

International relations

Правильная ссылка на статью:

Nikez A.Y., Nwalie G.A. — Nigeria's Sub – Regional Diplomacy: Nigeria's role in promoting West African Institutions // Международные отношения. – 2023. – № 1. DOI: 10.7256/2454-0641.2023.1.39208 EDN: IYUGVQ URL: https://nbpublish.com/library_read_article.php?id=39208

Nigeria's Sub – Regional Diplomacy: Nigeria's role in promoting West African Institutions / Субрегиональная дипломатия Нигерии: роль Нигерии в развитии западноафриканских институтов

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[Статья из рубрики "ИСТОРИЯ МЕЖДУНАРОДНЫХ ОТНОШЕНИЙ"](#)

DOI:

10.7256/2454-0641.2023.1.39208

EDN:

IYUGVQ

Дата направления статьи в редакцию:

18-11-2022

Дата публикации:

25-11-2022

Аннотация: Данное исследование посвящено изучению Нигерийской субрегиональной дипломатии: роли государства в развитии западноафриканских институтов. Объектом исследования являются отношения Нигерии с западноафриканскими учреждениями,

такими как Комиссия по бассейну озера Чад, Комиссия Гвинейского залива и экономическое сообщество стран Западной Африки (ЭКОВАС). Авторы подробно рассматривают национальные интересы Нигерии по отношению к западноафриканским институтам и государствам-членам. Для достижения цели исследования авторы уделяют особое внимание двусторонним отношениям Нигерии с соседними государствами и кооперации с африканскими институтами. Данное исследование базируется на теории политического реализма, предполагающего постоянное соперничество государств, защищающих свои национальные интересы. В процессе изучения данной проблемы авторы применяют институциональный, аналитический и проблемно-хронологический методы. Основными выводами проведенного исследования являются установление роли Нигерии в урегулировании пограничных и территориальных споров, позволившем государству взаимодействовать и сотрудничать со своими соседями, определение важности вклада Нигерии в миротворчество данного региона, выявление стабильности внешнеполитического курса Нигерии в отношении как Африки в целом, так и государств-соседей, анализ основных проблем западноафриканского региона, являющихся основой субрегиональной дипломатии Нигерии: отсутствие безопасности, политическая нестабильность и экономический дисбаланс. Более того, авторами дается критический анализ институционального сотрудничества Нигерии. Актуальность исследования обусловлена ростом политического и экономического влияния Нигерии на африканском континенте.

Ключевые слова:

Нигерия, Субрегиональная дипломатия, Западная Африка, Э К О В А С, Лидерство, Антиколониализм, Африканский союз, Экономическое сообщество, Общие интересы, Институты Западной Африки

Introduction

The Nigerian government established a strong relationship with its neighbors after gaining independence from Great Britain in 1960 [\[1\]](#). Nigeria's subregional diplomacy is characterized by both economic and political imperatives, which are conducted on two levels, bilateral and multilateral relations. Nigeria's role in subregional diplomacy can be traced back to the country's independence in 1960. Nigeria's subregional diplomacy was influenced by its national interest which became inevitable to the existents of Nigerian state. However, the country's subregional diplomacy became inevitable in order to fulfill its national interest [\[2\]](#). Issues such as political instability and economic imbalance were the root of Nigeria's interest in its neighbors. Nigerian subregional diplomacy is based on security and economic interests [\[3\]](#).

Over the years, Nigeria has built and developed a cordial relation with all its neighbors, namely, Benin, Niger, Chad and Cameroon, as well as other countries in the West African subregion, with most of which it has bilateral agreements [\[4\]](#).

For clarity, bilateral cooperation between Nigeria – Niger was established in 1971 to resolve various forms of challenges facing both countries, especially as it relates to the issues of borders and communities; In 1981, Nigeria and the Benin Republic created a Joint Border Commission to address issues such as border conflict, smuggling, irredentism; and Nigeria through the National Boundary Commission has engaged its neighbours – Niger, Chad,

Cameroon, Equatorial Guinea and Republic of Benin in activities that promote trans-border engagements, confidence-building and peaceful co-existence. Meanwhile, Nigeria through its institutional diplomacy has contributed tremendously to existence of the Lake Chad Basin Commission, Gulf of Guinea Commission and ECOWAS.

Since independence, Nigeria's foreign policy has been characterized by a focus on Africa and, by extension, West African Institutions. Nigeria's quest to cooperate, regulate and control utilization of the water and other natural resources in its subregion has necessitated the establishment of the Lake Chad Basin Commission, Gulf of Guinea Commission and ECOWAS.

Of all these concerns has necessitated Nigeria's leadership role in West African institutions. Nigeria's leadership role in ECOWAS could be determined by its financial contribution to ECOWAS and its member states. Nigeria huge contribution to ECOWAS's can be traced to the ECOWAS Community levy agreement, which was adopted in 1996 by the Authority of Heads of State as the major funding for ECOWAS after the initial contribution regime seemed ineffective. The Community Levy Protocol took effect in 2003 when all member states started its application.

Nigeria's Bilateral Cooperation with the Neighboring Countries

Since the 1960s, Nigeria has built and developed a cordial relation with all its neighbors, namely, Benin, Niger, Chad and Cameroon, as well as other countries in the West African subregion, with most of which it has bilateral agreements. The Nigerian government established a strong relationship with its neighbors after gaining independence from Great Britain in 1960.

However, there had been a few times when Nigeria and its neighbors had gotten into arguments about borders, of particular interest was the trouble of colonial heritage-invasion, annexation, division, and colonization of most of Africa by seven Western European powers during a short period known as New Imperialism (between 1881 and 1914). These issues have made it hard for Nigeria and other West African countries to work together because they keep blaming each other for the problems caused by these acts. The mixed relations between Nigeria and its neighbors have created suspicion and fear of Nigeria based on its military capacity, population, and economic resources. As Jackson A. A. [5] pointed out, issues such as irredentism, border disputes, and contention over mineral resources discovered in various border regions have created unrest and contention that have hindered cooperation among various African states, especially between the Limitrophe countries across the African continent. Thus, the border areas between Nigeria and its neighbors have served as a medium to foster its national interest through political, economic, and sociocultural relations among the people.

It is essential to explore the issues of border ambivalence between Nigeria and its immediate neighbors. There has been a period of cooperation as well as conflict between Nigeria and its immediate neighbors. The Nigerian government established bilateral relations with its immediate neighbors to foster political, economic, and security cooperation in the region [6].

For clarity, Nigeria – Niger cooperation was established in 1971 to resolve various forms of challenges facing both countries, especially as it relates to the issues of borders and communities. For instance, the countries have organized several sessions of the council of Minister of the Joint Commission, which has conceived Warehouses in Konni and Maradi

(Niger Republic), Border market, and Bilateral Chamber of Commerce [\[7\]](#).

In 1981, Nigeria and the Benin Republic created a Joint Border Commission to address issues such as border conflict, smuggling, irredentism, etc. The commission was charged to deal with incursions by troops from the other side of the country. Following this development, a conference on Nigeria-Benin border cooperation was held in Lagos, where the issues of border demarcation, illegal immigration, and the harassment of people were addressed.

Meanwhile, Muhammadu Buhari closed Nigeria's land border with its Limitrophe neighbors in April 1984, despite all the mutual agreement reached for free movement of human and material in the region. However, this decision was believed to have paved the way for the effective implementation of the change in Nigerian currency. It was argued that the border closure was a response to the threat of smuggled goods from neighboring countries into Nigeria through their border, which had crippled the Nigerian domestic industries.

Nevertheless, Muhammadu Buhari's decision to close Nigeria's land borders with its immediate neighbors was vehemently condemned by the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS). It was regarded as a breach of the ECOWAS protocol on an open border and free movement of persons and goods across the subregion [\[8\]](#). Asiwaju stated that Nigeria's land borders were reopened immediately after Muhammadu Buhari's regime in 1986. However, the trend of open borders characterized Nigeria's foreign relations with its neighbors until the end of Buhari's administration.

The period of the border closure affected the relations between Nigeria and the affected countries, especially the relationship of the people living between the border communities that had lived together for several years [\[9\]](#). Nevertheless, President Buhari's new agendas towards border cooperation are not a deviation from the previous agendas, during his military era as head of state from 1983 to 1985 and later as President in a democratic regime from 2015 until the present. For emphasis, Muhammadu Buhari during his military regime closed Nigeria's land border with its Limitrophe neighbors, despite all the mutual agreement reached for free movement of human and material in the region [\[10\]](#).

It was in the national interest of Nigeria that Ibrahim Babangida reopened Nigeria's land borders with its Limitrophe neighbors in 1986, which were closed by Muhammadu Buhari, his predecessor, in April 1984. The Ibrahim Babangida administration sought a lasting solution to boundary issues with Nigeria's Limitrophe neighbors. This development led his administration to establish the National Boundary Commission (NBC) to resolve boundary challenges emanating from both internal and external boundaries with Nigeria's immediate neighbors [\[11\]](#).

It is crucial to note that the National Boundary Commission (NBC) has organized several trans-border cooperation workshops. Nigeria through the National Boundary Commission has engaged its neighbours – Niger, Chad, Cameroon, Equatorial Guinea and Republic of Benin in activities that promote trans-border engagements, confidence-building and peaceful co-existence. For example, the Nigeria-Niger trans-border cooperation workshop was held in 2002, the Nigeria-Benin Republic trans-border cooperation workshop was held in 1988, the Nigeria-Cameroon trans-border cooperation workshop was held in 1992, and the Nigeria-Equatorial Guinea trans-border cooperation workshop was held in 1992. Since this initiative started, the workshop has solved many boundaries and border issues in Nigeria and other countries. For instance, the National Boundary Commission under the leadership of Adamu

Adaji has helped to resolve the territorial issues between Taraba and Plateau state as well as Abia and Akwa Ibom state, all situated in Nigeria. The Commission urged the various communities to cooperate and support the completion of seamless border demarcation between them [\[12\]](#).

In accordance with the National Boundary Commission's objectives of intellectual dialog, the NBC has resolved several borders – related issues in a friendly atmosphere. According to Asiwaju A. I. [\[13\]](#) the trans-border cooperation workshops serve as a laboratory where solutions to border conflicts and efforts in promoting regional integration are deliberated upon for the interest of the region.

Furthermore, the idea of the trans-border cooperation workshops was conceived by the then Commissioner of International Boundary in National Boundary Commission, Anthony I. Asiwaju. According to him, the entire project is aimed at establishing a border-specific bilateral cooperative policy and practice between Nigeria and each of the five adjacent countries [\[14\]](#).

Over the years, border issues have confronted Nigeria and its neighbors, and these workshops have provided a platform to discuss them. An array of issues affecting border communities between Nigeria and its adjacent countries are discussed during the workshops to establish areas of cooperation between Nigeria and its neighbors.

It was evident from the trans-border cooperation workshops held that scholars and professional bodies, as well as traditional rulers from both sides of the international border, had presented their cases in an array of topical issues. According to Asiwaju A. I. the workshops look at issues on local administration, culture, the border economy, legal issues and close with conclusions, delimitation questions on border security and recommendations. The trans-border cooperation workshop has contributed to border cooperation in the areas of political and socio-economic development between Nigeria and its immediate neighbors for the interest of the sub-region.

The success of trans-border cooperation workshops through the National Boundary Commission influenced similar programs in West Africa. The Malian government in 1999 influenced by the Nigerian model and established the National Borders Directorate, which promoted the policy concept of the Border Country or Cross-Border Area in 2002 [\[15\]](#).

Nigeria's Institutional Cooperation

Since independence, Nigeria's diplomacy has been characterized by a focus on Africa and, by extension, West African Institutions.

The Lake Chad Basin Commission Nigeria's relations with the Lake Chad Basin Commission and Gulf of Guinea Commission are necessitated as a result of the following goals: to exercise hegemonic influence in the region; to regulate and control utilization of the water and other natural resources in the basin; to uphold African unity and independence; and to examine complaints and promote settlement of disputes, with a view to promoting regional economic cooperation and development. In line with this judgment, Nigeria participates in the activities of the Lake Chad Basin Commission [\[16\]](#) and Gulf of Guinea Commission [\[17\]](#). Nigeria has enjoyed generally good relations with the abovementioned institutions in several dimensions.

Nigeria's quest to cooperate, regulate and control utilization of the water and other natural

resources in its subregion has necessitated the establishment of the Lake Chad Basin Commission. The commission was established by a convention and statute signed on 22 May 1964 by Cameroon, Chad, Niger, Nigeria, and later by the Central African Republic, Algeria, Libya, and Sudan [\[18\]](#). The goals and objectives of the commission are to regulate and control the utilization of water and other natural resources in the basin; to examine complaints and promote the settlement of disputes; to promote regional cooperation; and to initiate, promote and coordinate natural resource development projects and research within the basin area.

The Lake Chad Basin Commission was also instituted in pursuance of achieving the following mandate: (1) to sustainably and equitably manage the Lake Chad and other shared water resources of the Lake Chad Basin; (2) to promote regional integration, peace and security across the basin; and (3) to preserve the ecosystems of the Lake Chad Conventional Basin.

Of all these concerns, Ogilvie A. [\[19\]](#) argued that the Nigerian government has considered collaborative measures with other West African countries as the only panacea to address the tension in the Lake Chad region. In the same light, the Nigerian President Muhammadu Buhari, during the United Nations General Assembly Plenary in 2018, advocated for global action on the Lake Chad crisis. According to President Muhammadu Buhari, illegal immigration is not just a consequence of conflict but also of the impacts of climate change and lack of opportunities. The president emphasized the need for better cooperation over water, which constitutes a vital lifeline for people and nature in this semiarid region of West and Central Africa.

Similarly, President Muhammadu Buhari on May 25, 2021 at the opening of the Extraordinary Summit of Heads of State and Government of the Lake Chad Basin Commission (LCBC) summoned to deliberate on the recent happenings in Chad after President Idris Deby Itno died on the frontline while defending the territorial integrity of his country. President Muhammadu Buhari declared Nigeria ready to support the fight against insurgency in the Lake Chad region; he urged all leaders within the Lake Chad region and international development partners to rise to the need for peace and stability to be restored in the region.

Following the 1999 inauguration of a civilian president, the Nigerian-Gulf of Guinea country's cooperation began to improve in the areas of regional economic cooperation and development.

The Gulf of Guinea Commission. In line with this judgment, President Olusegun Obasanjo, in conjunction with other African presidents residing in the Gulf of Guinea, signed a treaty for the establishment of the Gulf of Guinea Commission on 3 July 2001. The treaty is targeted to develop close and multifaceted cooperation among member states and to establish a relationship on a basis of mutual understanding, good neighborliness and strong bonds of friendship. This, among other factors, has been promoting and protecting the integrity and welfare of Nigeria and its neighbors within the context of unity and development [\[20\]](#). All of this was in tandem and consonance with Nigeria's first Prime Minister's ideas to commensurate with Nigeria's name and status 'messiah' of the continent [\[21\]](#).

Again, the concept of good neighborliness was given more credible and emphatic attention when Jaja Anucha Wachuku, the Nigeria first Minister of Foreign Affairs, stated that any Nigeria's foreign policy that does not connote the interest of the common man in the

continent of Africa is unrealistic. According to him, charity begins at home; thus, the dividend of Nigeria's foreign policy should be seen in the affairs of the people [22].

Since Nigeria, according to Ujara E. C. [23] is regarded as the giant of Africa in terms of population, human resources, and natural resources put together, and in its national interest, the country is expected to take a leading role in solving the various problems confronting the Gulf of Guinea region and even beyond.

According to George O. O. [24] in the policy document prepared by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Nigeria showed the process into the establishment of the Gulf of Guinea Commission; nevertheless, it was contemplated that when the Commission took off, it would be a multilateral body devoted to cooperation among the countries that share the geographical formation known as the Gulf of Guinea and would equally serve as a platform for promoting the interests of the constituent states in the areas of the environment, politics, security, and economy.

After President Muhammadu Buhari emerged as the Chairman Gulf of Guinea Commission on 23 November 2017. In his acceptance speech, the President declared Nigeria's readiness and position in curtailing the socio-- economic and security challenges bedeviling the Gulf of Guinea. President Muhammadu Buhari in his submission claims that the members would only achieve the set goals and objectives of the commission through a collective measure.

Again, President Muhammadu Buhari on July 7, 2021, in a virtual audience with the Executive Secretary of the Commission, Florentina Ukonga, reiterated Nigerian interest to fortify the Gulf Guinea Commission to enable the commission to perform the roles for which it was set up [25].

ECOWAS. ECOWAS was created by the initiative of Nigerian and Togolese Presidents: Nigeria's former Head-of-State, General Yakubu Gowon (Retired) with the late Togolese President, Gnassingbe Eyadema, spearheaded the establishment of regional economic Organisation, ECOWAS in order to concertedly managed the economic and political challenges in the West African region. Furthermore, Nigeria's leadership role in ECOWAS could be determined by its financial and institutional (Headquarter) contribution to the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), and its member states. Nigeria huge contribution to ECOWAS's can be traced to the ECOWAS Community levy agreement, which was adopted in 1996 by the Authority of Heads of State as the major funding for ECOWAS after the initial contribution regime seemed ineffective. The Community Levy Protocol took effect in 2003 when all member states started its application. For emphasis, the protocol stipulates that the taxable base shall be all goods originating from third countries (non-ECOWAS countries) imported into the community.

Moreover, Nigeria paid more than \$1,177 billion to the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) as its Community Levy contribution in the last 16 years because of the tax on imported goods. Nigeria's payment represents 40.42 per cent of the total payment of \$2,913,088,908 payment made by all the 15 member states and is higher than the payments made by 12 other countries put together, except Ghana and Cote d'Ivoire. Ghana paid about \$508,577 million, Cote d'Ivoire \$347,262 million, while Benin, Burkina Faso, Cape Verde, Guinea, Guinea Bissau, Gambia, Liberia, Mali, Niger, Senegal, Sierra Leone and Togo paid a total of \$879,711 million [26]. Perhaps, what the Nigerian contributed to the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) as its Community Levy contribution in the last 16 years tells the story of Nigeria's enormous contribution in relation to member

states.

It is crucial to note that many countries were yet to comply with the payment of their community levy. Furthermore, the community levy data showed that many countries were yet to pay the total sum from their community levy assessments. Based on the assessment, if all countries had paid in full, the sub-regional body would have gotten more than \$3,710 billion as against the \$2,913 billion paid, leaving a deficit of \$797,215 million. Based on this assessment, Nigeria had paid 64 per cent of its payments, leaving an outstanding of 36 per cent.

Apparently, Nigerian has exhibited its leadership role through various ECOWAS protocols in the peaceful resolution of the political crises in Sierra Leone, Liberia and Togo. Nigeria equally gets involved while playing the lead role in the Mano River dispute between Liberia, Guinea, and Sierra – Leone thus bringing an end to the sequence of hostility prevalent within the region. Finally, the Nigeria's diplomacy has directly or indirectly contributed to the growth of West African institutions and the development of the region at large especially in spheres of the economic scheme, security formation, and promotion of political stability through democracy and good governance. Thus, Nigerian engagements in ECOWAS activities are carried out through bilateral and multilateral diplomacy to meet the expectations of the international community as a regional leader.

Following the affirmative analysis, it would be impossible for ECOWAS to initial any peacekeeping mission without the consent of Nigerians couple with the fact that the main structure of ECOWAS institutions are located in Nigeria (Legos, Abuja) and most of the vital positions in the commission are occupied by Nigerians. For instance, the 40th Ordinary Session of the Authority of ECOWAS Heads of State and Government appointed former Nigerian President, President Olusegun Obasanjo and President Goodluck Jonathan as an ECOWAS conflict resolution chairperson and special envoy to head its mediation mission in Senegal and Mali respectively, and from 1990 to 1999 Nigerian military commander Joshua Dogonyaro and eight other Nigerian military commanders spearheaded the ECOMOG troops to Liberia, which in turn produced the expected result as required by the ECOWAS.

Conclusion

It is shown that Nigeria's subregional diplomacy was rooted in issues such as insecurity, political instability and economic imbalance. It has been established that Nigeria's role in border and territorial dispute settlement has given the country a free will to interact and cooperate with its neighbors. More importantly, given Nigeria's huge contributions to the peacekeeping mission and other developmental areas, such as economic and sociocultural in Africa. Suffice it to say that since Nigeria attained independence, the successive Nigerian Presidents have shown much commitment towards promoting African diplomacy, as well as representing the good image of Africans within and in diaspora. Nigerian foreign policy is rooted in the bilateral and multilateral diplomacy in West Africa.

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Результаты процедуры рецензирования статьи

В связи с политикой двойного слепого рецензирования личность рецензента не раскрывается.

Со списком рецензентов издательства можно ознакомиться [здесь](#).

Современный мир предъявляет повышенные требования к коллективной безопасности: и действительно, боевые действия в Ираке и Афганистане, сирийский и украинский кризисы наглядно показывают, что современная международная обстановка в условиях трансформации монополярного мира в многополярный временно находится в фазе обострения. Заметим, что отдельные регионы мира, например, Ближний Восток, традиционно относятся к «горячим точкам», привлекая повышенное внимание аналитиков и экспертов. Наряду с Ближним Востоком традиционно конфликтогенным, но, вместе с тем, немного менее известным широкой аудитории, является Африканский континент. В условиях повышения роли России в системе международных отношений представляется важным обратиться к изучению различных региональных игроков, в том числе в многогранной Африке.

Указанные обстоятельства определяют актуальность представленной на рецензирование статьи, предметом которой являются дипломатические усилия Нигерии в Западной Африке. Автор ставит своими задачами рассмотреть двухсторонние отношения Нигерии с государствами региона, а также проанализировать участие Нигерии в региональных институтах.

Работа основана на принципах анализа и синтеза, достоверности, объективности, методологической базой исследования выступает системный подход, в основе которого находится рассмотрение объекта как целостного комплекса взаимосвязанных элементов. Научная новизна статьи заключается в самой постановке темы: автор на основе различных источников стремится охарактеризовать дипломатические усилия Нигерии в западноафриканском регионе.

Рассматривая библиографический список статьи, как позитивный момент следует отметить его масштабность и разносторонность: всего список литературы включает в себя 26 различных источников и исследований. Несомненным достоинством рецензируемой статьи является привлечение зарубежных англоязычных материалов, что

определяется самой постановкой темы. Из привлекаемых автором источников отметим нормативно-правовые акты, воспоминания дипломатов, интернет-источники. Из используемых исследований укажем на труды англоязычных авторов, в центре внимания которых внешняя политика Нигерии после достижения независимости. Заметим, что библиография обладает важностью как с научной, так и с просветительской точки зрения: после прочтения текста статьи читатели могут обратиться к другим материалам по ее теме. В целом, на наш взгляд, комплексное использование различных источников и исследований способствовало решению стоящих перед автором задач.

Стиль написания статьи можно отнести к научному, вместе с тем доступному для понимания не только специалистам, но и широкой читательской аудитории, всем кто интересуется как международными отношениями, в целом, так и региональными процессами на Африканском континенте, в частности. Апелляция к оппонентам представлена на уровне собранной информации, полученной автором в ходе работы над темой статьи.

Структура работы отличается определенной логичностью и последовательностью, в ней можно выделить введение, основную часть, заключение. В начале автор определяет актуальность темы, показывает, что «правительство Нигерии установило прочные отношения со своими соседями после обретения независимости от Великобритании в 1960 году». Несмотря на это, как отмечается в рецензируемой статье, в ряде случаев «Нигерия и ее соседи вступали в споры о границах, особый интерес представляла проблема колониального наследия». Что касается институционального сотрудничества в Западной Африке, автор обращает внимание на участие Нигерии в комиссии по бассейну озера Чад, комиссия Гвинейского залива и ЭКОВАС (Экономическое сообщество западноафриканских государств). Примечательно, что, как показывает автор, основная структура институтов ЭКОВАС расположена в Нигерии большинство важных должностей в комиссии заняты нигерийцами.

Главным выводом статьи является то, что участие Нигерии в урегулировании пограничных и территориальных споров позволило выстроить взаимодействие и сотрудничество со своими соседями.

Представленная на рецензирование статья посвящена актуальной теме, написана на английском языке, вызовет читательский интерес, а ее материалы могут быть использованы как в учебных курсах, так и в рамках внешнеполитических стратегий России на Африканском континенте.

В целом, на наш взгляд, статья может быть рекомендована для публикации в журнале «Международные отношения».