the domestic and international levels. The import of this, generally speaking, is that the success or failure of a foreign policy is largely dependent on certain prevailing internal political variables which characterize the locality of the international relations policy in question.

Obvious, Nigeria is an actor within the international system. But what implication does her domestic politics have on the foreign policy of the country? This paper therefore aimed at investigating the influence of domestic politics of Nigeria on her foreign policy.

PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

The main purpose of this study was to examine the influence of domestic politics of Nigeria on the country's foreign policy. Specifically, the paper seeks:

- i. To determine the implications of ethnic marginalization on Nigerian foreign policy, and
- ii. To examine the influence of poverty and inequality on foreign policy of Nigeria.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The study was guided by the following research questions:

- i. Does ethnic marginalization adversely affect Nigeria's foreign policy?

- ii. What implication does poverty and inequality in Nigeria have on the country's foreign policy

SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

The paper examined the influence of domestic politics of Nigeria on the foreign policy of the country. Local politics of a country determines her foreign policy, in terms of actualization of the foreign policy objectives or otherwise. Indeed no foreign policy can rise above the political temperature of the locality where it is domiciled. Findings of this paper would therefore guide the political class, national policy makers and even foreign policy elites in making appropriate political decisions for the country.

METHODOLOGY

The researcher adopted qualitative descriptive approach based on content analysis for this study. As a qualitative research, data was collated from secondary sources. The data was analyzed and necessary relationship between variables of the research described against each of the research questions.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

This paper is based on the Social Constructivist Theory. The theory posits that what states do depends on what their identities and interests are (Weber, 2005). The Social constructivism is a theory in International Relations that is based on how actors define their national interests, threats to those interests and their relationship to one another (Ujara and Ibietan, 2014).

Goldstein and Pevehouse (2011) aver that Constructivism recognizes that power is not absent from the international system but it focuses more on social interactions based on perception. By implication, the Constructivist theory examines how state interests and identities are intertwined and how those identities are shaped by their interaction with other states.

According to Jackson and Sorensen (2006), the focus of Constructivism is on human awareness or consciousness in its place on world affairs. Also, Slaughter (2011) avers that the perception of friends and enemies, in-groups and out-groups, fairness and justice all become key determinants of a state's behaviour. It is a contention that while some Constructivists would accept that states

are self-interested and rational actors, they would stress that varying identities and beliefs underlie the notions of rationality under which states pursue simply survival, power or wealth.

Wendt (1995) in Weber (2005), nonetheless, outlines the fundamental principles of the theory to include:

- People act toward objects, including other actors, on the basis of the meanings that the objects have for them: social knowledge
- The meanings in terms of which action is organized arise out of interaction: social practice
- Identities (and interests) are produced in and through ‘situated activity’: social identities and interests

The implication of the theory for this paper which seeks to evaluate the implication of domestic politics in Nigeria on the attainment of her foreign policy goals is not far-fetched. It means that the political and economic realities in Nigeria influence the extent, degree and nature of her relations with other states in the international community. These identities go a long way in defining how Nigeria is perceived by the rest of the state actors in the context of social relations. It also shapes roles of citizens in achieving those foreign policy objectives.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Nigerian Foreign Policy: Pros and Cons

It will suffice to commence the discourse with an assertion by Obi (2006) to the effect that there is no agreed decision on the definition of foreign policy as scholars have attempted to define the concept from their own perspectives. However, what has been agreed upon is an assertion by Egbo (2003) that the question of whether a country will have a policy towards others is not optional as it is a highly compelling and inevitable situation. The obvious implication therefore is that every country must have a foreign policy in order to live and survive as an independent state in the complex, sometimes dangerous world we live in today (Chibundu, 2003).

Foreign policy is inevitable, paramount and an integral essence of statehood. In fact, it is part of what makes a state a state. It is always there, irrespective of whether a state is conscious that it is endlessly engaged in pursuit of national interests in her foreign dealings or not. In other words, it is non-negotiable, regardless of what constitutes the country’s general strategy or orientation.

What this means is that all sovereign states in the international system must have foreign policy, not minding their level of power or degree of involvement in global affairs. This is more so when it is understood that foreign policy includes when a state refuses to take any action or decides to keep quiet over external issues. That, of course, explains why Saliu (2013) conceptualizes foreign policy as the totality of actions or inactions on the part of a nation state aimed at exercising preferences at the level of international system.

Thus, what is regarded as foreign policy or international relations policy is simply a set of explicit objectives with regard to world beyond the borders of a given social unit and a set of strategies and tactics designed to achieve those objectives (Ojukwu, 2015). It is a country's response to the world outside or beyond its own frontiers or boundaries which may be friendly or aggressive, casual or intense or even simple or complex (Chibundu, 2003). Certainly, implementation of foreign policy involves certain techniques which include diplomacy, propaganda and war (Okoli and Okoli, 2003). These are what Chibundu (2003) lists as elements of foreign policy – diplomatic, military, trade, economic, social, cultural, educational, sporting, among others.

Since there is already a preponderance of perspectives as to what foreign policy refers, effort here would not be channeled towards reviewing those definitions. However, it suffices to only add, in line with the view expressed by Ojukwu (2015) that foreign policies, generally, are designed to help protect a country's national interests, national security, ideological goals and economic prosperity.

Ideally, Nigeria as an independent state has evolved for herself a number of strategies in dealing with events outside her borders. The country has defined for itself what constitutes its national interests. On the other hand, just as the State has witnessed dynamisms in her political sojourn since gaining independence from Britain in 1960 moving from civilian to military administration and vice versa, so has its foreign policy objectives witnessed changes over time (Okeke, 2018).

Obviously, foreign policy objectives of Nigeria have, over time, attracted immense scholarly interest. The debate arose out of the problem inherent in pinpointing what actually constitutes Nigeria's national interest and largely centred on the intrinsic ambiguity and impracticability of

the objectives, gabbed in clumsy and nebulous characterization. In fact, this is why Nwanolue (2015) argues that it is difficult to define the national interest of Nigeria, same way he insists some foreign policy expectorates believe that Nigeria has no clear-cut political ideology and national interest.

Be that as it may, it is pertinent to say, along with Omenma (2015), that foreign policy stance of Nigeria has never shifted significantly from its original form. This is without prejudice to the fact that Nigeria at independence outlined its own foreign policy goals different from the foreign policy of its ex-colonial authority – the Great Britain.

According to Okeke (2018) and Yakubu (2011), the 1999 Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria (as amended) gives objectives of the country's foreign policy as:

- (a) Promotion and protection of the national interest
- (b) Promotion of African integration and support for African unity
- (c) Promotion of international cooperation for the consolidation of universal peace and mutual respect among all nations and elimination of discrimination in all its ramification
- (d) Respect for international law and treaty obligation as well as the seeking of settlement of international disputes by negotiation, mediation, conciliation, arbitration and adjudication, and
- (e) Promotion of a just world economic order

The import of the objectives is clear. First is that the foreign policy drive of Nigeria gives priority to the promotion and protection of the national interest of the country. In another way, it marks out Africa as its centerpiece. The overall interest, nonetheless, is promotion of world peace.

Nigerian Foreign Policy and Distorted Social Structure

Nigeria is a creation of historical accident associated with colonialism; it is an external creation foisted on the people (Omenma, 2015). This single factor provides an explicit answer to an oft-asked question as to why Nigeria is constantly enmeshed in socio-economic and political

quagmire. Is the Nigerian State inherently wired for failure? This is the often-repeated question by many citizens.

Obviously, the question is triggered by many factors. For instance, governance outcomes in Nigeria over the years have not given any hope that the country is on the path of real and sustainable progress. There is equally no cheering optimism that the national interest of the country is any soon to be realized.

The sad condition of the country provides real-time reinforcement to the claim by Otite (1999) that Nigeria is a very complex one with the behaviour and relationships of individuals and groups determined by the imperatives of cultural symbols and strategic social institutions. It also lays credence to the assertion by Nweke (1986) that what determines the characteristics of Nigeria's foreign policy is its total domestic structure which includes cultural and historical forces, socio-economic structure, institutional framework and processes, and class formations and relations.

In fact, to Omenma (2015), the people who make up the entity – Nigeria – and who existed separately with little or no cultural affinity and political orientations before their amalgamation continue to see each other as strange bed-fellows as they demonstrate a yearning in their political behaviour for their respective primordial attachment. In essence, the difficulty, nay, obvious failure by the domestic potentialities to construct a positive bearing for the realization of foreign policy goals of Nigeria has clear link with the country's leadership experimentation which has lingered for decades. In fact, what supplies oxygen to the consistent leadership failure in the country is directly connected to the externally-crafted marriage of strange bed-fellows or succinctly put, a forced marriage of a people administratively orchestrated by colonial-oriented Britain.

As Omenma (2015) puts it, Nigeria has witnessed a torrential turnover of leadership succession, and successive foreign policy elites, for diverse reasons, have arrogated the domain of foreign-policy making and implementation exclusively to themselves. According to him, for fear of being sacrificed to rationality and technicism, the political leaders choose to monopolize the

foreign policy process, thus creating an array of foreign policy outlook for the country, masterminded by the irreconcilably ideological backgrounds of the leaders.

However, there are other negative implications of the dominance of foreign policy process by political elites in Nigeria. For instance, successive Nigerian foreign policy elites have either exhibited a high-level of political obscurantism and indolence or have chosen the style of indiscretion and area boy diplomacy (Newswatch, 1998). Clearly, the foreign policy orientation of the Nigerian political elite is ad hoc in nature, incoherent, inconsistent and unsystematic, characterized by flowery language, flamboyance and much inaction (Omenma, 2015). The sad narrative remains that the country's social structure seems, from all intent and purpose, to have been inherently built to engender conflicts from the diverse ethnic-cultural interests and goals.

Ethnicity and Nigerian Foreign Policy

It is true that as a British imperial creation, Nigeria has attracted the attention of scholars and others (Nurudden, 2010). Its amalgamation has generated a number of discourses and is also blamed for inducing the country's backwardness.

But as Njoku (2009) rightly points out, Nigeria is not the only place where different nations were merged together, even though criticisms abound regarding the bad intention and economic motive with which Britain brought it about. Be that as it may, the growing discontent and mistrust among the population along religious, ethnic, sectional and geo-political cleavages have their roots in British imperialism (Nurudden, 2010). To him, the mutual antagonism is increasingly being reinforced by the inability of the Nigerian ruling elites to check/arrest the problems of declining infrastructure, extreme deprivations, numerous injustices, corruption, chaotic administration, electoral malpractices, among other things. Yet other problems include the British manipulation of the Nigerian state, introduction of political thuggery in the Nigeria's politics, the civil war, the long ineptitude of the Nigerian leadership, the inability to outgrow ethnic suspicion in the Nigerian social milieu, divisive religious attitudes, social prejudice, youth unemployment and the Niger Delta problem. Today, the Boko Haram terrorism adds to the list.

Owing to the deep ethnic division in Nigeria, Okeke (2018) laments that lack of basic tenets of democracy - justice and equality - heightens threats to peaceful co-existence in the country. He

thus explains that giving all citizens or at least majority of the citizens a positive sense of belonging in the Nigeria-project will, certainly, turn the identity question into pure national asset. To Nnoli (2008), ethnicity in Nigeria finds expressions through inter-ethnic discrimination in jobs, housing, admission into schools, promotions, business deals and welfare services, accompanied by nepotism, socio-economic and political discrimination (tendency to exclude out-group members from social and economic opportunities and welfare services), and sacrifices to pursue interests which may be inimical to the interest of other groups, among others.

For instance, the cut-off marks for each of the regions in the country for entrance into federal government-owned unity schools show lopsidedness and ultimately reinforces the belief by the south east zone of the country that policies of the government are designed to either exclude or punish people from the zone. Anambra, Imo and Enugu states located in the south east zone of the country have the highest cut-off requirement for admission. In fact, going by the policy of the federal government, candidates from the three states must score 139, 138 and 134 respectively before they can gain admission into the federal government-owned schools. On the contrary, students from other regions, particularly the north, are offered admission with less scores. For states like Yobe, Taraba and Zamfara, their male applicants are required to score just two, three and four points respectively to gain admission, according to the government's cut-off requirements. For a South South state of Bayelsa, candidates who score 72 points can secure admission into the federal schools. The obvious implication, therefore, is that a lot of students from the south east region aspiring to gain admission into the schools are denied the chance even when they score far above their counterparts from other zones (Okeke, 2018).

Poverty, Inequality and Foreign Policy of Nigeria

No doubt, issues of high-rate poverty and inequality in Nigeria have continued to attract attention, just as they call for serious concern. For Nigeria, inequality in terms of income and opportunities has been growing rapidly and has adversely affected poverty reduction while large pockets of Nigeria's population still live in poverty, without adequate access to basic services (World Bank, 2019). Same goes for poverty.

According to National Bureau of Statistics (2010), poverty incidence in Nigeria rose from 27.2 percent in 1980 with an estimated population of 65 million, representing 17.1 million as population in poverty, to poverty incidence of 69.0 percent with estimated population of 163 million representing 112.47 million as population in poverty in 2010. On the other hand, the proportion of extremely poor jumped from 6.2 percent to 38.7 percent within the same period.

In its Nigerian Living Standards Survey 2018-2019, National Bureau of Statistics (2020) puts the figure of Nigerians considered poor by national standards at over 82.9 million people. What that means is that on average, 4 out of 10 individuals in Nigeria has real per capita expenditures below N137,430 per year. The World Poverty Clock, quoted in *The Guardian* (2019), however reported that Nigeria had the largest extreme poverty population in the world, with up to half of the Nigerian population living in poverty.

Obviously, the causes of poverty in Nigeria are multi-dimensional (Inam, 2015). They include low or negative economic growth, inappropriate macroeconomic policies, deficiencies in the labour market resulting in limited job growth, low productivity and low wages in the informal sector, lag in human resource development, environmental degradation and retrenchment of workers (Olowa, 2012).

Others are incidences of unemployment, corruption, non-diversification of the economy, income inequality, laziness, poor education system, high crime rates, non-diversification of the economy from the oil and gas sector to more labour – intensive sectors, lack of improvements in the health and education sector, instability of government revenue and crowding-out of agriculture, poor infrastructure, hash economic policy, poor governance or poor leadership, low productivity and a lag in human resources development. They also include increase in crime and violence, environmental degradation, retrenchment of workers, a fall in the real value of safety nets as well as changes in family structures (Ucha, 2010; Ford, 2007; Garcia et al, 2006; Ajakaiye and Adeyeye, 2002; Kolawole and Torimiro, 2006; Adeyemi, 2012).

The contribution of macroeconomic shocks and policy failure to poverty is affirmed by Egbide (2015) who observed that many economies in the world faced macroeconomic disequilibrium, mostly in the balance of payments due to expansive aggregate demand policies, terms of trade shock, and natural disasters, which makes it necessary to undertake major policy reforms. According to him, in the process, such economies become vulnerable to poverty largely because such shocks and policy failures constrain the poor from using their greatest assets – labour.

In the overall, corruption contributes more to poverty in Nigeria. This explains why Kolawole and Torimiro (2006) observe that the relationship between corruption and poverty is predicated on the fact that looted funds in most cases are stacked in foreign accounts, thereby robbing the country of adequate funds and depriving the local citizens of resources meant for meaningful developmental efforts. The aftermath of the incident is increase in the poverty profile of the country.

Anibueze (2018), in his contribution, notes that the World Bank in 2000/2001 identified causes of poverty and a framework for action. According to him, the bank puts it that one route to investigating causes of poverty is to examine the dimensions highlighted by poor people. These include lack of income and assets to attain basic necessities of life (food, shelter, clothing, and acceptable levels of health and education) sense of voicelessness and powerlessness in the institutions of state and society and vulnerability to adverse shocks, linked to an inability to cope with them.

In Nigeria over the years, successive governments have initiated and implemented diverse policies and programmes as part of their development strategies aimed at poverty reduction (Inam, 2015). However, despite these efforts, the incidence of poverty persists, unemployment rate has increased and the human development index ranking of 0.504 in 2013 placed Nigeria at 152 out of 187 countries surveyed worldwide and 22 out of 52 countries surveyed in Africa (United Nations Development Programme, 2014).

The incidence and scourge of poverty has persisted in Nigeria over the years because of some problems associated with the successive poverty-reduction programmes (Inam, 2015). Thus,

corruption, gross mismanagement of funds, lack of financial discipline, politicization of the strategies, lack of effective and coordinated implementation, poor monitoring, political instability, terrorism and insurgency remain factors that have hindered the success of poverty alleviation strategies in Nigeria.

According to Dangana (2011), poverty-eradication efforts in Nigeria have had poor outcomes. He argues that the various poverty alleviation measures are not programmes generated from sound economic ideas that can transform the lives of the citizens and the economy but are simply consumption-patterned poverty alleviation measures that give the people a sort of food on the surface without a solid foundation that will give permanent solution to their incapacitation.

Today, the Nigerian state lacks economic fibre to firmly pursue and sustain its declared foreign policy goals. For Nigeria’s foreign policy to be stable and consistent, concrete steps need to be taken to make it a veritable tool for delivering rapid economic growth that would improve the lives and living conditions of Nigeria’s long-suffering and separate masses (Omenma, 2015).

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

Research Question 1: Does ethnic marginalization adversely affect Nigeria’s foreign policy?

Table 1: Nigeria’s Leadership in Terms of Ethnic Tenure 1960-2020

S/N	Name	Title	State	Ethnicity	Zone	Period	Ethnic Tenure
1	Dr. Nnamdi Azikiwe	President (Ceremonial)	Anambra	Igbo	South East	1/10/1960-15/1/1966	5 years, 5 months and 8 days
2	Alh. Abubakar Tafawa Balewa	Prime Minister	Bauchi	Jarawa	North East	1/10/1960-15/1/1966	5 years, 5 months and 8 days
3	Maj.Gen. J.T.U. Aguiyi Ironsi	Head of State	Abia	Igbo	South East	16/1/1966-29/7/1966	6 months and 13 days
4	General Yakubu Gowon	Head of State	Plateau	Angas/Beron	North Central	29/7/1966-29/7/1975	9 years
5	Gen. Murtala Muhammed	Head of State	Kano	Hausa	North West	29/7/1975-13/2/1976	6 months and 15 days
6	General Olusegun Obasanjo	Head of State	Ogun	Yoruba	South West	13/2/1976-30/9/1979	3 years, 7 months and 17 days
7	Alh. Shehu Shagari	President	Sokoto	Fulani	North West	1/10/1979-31/12/1983	4 years, 2 months and 30 days
8	Maj. General Muhammadu Buhari	Head of State	Katsina	Fulani	North West	31/12/1983-27/8/1985	1 year, 7 months and 26 days

9	General Ibrahim Babangida	Head of State	Niger	Gwari	North Central	27/8/1985-26/8/1993	8 years
10	Chief Ernest Shonekan	Head of State	Ogun	Yoruba	South West	26/8/1993-17/11/1993	2 months and 23 days
11	General Sani Abacha	Head of State	Kano	Kanuri	North West	17/11/1993-8/6/1998	4 years, 6 months and 22 days
12	Gen. Abdulsalami Abubakar	Head of State	Niger	Nupe	North Central	8/6/1998-29/05/1999	11 months and 21 days
13	Chief Olusegun Obasanjo	Executive President	Ogun	Yoruba	South West	29/05/1999-29/05/2007	8 years
14	Musa Yar'Adua	Executive President	Katsina	Fulani	North West	29/05/2007-05/05/2010	2 years, 11 months and 6 days
15	Dr. Goodluck Jonathan	Acting Executive President	Bayelsa	Ijaw	South South	6/05/2010-29/05/2011	1 year and 23 days
16	Dr. Goodluck Jonathan	Executive President	Bayelsa	Ijaw	South South	29/05/2011-29/05/2015	4 years
17	Muhammadu Buhari	Executive President	Katsina	Fulani	North West	29/05/2015-Date	5 years (As at 29/05/2020)

Source: Ohaneze (2002). The violations of human and civil rights of Ndi Igbo in the federation of Nigeria (1966-1999). A petition to the Human Rights Violation Investigating Committee. Enugu: Snaap Press, p.47. Minor adjustment by the researcher in adding updates.

As the table reveals, ethnic consideration or marginalization plays active role in political environment of Nigeria. Such exclusion manifests in leadership opportunity. From the table, it is evident that out of the about 60 years since the country gained political independence from Britain, persons from the south east zone of Nigeria have only had opportunity of leading the country for five years, 11 months and 21 days during the tenures of Dr. Nnamdi Azikiwe and Major General J.T.U. Aguiyi Ironsi. This finding aligns with the view expressed by Okeke (2019) who added that Azikiwe who was in office for five years, five months and eight days was only a ceremonial president without executive powers.

To lay credence to the politics of exclusion, the ruling party (All Progressives Congress) and the main opposition party (Peoples Democratic Party), during the 2019 general election, failed to pick their presidential candidates from the south east zone. Table 2 shows details of the presidential candidates and their running-mates as well as the result of the frontline candidates and political parties that participated in the 2019 general election.

Table 2: Details of Frontline Presidential Candidates and Their Running-mates/Result

S/N	STATE	POSITION	NAME OF CANDIDATE	PARTY	PWD	AGE	GENDER	QUALIFICATION	VOTES RECEIVED AND REMARKS
1	NIGERIA	PRESIDENT	BUHARI MUHAMMADU	All Progressives Congress (APC)	None	75	M	FSLC, WASC, CDT	15,191,847 ELECTED
2		VICE PRESIDENT	OSINBAJO OLUYEMI OLULEKE	APC	None	61	M	FSLC, WASC O&A, LLB, LLM	
3		PRESIDENT	ABUBAKAR ATIKU	PEOPLES DEMOCRATIC PARTY (PDP)	None	71	M	FSLC, WAEC, DIPLOMA	11,262,978 RUNNER-UP
4		VICE PRESIDENT	OBI PETER	PDP	None	57	M	FSLC, BA, WAEC	
5		PRESIDENT	MAILAFIA OBADIAH	AFRICAN DEMOCRATIC CONGRESS (ADC)	None	61	M	FSLC, SSCE, BSc, PHD	97,874 4th
6		VICE PRESIDENT	NASIRU TANIMOWO NURAIN BOLANLE	ADC	None	65	M	FSLC, BEd, PHD	
7		PRESIDENT	GBOR JOHN WILSON TERWASE	ALL PROGRESSIVES GRAND ALLIANCE (APGA)	None	70	M	FSLC, WASC, HSC	66,851 5th
8		VICE PRESIDENT	GERALD CHUKWUEKE NDUDI	APGA	None	61	M	FSLC, BSc, WASC	
9		PRESIDENT	DONALD DUKE	SOCIAL DEMOCRATIC PARTY (SDP)	None	57	M	LLB	34,746 8th
10		VICE PRESIDENT	GABAM SHEHU MUSA	SDP	None	48	M	BSc	

Source: <https://www.inecnigeria.org/elections/election-candidates> Minor adjustment by the researcher.

From table 2, it is clear that none of the major political parties fielded candidates from the south east zone. The ruling All Progressives Congress which did not field anybody from south east zone as presidential or vice-presidential candidate won the 2019 presidential election with 15,191,847 votes. So its candidate, Muhammadu Buhari from the north got re-elected for a second term in office. His first term began in 2015. The main opposition party, PDP, which fielded a vice-presidential candidate of south east origin lost out, having scored 11,262,978 votes. The All Progressives Grand Alliance (APGA) which featured among the frontline political parties and which fielded a vice-presidential candidate of south east origin finished fifth with 66,851 votes. The outcome of the 2019 presidential election further excluded the south east zone from ascendancy to presidency.

This political exclusion is further reinforced by the outcome of the appointments made by President Buhari who became an executive president in 2015. An instance is security appointments by the president as shown on table 3.

Table 3: Security appointments under President Buhari

Positions	Regions
Chief of Army Staff	North East
National Security Adviser	North East
Chairman EFCC	North East
Minister of Defence	North East
Chief of Airforce	North East
Inspector General of Police	North Central
Commandant NSCDC	North Central
Director of Secret Service	North West
Comptroller of Immigration Service	North Central
Marshal of Road Safety Agency (FRSC)	South West
Director of Fire Service	North
Director of Emergency Agency (NEMA)	North
Comptroller of Customs	North East
Chief of Defence Staff	South West
Director of National Intelligence Agency	South West
Chief of Naval Staff	South-South

Source: Saturday Punch, July 2, 2016

The table gives credence to the accusation that the president and his administration promote northern agenda, away from a balance in such appointments during previous administrations. From the table, it is evident that the south east zone is not represented in the current security architecture of the country. In fact, the table shows that the security appointments went to persons from the north where the president comes from. The situation shows inability of a country to rise above primitive politics of exclusion for equity, justice, fairness and political inclusion, such that would have promoted her foreign policy drive. The offshoot is rooted in an assertion by Omenma (2015) to the effect that foreign policy orientation of the Nigerian political elite is ad hoc in nature, incoherent, inconsistent and unsystematic. To him, successive Nigeria foreign policy elites have either exhibited a high-level of political obscurantism and indolence. This is obviously unfortunate and is a major reason for foreign policy failure in Nigeria. As Johnson and Olaniyan (2017) rightly observe, added to the marginalization in political

appointments is the downturn in the economy that has resulted in growing level of poverty among the masses at large.

Research Question 2: What implication does poverty and inequality in Nigeria have on the country’s foreign policy?

Table 4: Poverty and Inequality Indicators in Nigeria in 2019

	Poverty headcount rate, in percent of population in strata	Poverty gap index, in percent of poverty line	Gini coefficient
NIGERIA	40.1	12.9	35.1
Urban	18	4.5	31.9
Rural	52.1	17.4	32.8

Source: NBS (2020) Nigeria Living Standards Survey, 2018-19.

The table shows that 40.1 percent of total population in Nigeria was classified as poor. The highest number lives in rural area with 52.1 percent. Table 5 highlights further details in terms of multi-dimensional poverty in Nigeria.

Table 5: The Most Recent MPI for Nigeria Relative to Selected Countries

Country	Survey year	MPI value	Headcount (%)	Intensity of deprivations (%)	Population share (%)			Contribution to overall poverty of deprivations in (%)		
					Vulnerable to multidimensional poverty	In severe multidimensional poverty	Below income poverty line	Health	Education	Standard of living
Nigeria	2016/2017	0.291	51.4	56.6	16.8	32.3	53.5	27.0	32.2	40.8

Source: UNDP Human Development Report Nigeria 2019. Minor adjustment made by the researcher to exclude data on DRC and Ethiopia.

The table shows that the breadth of deprivation (intensity) in Nigeria, which is the average deprivation score experienced by people in multi-dimensional poverty, is 56.6 percent. The multi-dimensional poverty index, which is the share of the population that is multi-dimensionally poor, adjusted by the intensity of the deprivations, is 0.291.

Going by the outcome of tables 4 and 5, there is therefore no gainsaying the fact that the adverse poverty and inequality condition negatively impacts on the foreign policy of the country. It is a major reason why Nigeria's influence in the international arena is consistently dwarfed and almost non-existent. The condition prompted Omenma (2015) to maintain that for Nigeria's foreign policy to be stable and consistent, concrete steps need to be taken to make it a veritable tool for delivering rapid economic growth that would improve the lives and living conditions of Nigeria's long-suffering and desperate masses. This, of course, is what internal politics would deliver.

CONCLUSION

From the findings, it could be concluded that domestic political as well as economic challenges combine to undermine actualization of the foreign policy goals of Nigeria. Even in the contemporary time, negative tendencies such as marginalization, ethnicity, injustice, inequity, poverty and inequality are yet to be overcome in the body-polity of Nigeria. In fact, political exclusion and poverty rate in Nigeria have gone so high, thereby undermining achievement of the country's foreign policy objectives.

RECOMMENDATIONS

It is therefore recommended that national leadership in Nigeria sincerely commits to resolving the myriads of domestic bottlenecks including politics of exclusion, high-rate poverty and inequality that weaken the influence and prestige of the country in the international arena. This includes ensuring equal treatment for all sections of the country and building a virile economy. Addressing the political and economic challenges is a prerequisite for a strong, stable, vibrant, consistent and result-oriented foreign policy for the country.

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